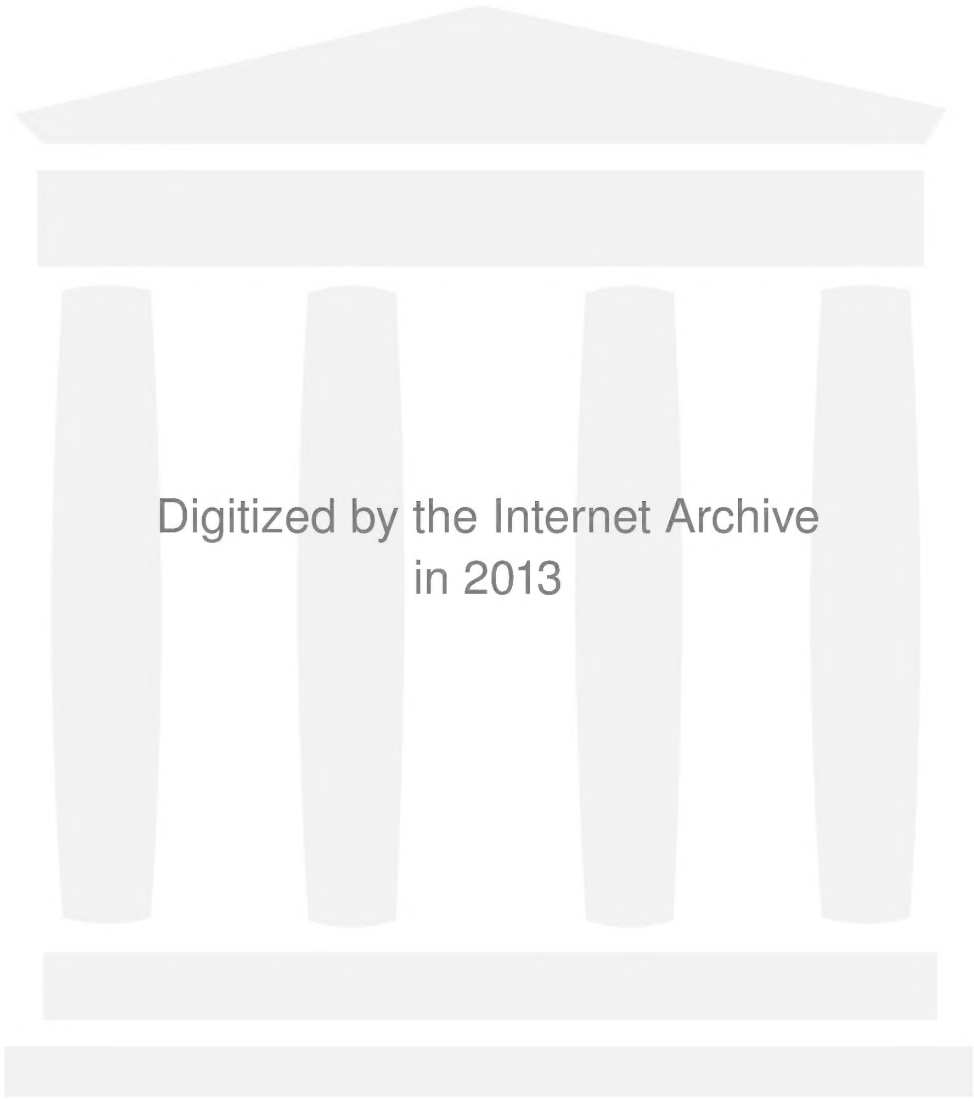

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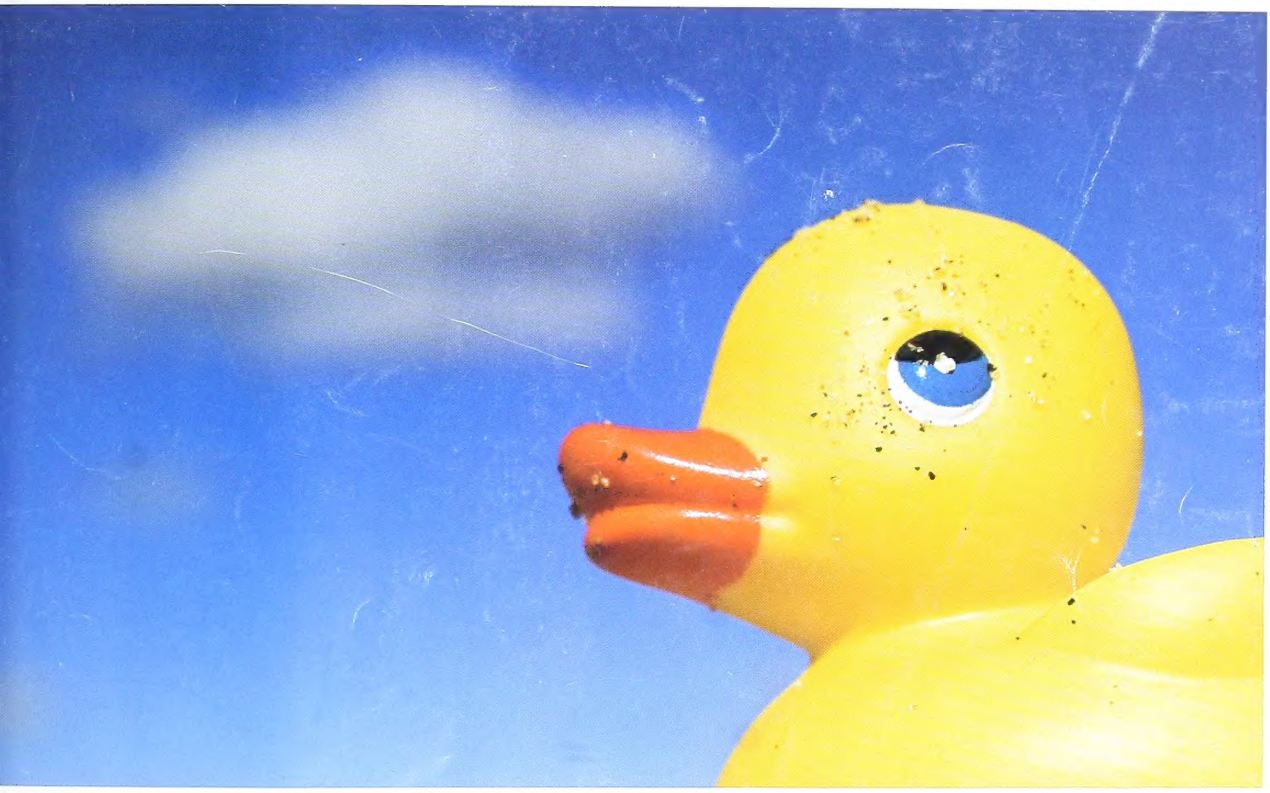
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By Donovan Hohn

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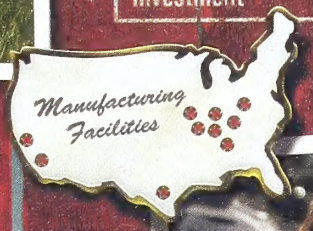


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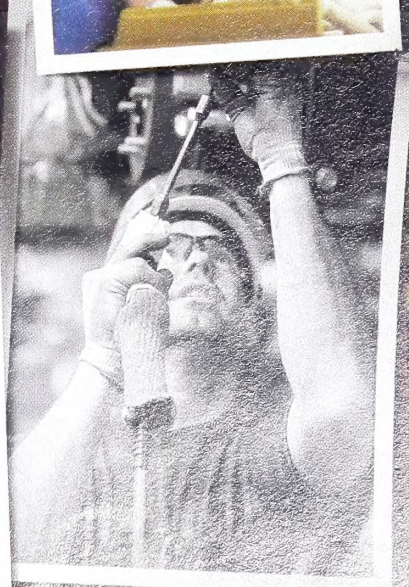
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LETTERS

Barack and a Hard Place

Ken Silverstein's November report, "Barack Obama Inc.," insinuates that Senator Obama votes with campaign contributions, rather than good policy, in mind, but his report suffers from the omission of key facts that would undercut this argument. For example, Silverstein notes that the financial industry, which lobbied aggressively in favor of the Class Action Fairness Act, constitutes Senator Obama's second-largest bloc of donors, implying that those donations influenced his vote. What Silverstein fails to mention is that Senator Obama's *largest* bloc of contributors—lawyers and law firms—lobbied just as aggressively against the bill. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, lawyers and law firms, who have long been among the Democrats largest contributors, have given more than $539 million to Democrats since 1990. If Silverstein is going to assume that Senator Obama's vote can be bought, isn't it relevant that he voted against the interests of one of the Democratic Party's closest allies and his biggest contributor?

Silverstein makes similar omissions when discussing Obama's vote to provide loan guarantees for power-plant operators in order to encourage the development of new energy policies. He writes that Obama voted for the loans because of donations from Exelon Corporation, an Illinois-based nuclear-power-plant operator, but he fails to make clear that the amendment provided loan guarantees for a number of other clean-energy technologies, including wind power and hydrogen fuel cells. Worse still, Silverstein never mentions that Senator Obama has been critical of Exelon due to its failure to report leaks of radioactive materials.

Silverstein also incorrectly suggests that Obama stopped taking private subsidized air travel due to bad press. In fact, the opposite is true. Obama chose to reimburse the full fare for private flights—not just the first-class fare required by Senate rules—because he felt it was the right thing to do.

The real problem with Silverstein's article, however, is that it presumes that Senator Obama would rarely take a vote or a position based on what his

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lieves. Instead of asking Senator bama or his staff for the rationale hind the votes, Silverstein implies at they're all tied to contributions, hen a full presentation of the evi-nce would suggest otherwise. (For a ore complete response to Silverstein's ticle, readers can visit Senator Oba-a's website.)

bert Gibbs
ommunications Director
enator Barack Obama
/ashington, D.C.

In 1963, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., mself an eventual victim of Wash-gton's corrupting influences, wrote an *Esquire* article that "[t]he prima- and overriding duty and responsi-lity of each Member of the House nd the Senate is to get reelected." owell recognized that reelection nged upon addressing the needs of a ierarchy of interested parties and rinciples, which he ordered, from ost to least important, as follows: nstituents, party lines, special inter-ts, and personal viewpoints.

After reading "Barack Obama Inc.," it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that any ordering of interests among today's congressmen risks being displaced, wholesale, by the concerns of those who have the deepest pockets, which, as Silverstein demonstrates, transcends traditional one-on-one special-interest lobbying relationships. Senator Obama's predicament is equally reflective of the much-lauded yet ineffective "campaign finance reform" efforts of McCain-Feingold fame. What this country sorely needs, if it is to be the beacon of democracy its leaders so often hold it up to be, is an honest, open, and sustained debate on the proper role of money in politics.

Albert Wan
Brooklyn, N.Y.

It is hardly surprising that a politician, faced with current U.S. campaign laws, accepts money from lawyers and corporations, or that an Illinois senator would be in favor of ethanol. I'll stick with a cautious and practical politician over an impossible dreamer any day. Senator Obama deserves our encouragement.

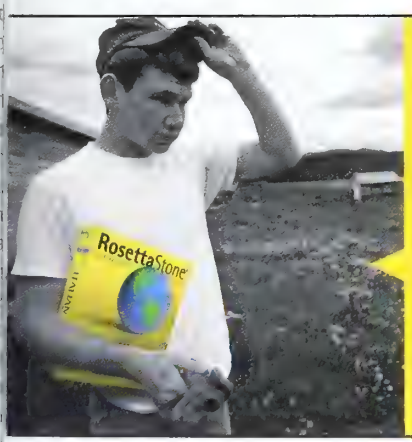
Peter Schmitz
San Francisco

I shared Senator Obama's opposition to the war in Iraq, as I share his current ambivalence about what to do now. I don't think these two positions represent a shift toward the "center." They represent, rather, considered judgments regarding two different situations. The result of withdrawing is fraught with uncertainty and with danger not only to the inhabitants of Iraq but to those of the United States as well. I am neither a politician nor a pundit, so I can hardly be accused of shifting my position to accommodate my constituents. Perhaps Obama didn't either.

James Loewen
Venice, Calif.

Ken Silverstein responds:

Senator Obama's office has mischaracterized my arguments. I never



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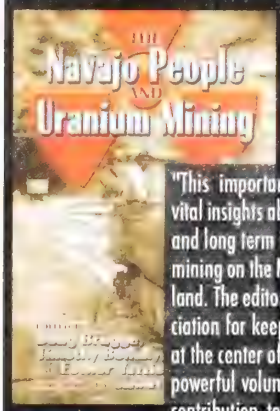
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–Luis J. Rodriguez, author of *Always Running* and *Music of the Mi*

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wrote that Obama votes in bad faith, thinking only of his campaign contributors. I wrote that given the necessity of raising huge sums of money in order to compete in our political system, Obama, who has raised more than $20 million since beginning his candidacy for the Illinois Senate in 2003, could not be entirely oblivious to the desires of big political contributors.

Robert Gibbs writes that the Class Action Fairness Act was the focus of a significant lobbying effort by financial firms, which constitute Obama's second-largest single bloc of donors, but that I failed to note that lawyers and law firms, his largest bloc, lobbied "just as aggressively" against the bill. That's a misleading statement, since many of Obama's biggest contributors in the latter category were corporate law firms that were surely on the same side as the financial industry. And besides, is Gibbs not acknowledging here that Obama received money from two groups with a major interest in the legislation? He implies that because the senator's powerful backers have different, sometimes competing interests, this somehow frees Obama from having to cater to any of their demands and suggestions. Obviously, as I reported in the original story (and in an additional story posted on Harpers.org), this is not the case.

Peter Schmitz, like many of Obama's defenders, is unconcerned with Obama's campaign-finance records or support for ethanol. If it were Trent Lott taking millions from big corporations in order to get pork for Mississippi, I suspect Schmitz would be less sanguine. I agree with James Loewen that the situation in Iraq is complex. But Obama has been slow in recognizing the need to change course dramatically. That's not leadership.

Right Young Things

In his November letter, "The Kids Are Far Right," Wells Tower painted the National Conservative Student Conference as an event at which bizarre, bunny-killing young people gathered to cheer the callous and paranoid utterings of some very strange people. I took away a diff- ent impression of the students, w struck me as intelligent and cons- entious young people, and of t speakers I heard. But I guess it's To- er's privilege to describe things t way he saw them. I do wish, thou that he hadn't missed the point my own remarks at the conferen According to Tower, I claimed th you're at a disadvantage "arguing t superiority of Western civilizatio without the classics: Great works literature "can be mined for obj lessons in conservative values, or d mantled into rhetorical brickb that make good hurling in cultu war skirmishes."

Well, no. What I actually argu was that instead of picking "rhetorical brickbats" and partic pating in the culture wars, conser ative students should spend the formative years actually educati themselves about Western cultur There's no point, I urged, in b coming a champion of tradition Western civilization if nobody's a tually getting the kind of educati that used to turn people into ed cated Americans and real citize of the West.

Elizabeth Kantor
Conservative Book Club
Washington, D.C.

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NOTEBOOK

Uncle Sam

By Lewis H. Lapham

A free people has] an indisputable, unlienable, indefeasible, divine right to hat most dreaded and envied kind of nowledge, I mean, of the characters nd conduct of their rulers.

—John Adams

Adams had in mind the ministers of the British crown in the reign of King George III, and presumably he new that the knowledge in question was interactive, moving mostly in the lirection of the man afraid of being liscovered as a thief but also toward he man afraid of finding out that he's been robbed. When the newly elected Congress assembles on January 4 in Washington, the Republican gentlemen in column A can be counted upon to say nothing apt to reveal a law of character, a proof of misconduct, or the earmark for a prison sentence. Yes, it's true, the invasion of Iraq proceeded under the flag of an expedient lie, but the intention was noble, the objective honorable and just—all allegations to the contrary, Mr. Chairman, are false, vindictive, and shamelessly partisan.

The chance for a more illuminating form of public education (Adams's topic in 1765) rests with a Democratic majority recruited from column B into a coherent body politic willing to acknowledge our current loss of a democratic republic and unafraid to find in the Bush Administration's specious war on terror a textbook lesson on the ways in which a predatory government goes about the work of stealing from a free but inattentive people their lives, liberties, fortunes, good name, and sacred honor. If the Congress can muster enough courage to exercise the power entrusted to it by the Constitution, the record won't have much trouble speaking for itself:

1. A foreign war conceived as a means of advancing the Bush Administration's imposition on the American people of a not-so-benevolent despotism, the army sent to fight and die not for the defense of country but for a corporate dream of commercial empire.
2. A government that tortures people classified as enemy combatants, denies their right to hear all the evidence bearing on their confinement and arrest, forbids their resort to petitions of habeas corpus.
3. The administration's systematic plundering of the Federal Treasury on behalf of its accomplices in the arms and construction trades.
4. The National Security Agency directed to monitor, without first obtaining a court order, any and all telephone and email traffic suspected of carrying the germs of terrorism.
5. The president's use of 136 signing statements since he took office to exempt himself from the rule of more than 1,000 federal laws.

The sum of the evidence warrants the impeachment of President George W. Bush on charges comparable to those brought by the Declaration of Independence against the "long train of abuses and usurpations" attendant upon the monarchy of George III. The odds don't favor the undertaking. Representative Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.), the incoming speaker of the House, was quick to declare so intemperate an initiative "off the table," wholly lacking in the spirit of bipartisan outreach needed to move the country forward on its patriotic search for common ground. Consistent with the Democratic Party's fear of being thought unduly liberal, still lost in the Day-Glo discontent of the 1960s with the flower children and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Pelosi's press statements during the week following the November elections stressed the importance of avoiding condemnations and recriminations. The money was gone, and what's to be gained by crying over spilt blood. The time had come for the Democratic Party to behave in the manner of geopolitical adults, to face up to the hard choices that confront the country, to quit striking poses trembling with virtuous indignation. "We have made history," Pelosi said, "now let us make progress."

Not surprisingly, the motion was seconded by the White House—"The most important priority right now is to win a war on terror and keep America safe and figure out ways that both parties can work together with the shared responsibility of having victory in Iraq"—but it was Robert Reich, once-upon-a-time secretary of labor in the Clinton Administration, who posted the notice of a general pardon on the website of *The American Prospect*. "Democrats," Reich said, "want [illegible] malfeasance [illegible] Bush Administration—find [illegible] really know what [illegible]

Lewis H. Lapham is the National Correspondent for Harper's Magazine.

Michael Bess
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gard to weapons of mass destruction, Abu Ghraib, Katrina, payoffs to Abramoff, and all the other rot. That's understandable, but it would be far better if Democrats used their newfound power to lay out a new agenda for America. There's no point digging up more dirt."

Democracy is born in dirt, nourished by the digging up and turning over of as much of it as can be brought within reach of a television camera or a subpoena. We can't "lay out a new agenda for America" unless we know which America we're talking about, the one that embodies the freedoms of a sovereign people or the one made to fit the requirements of a totalitarian state. We owe it to ourselves to know the difference. Seldom in our history have we been offered a better chance to learn a more useful civics lesson, and by holding up to the light the malfeasance, nonfeasance, and "all the other rot" embedded in the character and conduct of the Bush Administration, we might discover what we mean by America the beautiful. Like it or not, and no matter how unpleasant or impolitic the proceedings, the spirit of the law doesn't allow the luxury of fastidious silence or discreet abstention.

Whether Congress is controlled by Democrats or Republicans, by Vice President Dick Cheney or Senator Joe Lieberman, the doctrine of the separation of powers invites it to remove from office a president committing high crimes and misdemeanors. A duty implicit in the principle of a democratic republic, not a judicious or injudicious option subject to the daily verdict of the opinion polls. The Constitution doesn't serve at the pleasure of Representative Pelosi any more than it answers to the whim of President Bush, and by taking "off the table" the mess of an impeachment proceeding, the lady from California joins the president in his distaste for such an unclean thing as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Rightly understood, democracy is an uproar, the argument meant to be blunt, vigilant, and fierce, not, as the purveyors of our respectable opinion would have it, a matter of liveried civil servants passing one another po[l]e synonyms on silver trays.

Fortunately for any lawyers choos[ing] to poke around in the administrati[on]'s several compost heaps (at the Pen[tag]on and the intelligence agencies [and] the White House and the Justice D[e]partment), the malfeasance won't [be] hard to smell or find. Never have [the] attempts at regime change been so s[lo]pidly managed—those in the Uni[ted] States even more harebrained th[an] those in Iraq; the testimony alre[ady] entered on the record suggests that t[he] invasion of Iraq was designed to [fit] specifications of a criminal fraud, th[at] the threat presented by the permane[nt] emergency of the "war on terror" [is a] fiction providing an extortionate g[o]ernment with an alibi for its seizing, [in] the name of the national security, wh[at] John Adams would have recogniz[ed] as the powers of obnoxious despotis[m].

In an essay entitled "The Stat[e]" and published posthumously in 19[18] Randolph Bourne found his prem[ise] in President Woodrow Wilson's adoption of the same maneuver to send 50,000 American troops glo[ri]ously off to their destruction on t[he] battlefields of the First World W[ar]. The American people had no quar[rel] with Germany (the country had[n't] been attacked, no national interes[t] was at stake); how then did they fi[nd] themselves fighting the war to end [all] wars? Bourne answered the questi[on] by drawing a distinction between t[he] American political democracy (mo[st] est, tolerant, easygoing, content [to] mind its own business) and th[e] American industrial autocracy, th[e] country's "significant classes," se[lf]-important, vain, eager to exten[d] their economic privileges and appe[ar] on the world stage in the roles [of] British dukes, pleased to think of w[ar] as an upper-class sport, the means [of] disguising their own venal and i[n]competent politics in the dignity [of] handsome military uniforms. To pl[ay] the game they needed polo ponie[s] and in the effort to round up the lo[wer] social orders for the work of dyi[ng] in the French mud, the Wilson A[d]ministration's publicists elevated th[e] idea of the sanctity of the America[n] state, an august and mystical entit[y] patched together with heroic "beda[ze]lements"—slogans, flags, band mu[sic]

, and posters of Uncle Sam. A m de guerre for the interests of the dustrial autocracy, Uncle Sam, en as now, represents nothing and body other than the cost of his oduction; the American state for hich he stands becomes the proper- of the corporate management, nducting his affairs in secret, pendent for his existence on the bsidies (financial and emotional) rnished by the pomp and circum- ance of never-ending war.

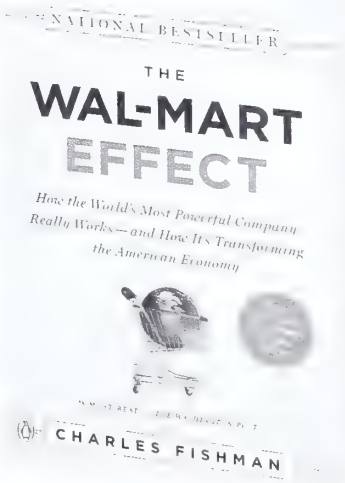
Bourne died in the course of writing e manuscript, at age thirty-two, of e Spanish flu that killed 675,000 ople in the United States in 1918 d 1919 (an actual as opposed to an aginary catastrophe), and on reread- g the essay soon after the November ection, I was reminded of the truism ually attributed to Mark Twain that though history doesn't repeat itself, rhymes. The politicians ascending apitol Hill on January 4 also might ant to reread the farewell radio and levision address that President wight D. Eisenhower delivered to e American people in the winter of 961. Like Bourne, Eisenhower un- erstood that the exploitation by the merican state of the resources of the merican democracy (its wealth and telligence, the energies and freedom its people) presented the country ith a clear and present danger as adly as the one the American armies ad encountered on the roads from ormandy to the Rhine. A general ho knew and once said that "every un that is made, every warship unched, every rocket fired signifies, the final sense, a theft from those ho hunger and are not fed, those ho are cold and are not clothed," isenhower didn't sweeten his last and nal word:

> This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.
>
> In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.
>
> We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.*

Both the security and the liberty of America have suffered heavy losses over the last fifty years, but none more apparent and therefore easier to weigh and count than those inflicted on the American political democracy by the military-industrial complex (a.k.a. the industrial autocracy, the commercial oligarchy) wearing the mask of the Bush Administration. The question now before the country is the one confronted by the man afraid of finding out that he's been robbed. How much longer do we wish to pretend that nothing really happened, or that nothing really valuable is lost; that the crime is the losing of the Iraq war, not the making of it? That in place of the constitutional questions asking why, to what end, and in whose interest, we can afford to substitute the questions of logistics—how many troops to dispatch or withdraw over a period of how many days or months; when to tell the Iraqi government that we're not renewing its social contract; what deals to cut with Syria and Iran; where to find another expedient lie to justify what we can present as an honorable exit strategy. The answers to the secondary questions will teach us nothing worth the knowing, but by impeaching President Bush the Congress not only can impart that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge without which a free people can't know whether the adjective is true or false; it also might turn over enough dirt to unearth the American democracy buried at the feet of Uncle Sam. ■

* For a further discussion of this speech, see "Republic or Empire," by Chalmers Johnson, page 63.

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HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that an American in 1998 described the quality of the U.S. health-care system as "poor" : 1 in 7
Chance today : 1 in 3
Percentage of Americans who say they support universal health care over the current system : 56
Percentage who say they would support it if it limited their choice of doctors : 28
Number of uninsured patients to whom a Texas hospital has given free preventive care since 2002 : 5,000
Estimated percentage change over two years in the number of emergency-room visits by these patients : –50
Estimated number of gallons of extra gasoline burned each year because Americans are overweight : 938,000,000
Amount that the U.S. government spent on energy research and development in 1979, adjusted for inflation : $7,770,000,000
Amount last year : $1,480,000,000
Average number of times that President Bush has used the pronoun "I" in each of his State of the Union addresses : 36
Average number of times that President Clinton did in his addresses : 103
Factor by which Hillary Clinton's spending on her 2006 reelection exceeded that of any other Democratic candidate : 2.5
Maximum percentage support that her opponent, John Spencer, ever got in polls : 33
Minimum number of New Jersey public officials who have been indicted since 2002 : 104
Factor by which African Americans are more likely than white Americans to believe their votes will not be tallied : 3.5
Chance that a student at a private U.S. college in 1992 came from the nation's top income quartile : 1 in 4
Chance today : 1 in 3
Amount that U.S. college students spent last year on furnishings for dorm rooms and apartments : $3,800,000,000
Percentage change since 2002 in the number of U.S. Air Force security clearances revoked due to personal debt : +900
Percentage of their total cost that five audited Iraqi reconstruction projects spent on overhead costs : 35
Average number of months after workers and equipment were ordered to Iraq that substantial work on the projects began : 6
Number of weapons that the Pentagon has issued to Iraqi security forces since 2003 : 505,093
Percentage of these that have been registered in any trackable fashion : 2
Number of LAPD officers shot by suspects between 1985 and 2005 : 90
Number shot by themselves or other officers : 68
Annual budget of Miami's police department, expressed as a percentage of the production cost of the film *Miami Vice* : 83
Number of different forms of copyright piracy a Boy Scout must identify to earn a "Respect Copyrights" merit patch : 3
Years that elapsed between the awarding of U.S. patents No. 1 and No. 1,000,000 : 75
Years between patents No. 6,000,000 and No. 7,000,000, awarded last year : 6
Factor by which male life-scientists are more likely to patent their findings than are their female counterparts : 2.5
Number of U.S. patents that have been issued for corporate tax-avoidance strategies : 32
Estimated percentage of the assets held by S&P 500 companies in 1980 and 2006, respectively, that were intangible : 20, 70
Minimum number of South Africans who do their banking entirely by mobile phone : 500,000
Number of Orthodox Israelis who subscribe to one rabbinically approved cell-phone service : 30,000
Average amount by which "kosher"-to-"kosher" calls are cheaper per minute than calls to non-plan numbers : 3¢
Number of members in the world's only remaining Shaker community : 4
Year by which South Korea intends to have a robot in every household : 2013
Amount a Rhode Island man received in a settlement last year over his faulty penile implant : $400,000
Number of years he has had an erection : 10
Percentage change since 1970 in the height of the National Christmas Tree : +63

Figures cited are the latest available as of November 2006. Sources are listed on page 104.
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READINGS

[Pensées]

IT WAS BEFORE WORDS WERE

From The Notebooks of Robert Frost, *edited by Robert Faggen, published this month by Harvard University Press. The fragments are culled from more than forty notebooks Frost left behind, containing writings dating from the 1890s to shortly before his death, in 1963.*

A sentence carries a certain number of words and those have their sound, but the sentence has a sound of its own apart from the words, which is the sentence proper. It was before words were. It still has existence without the embodiment of words in the cries of our nature.

In composing poetry I am packing up to go a long way on wings.

Story of the cigar box and the counter-revolutionary.
Story of the unhappy child at the amateur theatricals.
Story of not being chosen by the eagle for Jove's cup bearer.
Story of Darwinian suicides and Marxian murderers.
Story of the very poor man on fifteen a week for forty years.
Story of the very rich man in the Pullman car.
Story of the man who wouldn't let himself be lost by one fatal mistake. Blood poison, tetanus, syphilis.
Story of the equalitarian who thought it would be all right to use your literary reputation to get the better of an officious official.
Story of the campaign speech in favor of slavery.
Story of planned economy on Easter Island where the population was limited to nine hundred by killing either the newborn at one end or an old person at the other.
Story of the one-armed teacher who became first citizen of Glastonbury.
Story of the encounter with the man who thought too well of humanity to despair of its becoming utopian. Not just our faults, but our virtues stand in the way of the perfect state.
Story of Tristan da Cunha and the Circumnavigators.
Story of Joseph Albany's singing daughter.
Story of the hard drinker's disbelief in disinterestedness.
Story of the man who originated the slogan, No rivers to the sea.

If an idea for a poem comes to me when I am playing golf at the club, I just tell it to trot along for the present and come round to my office tomorrow morning. You come round to my office at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning and I'll write you down, you little rudiment, so you'll think you were always written down. Call on a man of business in his [illegible] of business.

Range of playfulness proof of real culture.

Crash. There goes another young ideal

BOY: You say you hate the word gem.

MAN: Not the word at all except as applied figuratively to a poem or picture.

BOY: What's your favorite word?

MAN: I have no favorite word.

BOY: My favorite words are silver and twilight. Some people think pavement is the most beautiful word in the language. Pav-e-ment—pav-e-ment. A boy at the Poetry Society last night had a set of poems all full of the words silver and twilight and frosted. I never heard anything I liked better.

MAN: The first thing frosted taken alone brings into my head is cake.

BOY: Don't!

Ages may vary a little. One may be a little better or worse than another. But it is not possible to get outside of the age you are in to judge it exactly. Indeed it is as dangerous to try to get outside of anything as large as an age as it would be to engorge a whole donkey. And the proof is the many who in the attempt have suffered a dilation from which the muscles of the mind have never been able to recover natural shape. They can't pick up anything delicate or small anymore. They can't use a pen. They have to use a typewriter. And they gape in agony. They can write huge gobs of raw sincerity.

Adventurous is not experimental. Experiment belongs to the laboratory. Adventure to life. Much of recent art has been merely experimental. It tries poetry with first one element then another omitted. It leaves out the head. Then it is too emotional. It leaves out the heart. Then it is too intellectual. It leaves out the feet. Then it is free verse. Adventure ends in the poorhouse. Experiment in the madhouse. Water spout theory of learning from above down from below up till it meets.

I thank the Lord for crudity, which is rawness, which is raw material, which is the part of life not yet worked up into form, or at least not worked all the way up. We meet with another fallacy of the foolish: having had a glimpse of finished art, they forever after pine for a society that shall be nothing but finished art—why not a world safe for good government and art—all things perfectly accomplished. An artist delights in roughness for what he can do to it. He's the brute who can knock the corners off the marble block. So also is the statesman politician: only the statesman works in a more protean mass of material that hardly holds any shape long enough for the craftsman to point it out and get credit for it. His material is a rolling mob. The poet's material is words that for all we say and feel against them are more manageable than men. You get a few words alone in a room and with plenty of time on your hands you can do almost your will on them.

It is interesting to remember that the paupers of a town used to be sold annually to the highest bidder for what work could be got out of them above the cost of their bed and board.

The saddest is not to see the poor longing for what they can't have, but to see a poor child happy in the possession of something too trifling for anybody else to want. When it is a grown woman it is worse. When it is a man it is worst of all. It is a sight to make me willing to bring down the universe in ruins—in carnage.

[Juvenilia]

REVOLUTION

By Vladimir Nabokov, published last winter in The Paris Review. *Nabokov, born in 1899, composed the poem in 1916 or 1917, before the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. The original first appeared in the Russian journal* Nashe Nasledie *in 1989. Translated from the Russian by Dmitri Nabokov.*

I found a lengthy word with a non-Russian ending,
unwittingly, inside a children's storybook,
and turned away from it with a strange kind of shudder.

That word contained the writhing of mysterious passions:
The growls, the howls, the whistles, and the senseless visions,
assassinated horses' vitreous eyes,

the sinuous streets, the evil-auguring constructions,
a man, incarnadine, prostrate upon his back,
the bestial motions of somebody's avid hands!

Yet, once upon a time, how sweet I used to find it
to read of funny rabbits who would dance in spring
with guinea pigs on stumps beneath the moon.

But now the fateful word above my childhood tales,
stormlike, has rushed! Gone is their old simplicity;
and terrifying thoughts, during the doomful nights,

now crepitate like gray newspaper sheets.



Conflagration, *ink on paper with digitized image, by Tom Burckhardt, whose work was on view last fall at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, in New York City.*

It should have gone thus: life, liberty, and the pursuit of pleasure. Happiness is too much to talk about. But pleasure now. Such as for instance wine, women, and song. Something you honestly find you can't help giving way to.

All the best people pulled out, we are told, and went to live in Canada. There was nothing left in the United States but the revolutionary rabble. But all that is intellectual, artistic, scientific, industrial, and political has occurred in the United States. Practically nothing in Canada. It proves either that nothing good comes of the best people or that nothing important can happen in a colonial state.

All the state is for is to protect the baby.

After babyhood self-improvement becomes a private matter. Physical, mental, or moral, please attend to it where I can't see you if you care to avoid my disgust. Public primping with a vanity glass is not the worst of it, though bad enough.

I have seen the younger generation in its day piss over the roof of a district schoolhouse. And they can beat us in bathing beauty contests and in pugilism and in eating between meals and in aversion to compromise. Their weakness is in not thinking of much to do unless we put them up to it. They lack initiative, enterprise, adventurousness. There lies our safety in the same society with them. Suppose they had the initiative to rise in their relative superiority (they have been chief gainers by the advance of medicine; the saving of life has been largely at the baby end) and demand that we meet them on their ground, say, naked in beauty contests. They'd have us skun of course. Let's not be dared out of our clothes by them whatever happens. Let's not throw away the advantage of keeping the comparison in the realm of brains. Let's keep our shirts on.

The father was hanged for killing the mother. Years afterward the son was hanged for killing a police officer. On the gallows he gave the address of two illegitimate sons of his own to the priest saying it would be interesting to follow them their lives—and see if hanging ran in families. Then he told the sheriff not to be so opposed to capital punishment as he heard he was (read it in newspapers).

Space is said to be circular. I don't know whether it is or not. I suspect the curvature of the mind, which makes us reason always in a circle, would make the universe look curved

even in its straightest lines. Some telescope will be strong enough for us to look at our own back hair.

The present is more derived from the future than from the past.

Of two people given their choice of living again ten thousand years hence or ten thousand years ago: one reasoned that he knew enough already of the past and so would choose the future, the other that he knew just enough of the past to want to know more and so he would take the past. The one who chose ten thousand years ago was sacrificed on an altar almost the moment he was born. The one who chose ten thousand years hence found himself the last of the human race and soon perished miserably of having nobody to talk to (a mental case).

The engineer said it was the easiest thing in the world for one of his profession to see the beauty of a mechanistic theory of the universe. He didn't need a God to explain things, yet when asked he couldn't remember having seen a machine with no one's hand on the lever of it, foot on the pedal. Every metaphor breaks down.

I was the calf that now I put into the back of the wagon to take to market.

True humility is a kind of carelessness that stays none too sure the mind is worth educating beyond the next idea, the body worth providing for beyond the next meal, and the soul worth saving beyond the momentary magnanimity. There is no humility at all in this religious anxiety for salvation here or hereafter. And what's the use of all this talk about it? We must come in with enough greed for punishment to give an opponent a solid satisfaction in the genuineness of the game. We may be irresistible or immovable as the case requires. We may be ambitious (but not too ambitious) to get something achieved clear away outside of us in the objective world, such as an elastic iridescence that floats a moment before bursting us into spray.

I had these higher thoughts long before I had to have them as a refuge in trouble.

That there should be a human race is a burst of force so absolutely different from anything else on earth or in the universe that I am too lost in wonder at it for finding fault with the details or questioning its worth. It may exist for the individuals of it to aim each for himself at getting to heaven. That may be its only purpose. But it would seem strange if the burst itself hadn't a destiny of its own that would become more and more apparent. It would be even sad if it was run for the sole purpose of seeing who could get out of it into a better world. Nonsense. I begin to feel sure sending people to Hell and Heaven is our strongest way of saying how good or bad they are when other words fail. We say Go to Hell to our enemies and Go to Heaven to our friends.

[Reckoning]

TRIUMPH OF THE SHILL

From a 1979 interview with Arno Breker, a German sculptor favored by Hitler, conducted by journalist André Müller. The interview originally appeared in Müller's book Disrobements *and was published in English for the first time last August by* signandsight. *The first major exhibition of Breker's sculptures in Germany since World War II opened last July at Schleswig-Holstein-Haus in Schwerin. Breker died in 1991. Translated from the German by Ian Pepper.*

ANDRÉ MÜLLER: I have the impression you're immensely dissatisfied. What's the source of this dissatisfaction?

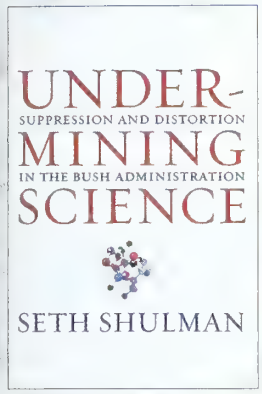
ARNO BREKER: You know, you can't just say that I made my large figures out of sheer perverseness. My artistic situation has been completely devalued by political history, cast in a false light. I don't make large figures out of megalomania, as many people assume.

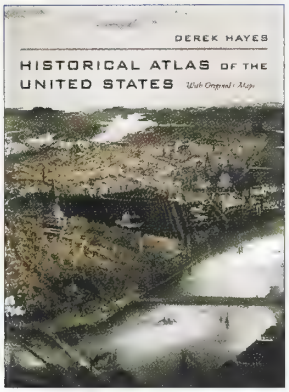
MÜLLER: I don't assume that. But I will say that your figures express your client's, Hitler's, megalomania.

BREKER: The contents of my art were entirely my own affair. There was no political background. The origin of my work is the beauty of the human body. The strengthening of the body, the vitality of sports, a hunger for nature, even for a culture of nudity, nude bathing out of doors: the feeling of being safely enclosed in a shell in which we travel through the world.

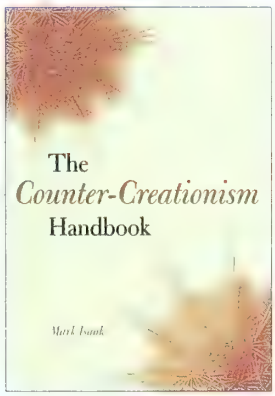
MÜLLER: So nude bathing was an important source of beauty for you. That's certainly consistent with the kind of twaddle the National Socialists liked to peddle to people: that everything would be grand, that a thousand years of paradise were just around the corner. A couple of years later, everything fell apart. I want to know what you felt in 1945 when you realized that these people whom you'd been with on a daily basis had murdered six million Jews. Was your image

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of the human being still perfectly intact? Or did you repress it all?

BREKER: Today I've repressed it. Because I'm still living, and I have the drive to develop further. I retain my enthusiasm for beautiful people. Last Sunday, I watched a tennis match. The players would have been superb models for me. When I look at these athletes, my ideal image of humanity is reinforced. Shouldn't the artist disclose the inner beauty of the human form before all else? I've come to realize that the man who is outwardly perfect is also inwardly beautiful. I had such a perfect man in the decathlete Gustav Stührk. He was the model for most of my male nudes.

MULLER: Could you also talk with him?

BREKER: Yes, of course. He was highly educated.

MULLER: If he really was a brilliant man, then you failed to capture his intellectual qualities in your sculptures. Have you ever done a bust of him?

BREKER: No, never.

MULLER: So you were only interested in his body?

BREKER: Yes, he was the best-looking athlete in Germany at the time. Decathletes are uniformly developed. Tennis players aren't developed like that, neither are sprinters. They have well-developed muscles in their legs, but the upper body and arms are not correspondingly well developed. I aspire toward the divine, the perfected human being.

MULLER: But then Gerhart Hauptmann, whose portrait you did, was not divine, nor was Cocteau. He was rather thin.

BREKER: An intellectual type like Hauptmann, who writes books, can't possibly spend enough hours every day cultivating his body. That's why in antiquity they set the heads of emperors on the bodies of athletes. I'm quite sure Pericles was no athlete, nor Socrates, but they certainly had interesting heads.

MÜLLER: Then you should have set Hauptmann's head on Stührk's body. But Hitler might not have liked that. Your mistake is to perpetually confuse Ancient Greece with National Socialist Germany. The political situation and the situation of art in Germany were totally different from those in antiquity. Hitler eliminated the artist and heralded a utilitarian art. He sought to channel what you call the "stream of average talents" into a solitary, officially sanctioned direction.

BREKER: Yes, there he was mistaken. He told me himself he'd been wrong. Hitler was an artist by nature, and if fate hadn't driven him into the arms of politics, he would have become a painter. The measures he took had purely political motives. He wanted to bring art closer to the people, and he could only do that with an intact image of the human form. He turned away only from those who transformed the image of the human form, to an extent destroying it, occasionally disintegrating it. He resisted this. His mistake was to have thrown out the baby with the bathwater.

MÜLLER: Whether you wanted to or not, you fulfilled the intentions of your client with exactitude. That's not a reproach, it's a fact.

BREKER: Michelangelo received commissions from the popes.

MÜLLER: Yes, but he didn't adopt the ideology of the papacy as the content of his creative work. On the contrary, he used the papacy to realize his own conceptions. No one denies your technical abilities. What distinguishes you from Michelangelo is the absence of any idea. That's why you've been so incapable of resisting all manner of external influences.

BREKER: Look here, I wouldn't have made so many heroes if I hadn't had to produce the reliefs for the grand arch in Berlin, a memorial to German warriors of all epochs.

MULLER: So Hitler wanted heroes, and you delivered them.

BREKER: Yes, what was I supposed to do? Look, if you're a sculptor with a penchant for the

[Poem]

TENDERNESS

By Zbigniew Herbert, from his last collection, Epilogue to a Storm *(1998). The poem appears in English for the first time in* The Collected Poems: 1956–1998, *to be published next month by Ecco. Herbert, who died in 1998, was the author of nine volumes of verse, including* Report from the Besieged City *(1983). Translated from the Polish by Alissa Valles.*

In the end what can I do with you—tenderness
tenderness for birds and for people for a stone
you should sleep in a palm in the eye's depths
that's your place may you be woken by no one

You spoil everything you get it back to front
you contract a tragedy into a pocket romance
you change the high-toned flight of a thought
into sobbing and exclamations into moaning

To describe is to murder because it's your role
to sit in the darkness of a cold and empty hall
to sit solitary where reason blithely rattles on
with mist in a marble eye tears running down



"Untitled," by Sally Mann, from Deep South, *published in 2005 by Bulfinch Press.*

monumental, now and then you have to produce a large sculpture. It's only human. You could call it human weakness. The impulse toward monumentality is a part of me. The monumental is my sickness.

MÜLLER: The monstrosity of your figures is a function not merely of their size but of their habitus, their cramped pathos. The roots of your susceptibility to National Socialism lay in the fact that failure never manifests itself in your image of humanity. Of course, that suited the Nazis, for whom the possibility of defeat had to be repressed. Quasi-religious sentiments of sacrifice replaced fears of death, and out of gratitude for this liberation from fear, millions allowed themselves to be slaughtered. In reality, human existence is a thoroughly broken one, full of hesitations and doubts.

BREKER: Not for me. There is no hint of decadence in me, you know.

MÜLLER: Human doubt, fear, ambivalence—you call that decadence?

BREKER: The disintegration of the human image, as we are experiencing it today, that is undoubtedly a manifestation of decadence. If you like, you might classify me among the naive.

MÜLLER: Precisely that is the tragedy of your life. Because you arrived at a time when there was only one thing that was entirely impermissible—namely, being naive.

BREKER: I wasn't in a position to choose the moment of my birth. Otherwise I would have waited.

MÜLLER: Or better, set the date back in time.

BREKER: Fair enough. Today, it's over. Today, things are quiet, the quiet before the storm. Today, humanity is only occupied with various materials. Someone takes a piece of railroad track and sets it on a lawn, and that's supposed to be art.

[Deliberation]

FOUR OUT OF FIVE PEERS AGREE

From the October 31 debate in Britain's House of Lords. In preparation for the session, Lord Selsdon prepared a one-page fact sheet on chewing gum pollution. Lord Rooker is a minister of state for environment, food and rural affairs.

LORD SELSDON: What steps will Her Majesty's Government take to reduce the level of urban pollution caused by the illegal depositing of used chewing gum on pavements and streets?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, chewing gum was defined as litter in 2005 to enable fixed penalty notices to be issued to individuals caught disposing of gum inappropriately.

LORD SELSDON: My Lords, I am most grateful to the Minister for that fairly bland reply, and I hope that he will not find my supplementary question unhealthy. Is the Minister aware of the results of my research, undertaken in preparation for this Question, into the life cycle of the chewing gum? As he knows, it starts life in a wrapper, with a nice notice on the outside: "Please use this wrapper prior to disposal." It then enters the mouth, where it is mixed with saliva, often with respiratory pathogens, and occasionally with blood, if you have recently been to a dentist for teeth cleaning. It is masticated and then given its exit in the form of excrement. This excrement is either spat onto the pavement or disposed of in other ways and carries with it certain dangers. As it hits the pavement, it is commonly or colloquially known as a "gum turd." This gum turd may retain viruses and bacteria for as long as it is wet. Then it becomes a "flat" and is cleaned up at a cost of maybe 50p per piece, or less if there is a major discount for thirty pieces per square meter. Will the Minister confirm that there is no possibility of people catching a contagious disease from a gum turd, a flat, or a stain? Is he aware that underneath us now, in the House of Lords entrance chamber, there are three pieces of gum? Would he inspect them tonight, to make sure that the evidence is not withdrawn?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, on the latter point, most certainly not. The noble Lord raises a serious issue. Gum is not biodegradable. The manufacturers keep promising to make biodegradable gum, but we see no evidence that they are doing anything to that effect. It lasts on the street, I am told, for something like three or four years. It is unsightly if it gets on clothes and shoes. It is a very antisocial way of disposing of something that one has purchased. Ninety-one percent of our high streets are affected, according to samples. It is a serious issue, and it is going to look a right mess, particularly all over London, as we go toward the Olympics.

BARONESS MILLER OF CHILTHORNE DOMER: My Lords, the Irish have persuaded Wrigley's to donate 7 million euros to clean up the problem. Do this Government have any intention of persuading Wrigley's to do the same in the U.K.?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, we are going to learn from the Irish work. I understand that part of the money will be spent on a contract with one of the universities to try to find a way of manufacturing biodegradable gum.

LORD HOYLE: My Lords, I do not think matters are helped by the sight of football managers chewing away on TV. What kind of message does that give to the young people watching?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, we do not know they are chewing gum; it might be something else.

LORD ROGAN: My Lords, I have long felt that a levy or tax should be placed on gum to the tune of, say, a penny per piece, and the revenue raised then distributed to local authorities to fund the clear-up of the mess. Will the Government give that consideration?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, we have, and it has been dismissed on the basis that people who are antisocial enough to dispose of gum this way will have their conscience eased on the basis that they have paid for it to be cleaned up. We want them to change their behavior in the first place.

BARONESS GARDNER OF PARKES: My Lords, is the Minister aware that the cost to Westminster City Council, which has one team working on this with what is called a "gum blaster," is £100,000 per year?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, obviously too many antisocial, uncaring people are disposing of gum this way when there are other ways of disposing of it.

BARONESS MASHAM OF ILTON: My Lords, is the Minister aware that gum can get into the grooves of wheelchairs, pushchairs, and prams?

LORD ROOKER: My Lords, the noble Baroness is absolutely right. In some ways, gum might be an antisocial product, but it is the disposing of it that is antisocial. There is no question about it.

LORD FAULKNER OF WORCESTER: My Lords, this problem will get worse as more people chew nicotine gum as they attempt to give up smoking.

LORD MARLESFORD: My Lords, perhaps when the Government introduce their next public order Bill, they should include a provision whereby the police have authority to issue a fixed penalty of four hours of litter picking to any litter lout.

LORD HOYLE: My Lords, my noble friend will agree with me that this is a very sticky Question, of course—

NOBLE LORDS: Oh!

[Fronting]

EBONY AND IVORY

From an interview with Terry Anderson, a radio host and founder of Choose Black America, published in the Fall 2006 issue of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report. *Choose Black America, an African-American anti-immigration group, is an offshoot of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which has ties to white-supremacist organizations and founded You Don't Speak for Me!, a Hispanic anti-immigration group.*

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: You have a lot of white supporters, but how successful is your message in the black community?

TERRY ANDERSON: It's hard, brother. See, black folks don't have no focus. We hold a town hall meeting about illegal immigration, and they want to talk about the schools, parking, police brutality. And then you get that old minority bullshit about, "We minorities, they minorities, so we all got to stick together," and, "The white man hard on them just like he hard on us." Right now, the white man they are talking about is Mexicans! It used to be the Klan, now it's the Klan with a tan. Then I hear these handkerchief-head, slave-catching Negro leaders who say we have to form an alliance, like the NAACP. What a bunch of outdated, worthless people. They are selling us out.

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: You say your job is to make people angry. Are you concerned that anger will lead to violence?

ANDERSON: I'm not talking about violence in the streets. I'm totally against that, although I predict it. If this thing ain't fixed, there will be a race riot in Los Angeles the likes of which you have never seen. We are now a third-class people. The Latinos have taken every political gain we made. We had better representation from some of these white mayors than we'll ever get from the Mexicans. Not only don't they care, but the Hispanics have disdain for the black population. They don't want us here.

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: On your show, you focus on the cultural impact of immigration, not the economic consequences for the black community.

ANDERSON: The guy who lives up the corner from me—from El Salvador—got rows of corn growing in the front yard. Corn! Rows of corn. The guy two doors from him has about twenty chickens in the back yard. On the next block up, there's a goat tied up in the back yard. They wash their clothes and hang them on the front fence—not even on a clothesline. Each house has seven cars, so there's nowhere to park. And then there's the mariachi parties, where they play just as loud as they can until four o'clock in the morning. All the billboards in my neighborhood are now in Spanish. None of that is economics. It's all cultural, and it's a problem.

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: How do you feel about the stands of many Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups against illegal immigration?

ANDERSON: I read the stuff they write—it's like I wrote it. It's not racially prejudiced. Usually it's a nationalist thing. They're a bunch of redneck, racist motherfuckers, but the statements they make are true. I have black people tell me, "Man, you saying the same thing the KKK is saying." Well, then we're both right. I'm sorry. We happen to agree on this. And I think a lot of white supremacists are softening toward us, because now they got a new enemy.

[Spot]

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN REPUBLICAN

"Don't Go There," a script for one of twenty-four radio advertisements targeting black voters aired during last fall's election campaigns, produced by America's PAC.

DENNIS: The night's still young! Let's head to the river and try out the slots!

MICHAEL: Naw, I gotta get home. I promised Kathleen I'd help the kids with their homework.

DENNIS: You know, the Army really changed you.

MICHAEL: War does that. It makes you value what you're fighting for.

DENNIS: So I suppose you want me to vote Republican, like you and your soldier buddies.

MICHAEL: Not at all. You've got no reason to.

DENNIS: How's that?

MICHAEL: Well, you don't work for a living. So what do you care about keeping taxes low?

DENNIS: Hey, that's cold.

MICHAEL: You cheat on your wife. So why would you want an amendment to protect marriage?

DENNIS: A man's got to do what a man's got to do.

MICHAEL: And I know you're not going to enlist to defend your country.

DENNIS: Not everyone's as slow as you are, bro.

MICHAEL: And if you make a little mistake with one of your hos, you'll want to dispose of the problem toot sweet, no questions asked, right?

DENNIS: Naw, that's too cold. I don't snuff my own seed.

MICHAEL: Huh. Really? Well, maybe [illegible] have a reason to vote Republican!

[Sting]

EVERY WORD YOU SAY

From emails and other documents related to Project Kona II, a surveillance operation run by private investigators hired by Hewlett-Packard last January to identify a source of leaks of confidential HP information to the press. Under the supervision of Patricia Dunn, chair of HP's board of directors, and Kevin Hunsaker, an HP senior counsel and ethics officer, the firm spied on board members as well as nine journalists, including reporters at the New York Times, BusinessWeek, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and* CNET News. *In October, Dunn, Hunsaker, and three investigators, who obtained targets' phone records on false pretenses, were charged in California on four felony counts, including wire fraud, conspiracy, and identity theft. Dawn Kawamoto is a* CNET *reporter. Ronald DeLia is a private investigator. Anthony Gentilucci was an HP security manager. The project eventually identified HP board member George Keyworth II as the source.*

The team commenced the investigation by conducting a detailed review of the article. It attributes the following to the source: "By the time the lectures were done at 10 P.M., we were pooped and went to bed."

- Use of the term "lectures." This is an academic term, rarely used in the business environment. Keyworth is the only board member with an academic background.
- "We were pooped." This is an unusual term. A number of witnesses indicated that Keyworth often uses colloquial terms in conversation.

The content of the Kawamoto articles indicates that Keyworth is most likely the source.

INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY UPDATE:

- Contact established covertly with Dawn Kawamoto via a nontraceable Hotmail email account.
- Pretrash inspection is in progress for key subjects of the investigation.
- Feasibility studies are in progress for undercover operations (clerical, cleaning company employees) in CNET and *WSJ* offices.

FROM: KEVIN HUNSAKER

Hi guys, If/when we put the tracer in an email to the reporter, is there any chance it will be discovered? Is it something a firewall could pick up, or antivirus software? Would it make it through HP's security and get to, say, my email? If CNET knows something like that was sent to them, we could end up with some seriously bad publicity.

FROM: RON DELIA

Team, Surveillance teams were in place from 9 A.M. to noon, and no activity was observed at either residence. It appears DK has not returned from vacation. We waited in the event the family was sleeping in. However, by noon the newspapers were not picked up from the driveway. A pretext call to the residence was not answered. Surveillance activity at GK's residence revealed no movement as well.

FROM: KEVIN HUNSAKER
TO: ANTHONY GENTILUCCI

Hi, Tony. How does Ron get cell and home phone records? Is it all aboveboard?

FROM: ANTHONY GENTILUCCI
TO: KEVIN HUNSAKER

The methodology utilized is social engineering. Investigators call operators under some ruse to obtain the call record over the phone. The operator shouldn't give it out, and that person is liable in a sense. I think it's on the edge, but aboveboard.

FROM: KEVIN HUNSAKER
TO: ANTHONY GENTILUCCI

I shouldn't have asked.

[Teleplay]

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Scenes adapted from Remember Your Dreams, or Guantánamo, *a movie aired November 4 on Al-Kawthar TV in Iran. The film begins at Guantánamo Bay, where Mustafa, a Lebanese doctor captured in Afghanistan, is being detained. He befriends U.S. Army Corporal Jennifer Smith, an Arabic interpreter who witnesses his torture at the hands of her superior, Major Rosenthal. Through the efforts of Jennifer and André Mahfuz, a French lawyer, Mustafa is released and returns to Lebanon. Sometime later, Jennifer and Rosenthal, both now reassigned to Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, visit Lebanon. There Jennifer enlists Mustafa's aid in breaking into Rosenthal's hotel room to steal a secret CD. Translated from the Arabic by the Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute.*

[*In* ROSENTHAL's *Beirut hotel room,* JENNIFER *and* MUSTAFA *search frantically.*]

JENNIFER: [*Holding up a CD*] I found it.

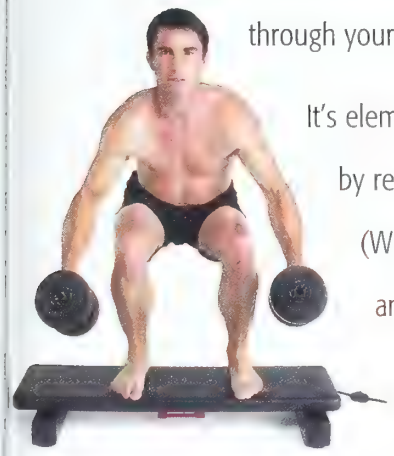
MUSTAFA: Great!

JENNIFER: Before the events of 9/11, I had a normal life. I graduated from Columbia Uni-



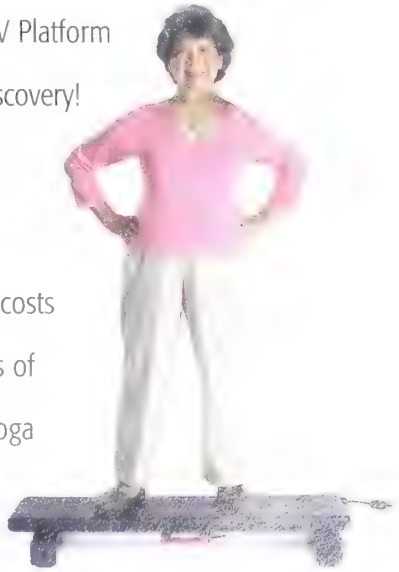
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"La Pouna," from the Patrimonio a la Deriva: Los Ingenios series, by Atelier Morales, whose work was on display last month at Design Miami

versity in Arabic literature. I worked at a language institute. My fiancé, Richard, had an important position in the twin towers. Only one week was left before our wedding, and then it happened. Richard was one of the thousands who died there. I decided to volunteer for the Army and dedicate my life to fighting terrorism. A year later, they sent me to Guantánamo. There, I felt something was wrong. After that I was transferred to Abu Ghraib. That situation is even worse. The U.S. Army entered Iraq under the pretext of liberating its people, but so far there have been 100,000 victims of our attack, women and men who had nothing to do with Al Qaeda or terrorism. In Iraq, I feel like I'm being laughed at. The oil companies and the security agencies signed contracts with the Pentagon and the CIA. They pocketed millions of dollars. When I found out that Major Rosenthal was among the founders of these organizations, I couldn't stand it any longer. There is a Chinese saying that goes: When you save a person's life, you are forever responsible for his life. This is what happened between you and me, Mustafa. If I had the slightest suspicion that you were connected to Al Qaeda, I would have killed you without hesitation. [*Handing* MUSTAFA *the CD*] You better take this and go alone.

MUSTAFA: What about you?

JENNIFER: I have to think about what I should do.

MUSTAFA: From now on, you are in danger. We must remain together, at least until we get the CD to the press. You've done a great thing. Thank you.

[*Out the window,* MUSTAFA *and* JENNIFER *see a car pull up.*]

JENNIFER: Mustafa, it's Rosenthal.

MUSTAFA: You'd better go, and I'll stall them. Take the CD with you and get it quickly to the media.

[*Flashback: in a Guantánamo prison,* ROSENTHAL *interrogates* MUSTAFA.]

ROSENTHAL: Listen, you asshole, your food strike won't do you any good. Another dead dog won't hurt a thing.

MUSTAFA: I have the right to an attorney, or at least to be treated according to the Geneva Conventions.

ROSENTHAL: The Geneva Conventions apply to prisoners of war, not dirty terrorists responsible for the destruction of the twin towers, like yourself.

MUSTAFA: I'm a doctor, and a member of Doctors Without Borders. When I came to Kabul, I treated many wounded who opposed Al Qaeda.

ROSENTHAL: You are one dirty pig. We have witnesses who say you cooperated with Al Qaeda and the Taliban. And you don't want to confess, but I know exactly how to make you do that. [*Extinguishes cigarette on* MUSTAFA*'s back;* MUSTAFA *screams.*]

[*Back in Beirut:* ROSENTHAL, *with his men, approaches* MUSTAFA.]

ROSENTHAL: I knew we'd meet again, Mustafa.

MUSTAFA: This will be our last meeting, Major. [*Pulls out a gun.*] Nobody moves or I blow this murderer's brains out. Drop your weapons! Drop your weapons! It's payback time!

ROSENTHAL: What are you talking about? You were our guest in Guantánamo, and when we knew that you were innocent, we set you free. So I owe you nothing, but you stole something from me, and you have to pay.

MUSTAFA: At least when we expose the CD, blood will not have been spilled for nothing.

[ROSENTHAL's *men shoot* MUSTAFA. *He falls, wounded.*]

ROSENTHAL: Finish him. I want to send him to Corporal Smith as a Christmas present.

[ROSENTHAL *exits.* MUSTAFA, *who has been playing dead, shoots the men and escapes.*]

[*In a hotel room,* JENNIFER, MUSTAFA, *and his French lawyer,* ANDRÉ MAHFUZ, *sit in front of a computer.*]

MUSTAFA: According to American research on Arab culture, Arabs regard sex as something personal that should not be made public. Humiliating the prisoners and taking degrading photos of them can turn them into spies, out of fear that the photos will reach their families and friends. This is what Rosenthal and his men are after.

ANDRÉ: What photos?

[MUSTAFA *inserts the CD into the computer.*]

ANDRÉ: The CD won't open, Mustafa. It is asking for a password.

MUSTAFA: My God—Jennifer, do you remember the tattoo on Rosenthal's arm?

JENNIFER: On his right wrist? What about it?

MUSTAFA: The image on the computer screen looks just like it.

JENNIFER: It's an image used by Satan worshippers. I've seen it on the Internet.

MUSTAFA: Satan? I think "Satan" is the password.

[ANDRÉ *types in password. Slide show of Abu Ghraib prison photos begins.*]

JENNIFER: [*To* ANDRÉ] Honestly, I envy you French people, who haven't drowned in this filthy swamp.

[*A press conference.*]

REPORTER: Could you comment on the pictures of Abu Ghraib prison printed in the newspaper?

ROSENTHAL: No comment. [*Answers phone.*] Hello.

MUSTAFA: [*Phoning from an airport*] You're finished, Rosenthal. Start digging your own grave.

ROSENTHAL: Did you think anything would change if the truth about the photographs was revealed?

MUSTAFA: At least people all over the world will discover the crimes you and your superiors committed in the name of democracy.

[Musicology]

AMBIENT PARKING LOT

By Pamela Lu, from a work in progress excerpted in the Spring issue of Chicago Review. *Lu is the author of* Pamela: A Novel *and* The Private Listener, *a chapbook from Corollary Press.*

The recording of "Ambient Parking #25" went off without a hitch. Production efforts approached the sublime. We watched in rapture as the parking lot cooperated with our long-armed mike and seemed to relax into the session. The seven-inch vinyl single was released two and a half weeks later on an indie label underwritten by the University of Kraków. Played back, the music emitted a low earthy growl, privileging bass-level amplitude over quasi-narrative pop disappointment. Stripped down to essentials, the noise had the pounding attitude of reverb without its inbred conservatism. As always, a tough-minded aesthetic kept our minimalist concept intact, while the lusciousness of the infinite loop made even the shoegazers smile. With just a little filtering, the empty landscape managed to express its industrially generated solipsism and came to overshadow even the engine gunning and trunk popping of SUVs.

It was a watershed moment in our recording career. The success of "Ambient Parking #25" buoyed our spirits and encouraged us to reconsider our earlier failures among "Ambient Parking #1" through "Ambient Parking #24." We slipped underground and regrouped to discuss proper ambition. After several cycles of soul-searching, we deemed ourselves ready to produce a full-length album. We sold our Dodge Dart, purchased sturdy walking shoes, and took only public transit in order to develop rigorous objectivity vis-à-vis our subject matter. A period of intensive study ensued.

We positioned ourselves near the entrances of major garage structures in the core of the city to observe the tonal differences between midweek and weekend parking. We compared the tempos of residential versus commercial parking and noted the modal distinction between those who parked within twenty feet of their destination and those who parked in order to walk toward a controlled, enclosed area, usually a faux downtown or pedestrian marketplace. These two populations, as it turned out, were separated culturally and socioeconomically by a chromatic half step. The seductive dissonance of songs-at-war, it seemed, had not been lost on certain city architects.

We rode the elevators to roof level, where prime parking spots and a crosshatched walk zone led to scenic aerial dining. We lurked in the short-term parking garages of local airports. We patrolled the grounds of self-attended corner lots, where visitors observed the grimy divisions of cracked asphalt and inserted dollar bills into numbered slots on metal collection boxes. Some of us could be seen in the predawn hours wearing orange visibility vests, unlatching the chain rope that prohibited the public from parking in a restricted lot. Others of us staged political experiments involving radical re-striping of the yellow and white lines dividing vehicle spaces. One morning in the faculty-reserved lot of a local elementary school, all lines were seen to form closed rectangles, rendering legal entry into the spaces impossible. A state of emergency was declared and all educational activities were halted for the better part of a week.

We quit our day jobs and took turns riding shotgun with the meter maids in their electric patrol carts. By sundown, we could distinguish at a glance between red-zone, loading-zone, time-out, peak-hour, street-sweeping, and hillside-curbing violations. We issued twenty-five citations in the name of "The Project," each one hand-numbered and signed. Ticket proceeds were wired promptly to our Canoga Park bank account to be tapped for food, bail, impending gender reassignment operations, and the like. Refreshed and funded, we sprawled into the suburbs and exurbs, commuting by rideshare. We reconnoitered the perimeter of a fashion outlet mall and tested the sound characteristics of each parking zone. We boxed up our demo tapes and hitchhiked with dignity to the nearest all-you-can-eat buffet. Commanding office hours there for the better part of the day, we plotted the emergence of a new cadence of parking—not just the parking lot but the hum of engines in idle, not just the cars in action but the action without the cars: the pure gestalt of parking itself. We dispatched our most gifted members to the interior, to pose as valet parking escorts. Unfortunately, none of them qualified for the job.

Then the economy collapsed and our theory was discarded in favor of an aesthetic of banal scarcity. Secular pragmatism replaced the faith-based work ethic, which had once led to the lush arpeggios of grocery bags being loaded into the trunks of single-driver vehicles, along with car doors thumping to a close in the late-afternoon sunlight. Energy costs soared and we began to ration usage of our recording equipment. When blackouts rolled through the region, we huddled in the hydrangea bushes and meditated on the functional relationship between white stripes and klieg lighting.

One day without warning, terrorists attacked several government buildings, including the basement level of the county DMV. We rushed to the scene with fluorescent cones, converting the DMV garage into a triage center. The injuries we witnessed there illustrated just how easily the luxury zone of the parking lot could be extended to slaughter. Over the next seven months, we were flooded with media images showing the impact of retaliatory air strikes and a coordinated ground campaign on so-called enemy soil.

[Obituary]

FAREWELL TOUR

From a posting on Chicago Rash Audio Potential, the website of Malachi Ritscher, who burned himself to death November 3 on a Chicago expressway during morning rush-hour traffic to protest the war in Iraq. A homemade sign reading THOU SHALT NOT KILL *was found by his remains.*

Chicago resident Malachi Ritscher passed away last (day of week), a (tragic, baffling, mundane) death at the age of (subtract 1954 from current year). He was a modern-day Renaissance man, except instead of attaining success in several fields, he consistently failed and didn't worry too much about it. He collected and played many exotic instruments, without mastering any, wrote poetry that was never published, painted watercolors in a naive style, and participated passionately in the antiwar and free-speech movements. He worked with friends in a band called Wantnot and recorded and released an album in 1990. The cover art received an award from the American Center for Design, which did not increase sales. One of his proudest achievements was a searing hot sauce recipe, which he registered under the brand name "Undead Sauce—Re-Animate Yourself!" It was a blend of tropical peppers, which he grew indoors in five-gallon buckets, and a few secret ingredients (pomegranate, pistachio, and cinnamon) that gave it a unique flavor. He dreamed of being a writer, and the handwritten manuscript of his fictional autobiography, *Farewell Tour,* was under consideration by publishers. It had a general theme of universal aloneness and was controversial for seeming to endorse suicide after age fifty. He had many acquaintances but few friends, and he wrote his own obituary, because no one else really knew him. Reportedly, his last words were "Sebud . . . oops."



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND APHELEIA, NEW YORK CITY

"Cleveland, Ohio, 2003," by Brian Ulrich, from MP3: Midwest Photographers Publication Project, *published in October by Aperture and the Museum of Contemporary Photography, in Chicago.*

Singularly repulsed and attracted, we commissioned a troupe of our dancer friends to stage Butoh-inflected body movements simulating the trauma of the violence. With eyes drooped down and mouths twisted into ghastly shapes, the dancers manifested the expressions of citizens trapped in the rubble of urban warfare. Meanwhile, we played the role of embedded journalists, inserting audiotapes of convoy trucks in the process of backing up, parking, unloading supplies, and being otherwise absorbed in the business of large-scale First World logistics. We procured a white utility van from a police auction and programmed it to circumscribe and videotape the performances at a rate of 1.26 miles per hour.

Some dancers explored the effects of compulsive news watching and blogging, while others engaged in the primacy of the open wound. Miming the heat-driven disintegration of human flesh into powdery dust, they presented historical collapse through a collective essay of anatomical movement. Like lovers and enablers, we mopped up their sweat and tended to their agonies. When their suffering threatened to plateau, we pushed forth convincing stage props of shrapnel and rocket flares to enhance the verisimilitude of their contortions.

A hushed audience, generated by word of mouth, began to gather respectfully. One dancer's performance in particular gave rise to intolerable feelings. Enacting the plight of a disaster victim, she had placed herself inside the wreckage of a crushed vehicle. With her legs pinned together and her arms wedged against her chest, she conjured up a pathos of immobility. Her choreography was subtle and wrenching in nature. She began by executing a series of muscular convulsions, emanating from the pit of her stomach and rippling upward, to dislodge a cell phone from her breast pocket. By rocking her elbows left and right, she nudged the instrument, millimeter by millimeter, along the length of her forearms, until it arrived at her hands. For a quarter of an hour, her fingers simply wriggled in the air, prompting a few of us to swoon from suspense. At last, her fingertips touched down on the keypad. She attempted the three-digit emergency plea followed by the speed-dialing of loved ones, yet her appeals were rebuffed every time. A courteous prerecorded

voice explained that, due to heavy network traffic, her call could not be completed at this time.[1]

Distressed by the spectacle, we prayed for a swift end to the performance, but to no avail. The dancer was committed to the integrity of her suffering, and we in turn were bound to the extremity of her commitment. Over the next ten hours, her fingers sashayed across the keypad to invoke ever more elaborate and futile combinations of numbers. Her solitude was consummate and philosophic, matching the solitude of the parking lot after it had been emptied of industrial noise and marked for death. As she punched in the numbers, the space between her fingers, the phone, and the wreckage was filled in with *ambience*, a covert backdrop of collective amnesia and white noise impeding her efforts to secure voice contact with a savior. Thus did her motions of survival approach the sublime abstraction of art. Converted, we stood by in admiration and horror, safeguarding her self-expression and shooing away the philistines who threatened to rescue her with the Jaws of Life.

To our amazement, the number of spectators only grew over time. They squatted in tight clusters with blankets and warm refreshment, digging in for their wordless vigil. By the eleventh hour, battery levels in the dancer's phone had dropped to critical, dimming the LCD and plunging our stage view into darkness; sound lingered on as our sole medium of recognition. The pressing of alphanumeric keys continued to reach our hearing, though in fainter tones and at reduced tempo. Sighs and groans sang forth at intervals from the dancer, interspersed with spasms of belabored breathing. We entered a stage of exalted anticipation, straining our ears for the onset of silence, which we imagined would signal the apotheosis of the performance.

Suddenly, all sound inside the wreckage puckered into a pause and then, just as quietly, ceased. The staged death of the dancer gradually registered with the audience, but our astonishment at what we had originally conceived as a larger-than-life experience was soon replaced with emptiness. The subsequent dismantling of the set was similarly anticlimactic, yet worthy of note. Some of us waited and wept in solemn queues to give the dancer hugs as she emerged from her post, hungry and shivering and too weary for words. Others lunged forward to attack the wreckage in a spasm of fury. A few of us, however, turned away and shuddered in a corner with eyes cast dreadfully to the ground, because we had witnessed — in the cosmic space of time between the onslaught of disaster and the reinstatement of the parking lot— the living performer become a thing.[2]

The performance haunted us for several weeks, then depressed us for many more. On the street, proponents of ágitprop celebrated our collaborative efforts by distributing leaflets in our honor. Precocious art students were spotted wearing T-shirts commemorating the event. Eschewing the fantare, our dancer friends packed up and retreated to a co-op in the composers' quarter of the former East Berlin. Six weeks later, they resurfaced on the front lawn of our nation's capitol, where they had choreographed a massive sit-in against the war. From a semi-secure wireless location on the southwest corner of the lawn, they called our flat, but none of us felt remotely well enough to pick up the phone.

We languished in curious isolation for some time, venturing out only to gather newspapers and pilfer milk. At last, dawn arrived and a slender shaft of light gleamed upon our darkest hour. A self-controlled efficiency lumbered into our consciousness, if only to mask our malaise. New projects arose on the horizon, as we extracted inspiration from the twentieth-century coterie of artists formerly known as the avant-garde. We became devoted students of our dreams and sought to fulfill their uncanny expectations in waking life. The appearance of a red trombone in one of our dreams prompted us to debate its significance over breakfast the next morning. We reviewed our listening knowledge of several trombone concertos, hoping to dredge up subconscious origins of insight and meaning. We filled our windows with hundreds of origami trombones and the spectacle soon drew a sidewalk following, garnering boxed write-ups in the free downtown weekly. While we prowled restlessly upstairs, controversy erupted on the sidewalk and added a few beats to the word on the street: *What madness had seized the Ambient Parkers now? Would they turn acoustic and remix "Ambient Parking #25" with horns? Had they given up pure ambience for the easy listening of Carnegie Hall?* ■

[1] *Although we had prepared an ambient soundtrack to complement the performance, we chose not to play it, relying purely on sounds generated by the dancer and her cell phone. We hoped the effect would challenge our assumptions about the range of audibility associated with stillness (i.e., the conventional parked position*

[2] *In retrospect, it would have been far better to have used the projection of a puppet rather than a live performer on the set, as in those serial dramas and films derived from a uniquely Asiatic sensibility, in which introspection requires a collective look backward into generations enclosed by regret and longing (through the use of flashbacks and hesitant dialogue inching bit by bit behind a mask of shame), and in which a wooden acting style is used to embody the depersonalized moment (or the moment of noisy stillness), where the effects of trauma have finally spread in close-up over the entire face and the resulting countenance, devoid of all Western forms of expression, is assumed by a figure who, having survived one too many atrocities along with a historical experience so annihilating as to arouse the sympathy of future spectators, is forced to step back and cover his face*

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Dr. Peter C. Mancall is a Professor of History and Anthropology at the University of Southern California and Director of the USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute. He has received two teaching excellence awards at the University of Kansas and in 2004 was named a Gamma Sigma Alpha Professor of the Year by the University of Southern California.

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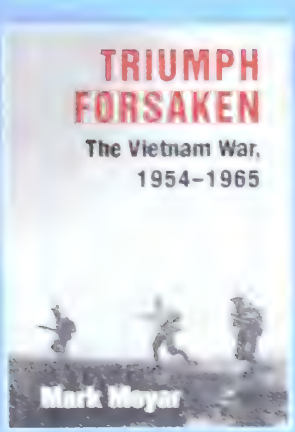
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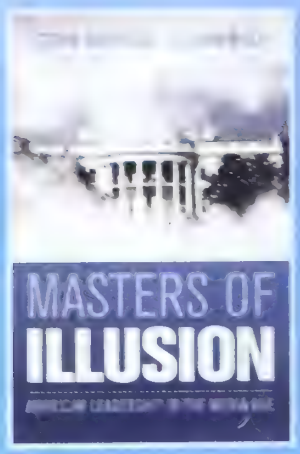
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ARMY OF ALTRUISTS

On the alienated right to do good

By David Graeber

You know, education, if you make the most of it, you study hard, you do your homework and you make an effort to be smart, you can do well. If you don't, you get stuck in Iraq.

—Sen. John Kerry (D., Mass.)

Kerry owes an apology to the many thousands of Americans serving in Iraq, who answered their country's call because they are patriots and not because of any deficiencies in their education.

—Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.)

In the lead-up to the midterm elections, the Republicans' single fleeting ray of hope was a botched joke by Senator John Kerry. The joke was obviously aimed at George W. Bush, but they took it to suggest that Kerry thought only those who flunked out of school end up in the military. It was all very disingenuous. Most knew perfectly well that Kerry's real point was to suggest that the president wasn't very bright. But the right smelled blood. The problem with "aristo-slackers" like Kerry, wrote one blogger on the website of *National Review*, is that they assume "the troops are in Iraq not because they are deeply committed to the mission (they need to deny that) but rather because of a system that takes advantage of their lack of social and economic opportunities.... We should clobber them with that ruthlessly until the day of the election—just like we did in '04—because it is the most basic reason they deserve to lose."

In the end, it didn't make a lot of difference, because most Americans decided they were not deeply committed to the mission either—insofar as they were even sure what the mission was. But it seems to me the question we should really be asking is: why did it take a military catastrophe (not to mention a strategy of trying to avoid any association with the sort of north-

David Graeber is an anthropologist and activist currently living in New York City. An associate professor at Yale, he is the author of Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value *and* Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology.

FOR ECONOMICS AND BIOLOGY, THE VERY EXISTENCE OF ALTRUISM IS CONSIDERED A KIND OF PUZZLE TO BE "SOLVED."

eastern elites Kerry typifies for so many Americans) to allow the Democ to finally emerge from the political wilderness? Or, in other words: why h this Republican line proved so effective?

It strikes me that to get at the answer, one has to probe far more dee into the nature of American society than most commentators are willing go. We're used to reducing all such issues to an either/or: patriotism versus portunity, "values" versus bread-and-butter issues like jobs and education. I I would argue that to frame things this way plays into the hands of the rig Certainly, many people do join the army because they are deprived of portunities. But the real question to be asking is: opportunities to do wh

Let me offer an anthropological perspective on the question. It first ca home to me a year or two ago when I was attending a lecture by Catheri Lutz, a fellow anthropologist from Brown University who has been studyi U.S. military bases overseas. Many of these bases organize outreach p grams, in which soldiers venture out to repair schoolrooms or to perform h dental checkups for the locals. These programs were created to improve cal relations, but they were apparently at least as effective in their psycl logical impact on the soldiers, many of whom would wax euphoric when scribing them: e.g., "*This* is why I joined the army," "This is what milit service is really all about—not just defending your country, but helpi people." The military's own statistics point in the same direction: althou

> the surveys do not list "helping people" among the motiv for enlistment, the most high-minded option available do something to be proud of"—is the favorite.

Is it possible that America is actually a nation of frustrated altruists? C tainly this is not the way that we normally think about ourselves. Our n mal habits of thought, actually, tend toward a rough and ready cynicism. T world is a giant marketplace; everyone is in it for a buck; if you want to u derstand why something happened, first ask who stands to gain by it. The sa attitudes expressed in the back rooms of bars are echoed in the high reaches of social science. America's great contribution to the world in t latter respect has been the development of "rational choice" theories, whi proceed from the assumption that all human behavior can be understood a matter of economic calculation, of rational actors trying to get as much possible out of any given situation with the least cost to themselves. As a r sult, in most fields, the very existence of altruistic behavior is considere kind of puzzle, and everyone from economists to evolutionary biologists h become famous through attempts to "solve" it—that is, to explain the m tery of why bees sacrifice themselves for hives or human beings hold op doors and give correct street directions to total strangers. At the same tim the case of the military bases suggests the possibility that in fact America particularly the less affluent ones, are haunted by frustrated desires to do go in the world.

It would not be difficult to assemble evidence that this is the case. Stu ies of charitable giving, for example, have shown the poor to be the most ge erous: the lower one's income, the higher the proportion of it that one is lik ly to give away to strangers. The same pattern holds true, incidentally, wh comparing the middle classes and the rich: one study of tax returns in 20 concluded that if the most affluent families had given away as much of the assets as even the average middle-class family, overall charitable donatio that year would have increased by $25 billion. (All this despite the fa that the wealthy have far more time and opportunity.) Moreover, charity re resents only a tiny part of the picture. If one were to break down what ty ical American wage earners do with their disposable income, one wou find that they give much of it away, either through spending in one way another on their children or through sharing with others: presents, trips, pa ties, the six pack of beer for the local softball game. One might object th such sharing is more a reflection of the real nature of pleasure than anythi else (who would want to eat a delicious meal at an expensive restaurant

himself?), but this is actually half the point. Even our self-indulgences tend be dominated by the logic of the gift. Similarly, some might object that elling out a small fortune to send one's children to an exclusive kinder- rten is more about status than altruism. Perhaps: but if you look at what ppens over the course of people's actual lives, it soon becomes apparent at this kind of behavior fulfills an identical psychological need. How many uthful idealists throughout history have managed to finally come to terms th a world based on selfishness and greed the moment they start a fami- ? If one were to assume altruism were the primary human motivation, this uld make perfect sense: The only way they can convince themselves to andon their desire to do right by the world as a whole is to substitute an en more powerful desire to do right by their children.

What all this suggests to me is that American society might well work com- etely differently than we tend to assume. Imagine, for a moment, that the nited States as it exists today were the creation of some in- nious social engineer. What assumptions about human ture could we say this engineer must have been working th? Certainly nothing like rational choice theory. For arly our social engineer understands that the only way to nvince human beings to enter into the world of work and e marketplace (that is, of mind-numbing labor and cut- roat competition) is to dangle the prospect of thereby be- g able to lavish money on one's children, buy drinks for ne's friends, and, if one hits the jackpot, spend the rest of ne's life endowing museums and providing AIDS medica- ons to impoverished countries in Africa. Our theorists are nstantly trying to strip away the veil of appearances and ow how all such apparently selfless gestures really mask some nd of self-interested strategy, but in reality American so- ety is better conceived as a battle over access to the right behave altruistically. Selflessness—or, at least, the right to gage in high-minded activity—is not the strategy. It is e prize.



If nothing else, I think this helps us understand why e right has been so much better, in recent years, at play- g to populist sentiments than the left. Essentially, they it by accusing liberals of cutting ordinary Americans off om the right to do good in the world. Let me explain what I mean here throwing out a series of propositions.

PROPOSITION I: NEITHER EGOISM NOR ALTRUISM IS A NATURAL URGE; THEY IN FACT ARISE IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER AND NEITHER WOULD BE CONCEIVABLE WITHOUT THE MARKET

First of all, I should make clear that I do not believe that either egoism or truism is somehow inherent in human nature. Human motives are rarely that mple. Rather, egoism and altruism are ideas we have about human nature. istorically, one has tended to arise in response to the other. In the ancient orld, for example, it is generally in the times and places that one sees the emer- nce of money and markets that one also sees the rise of world religions— uddhism, Christianity, and Islam. If one sets aside a space and says, "Here you all think only about acquiring material things for yourself," then it is hard- surprising that before long someone else will set aside a countervailing pace and declare, in effect: "Yes, but *here* we must contemplate the fact that ne self, and material things, are ultimately unimportant." It was these latter stitutions, of course, that first developed our modern notions of charity.

Even today, when we operate outside the domain of the market or of reli- on, very few of our actions could be said to be motivated by anything so sim- le as untrammeled greed or utterly selfless generosity. When we are dealing

IN FACT, AMERICAN SOCIETY CAN BE BEST SEEN AS A BATTLE OVER THE RIGHT TO BEHAVE ALTRUISTICALLY

IN SOCIETIES WITHOUT MONEY OR MARKETS, THE LANGUAGES TEND TO LACK WORDS FOR THE INTEREST OR "ALTRUISM"

not with strangers but with friends, relatives, or enemies, a much more c
plicated set of motivations will generally come into play: envy, solidarity, pr
self-destructive grief, loyalty, romantic obsession, resentment, spite, shar
conviviality, the anticipation of shared enjoyment, the desire to show u
rival, and so on. These are the motivations impelling the major dramas of
lives that great novelists like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky immortalize but that
cial theorists, for some reason, tend to ignore. If one travels to parts of the w
where money and markets do not exist—say, to certain parts of New Gui
or Amazonia—such complicated webs of motivation are precisely what
still finds. In societies based around small communities, where almost eve
one is either a friend, a relative, or an enemy of everyone else, the langua
spoken tend even to lack words that correspond to "self-interest" or "alt
ism" but include very subtle vocabularies for describing envy, solidarity, pri
and the like. Their economic dealings with one another likewise tend to
based on much more subtle principles. Anthropologists have created a v
literature to try to fathom the dynamics of these apparently exotic "g
economies," but if it seems odd to us to see, for instance, important m
conniving with their cousins to finagle vast wealth, which they then pres
as gifts to bitter enemies in order to publicly humiliate them, it is because
are so used to operating inside impersonal markets that it never occurs to
to think how we would act if we had an economic system in which we tre
ed people based on how we actually felt about them.

Nowadays, the work of destroying such ways of life is still often done
missionaries—representatives of those very world religions that origina
sprang up in reaction to the market long ago. Missionaries, of course, are
to save souls; but they rarely interpret this to mean their role is simply to tea
people to accept God and be more altruistic. Almost invariably, they end
trying to convince people to be more selfish and more altruistic at the sa
time. On the one hand, they set out to teach the "natives" proper work d
cipline, and try to get them involved with buying and selling products on t
market, so as to better their material lot. At the same time, they explain
them that ultimately, material things are unimportant, and lecture on t
value of the higher things, such as selfless devotion to others.

PROPOSITION II:
THE POLITICAL RIGHT HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO ENHANCE THIS DIVISION AND THUS CLAIMS TO BE THE CHAMPION OF BOTH EGOISM AND ALTRUISM SIMULTANEOUSLY. THE LEFT HAS TRIED TO EFFACE IT

Might this not help to explain why the United States, the most marke
driven, industrialized society on earth, is also among the most religious? C
even more strikingly, why the country that produced Tolstoy and Dost
evsky spent much of the twentieth century trying to eradicate both the ma
ket and religion entirely?

Whereas the political left has always tried to efface this distinction
whether by trying to create economic systems that are not driven by the pr
it motive or by replacing private charity with one or another form of co
munity support—the political right has always thrived on it. In the Unite
States, for example, the Republican Party is dominated by two ideologic
wings: the libertarians and the "Christian right." At one extreme, Repub
cans are free-market fundamentalists and advocates of individual liberti
(even if they see those liberties largely as a matter of consumer choice); a
the other, they are fundamentalists of a more literal variety, suspicious of m
individual liberties but enthusiastic about biblical injunctions, "family va
ues," and charitable good works. At first glance it might seem remarkable th
such an ill-fitted marriage to hold together at all (and certainly they hav
ongoing tensions, most famously over abortion). But, in fact, right-win
coalitions almost always take some variation of this form. One might say th
the right's approach is to release the dogs of the market, throwing all trad

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Breeding Bin Ladens

America, Islam, and the Future of Europe

Zachary Shore

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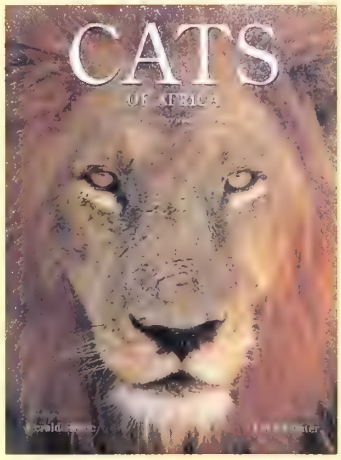
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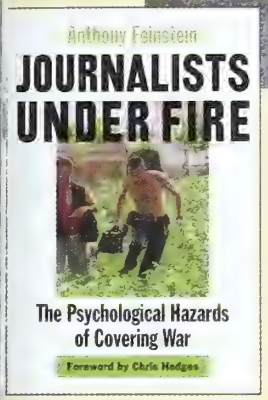
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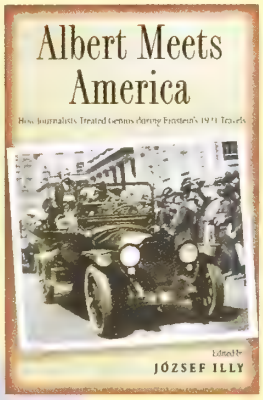
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Anthony Feinstein

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Barron H. Lerner

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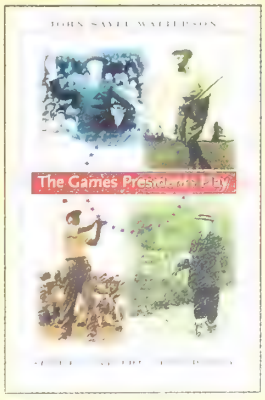


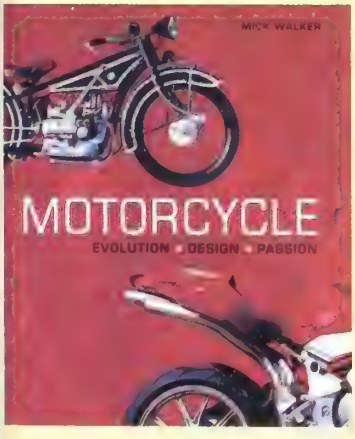
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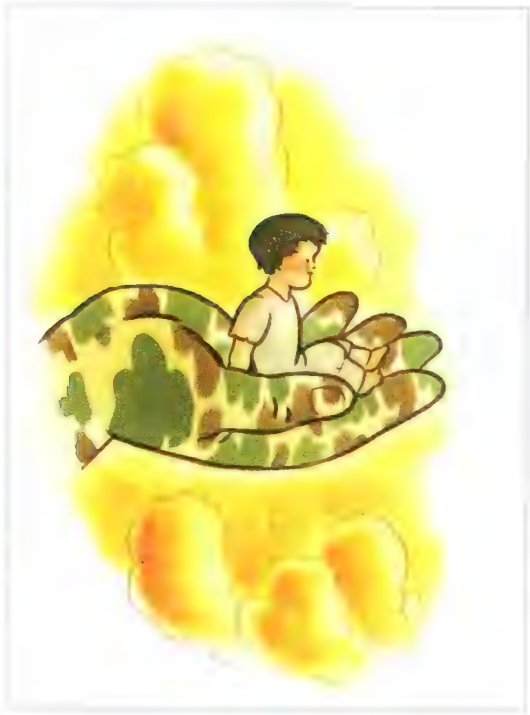
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IF WE DO AMASS A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY, WE ARE LIKELY TO TRY TO CONVERT IT INTO SOMETHING UNIQUE



tional verities into disarray; and then, in this tumult of insecurity, o
themselves up as the last bastion of order and hierarchy, the stalwart defenc
of the authority of churches and fathers against the barbarians they have the
selves unleashed. A scam it may be, but it is a remarkably effective one;
one result is that the right ends up seeming to have a monopoly on val
It manages, we might say, to occupy both positions, on either side of the
vide: extreme egoism and extreme altruism.

Consider, for a moment, the word "value." When economists talk ab
value they are really talking about money—or, more precisely, about wh
ever it is that money is measuring; also, whatever it is that economic act
are assumed to be pursuing. When we are working for a living, or buying a
selling things, we are rewarded with money. But whenever we are not wo
ing or buying or selling, when we are motivated by pretty much anything o
er than the desire to get money, we suddenly find ourselves in the dom
of "values." The most commonly invoked of these are, of course, "family v
ues" (which is unsurprising, since by far the most common form of u
paid labor in most industrial societies is child-rearing and housewor
but we also talk about religious values, political values, the values th
attach themselves to art or patriotism—one could even, perhaps, cou
loyalty to one's favorite basketball team. All are seen as commitmer
that are, or ought to be, uncorrupted by the market. At the same tin
they are also seen as utterly unique; whereas money makes all thir
comparable, "values" such as beauty, devotion, or integrity cannot,
definition, be compared. There is no mathematical formula that cou
possibly allow one to calculate just how much personal integrity it
right to sacrifice in the pursuit of art or how to balance responsibilit
to your family with responsibilities to your God. (Obviously, people
make these kinds of compromises all the time. But they cannot be c
culated.) One might put it this way: if value is simply what one co
siders important, then money allows importance to take a liquid for
by enabling us to compare precise quantities of importance and tra
one off for the other. If someone does accumulate a very large amou
of money, the first thing he or she is likely to do is to try to convert
into something unique, whether it be Monet's water lilies, a pri
winning racehorse, or an endowed chair at a university.

What is really at stake here in any market economy is precisely th
ability to make these trades, to convert "value" into "values." All of
are striving to put ourselves in a position in which we can dedicate ou
selves to something larger than ourselves. When liberals do well
America, it's because they can embody that possibility: the Kennedy
for example, are the ultimate Democratic icons not just because th
started as poor Irish immigrants who made enormous amounts of mo
ey but because they are seen as having managed, ultimately, to turn all th
money into nobility.

PROPOSITION III:
THE REAL PROBLEM OF THE AMERICAN LEFT IS THAT ALTHOUGH IT DOES TRY IN CERTAIN WAYS TO EFFACE THE DIVISION BETWEEN EGOISM AND ALTRUISM, VALUE AND VALUES, IT LARGELY DOES SO FOR ITS OWN CHILDREN. THIS HAS ALLOWED THE RIGHT, PARADOXICALLY, TO REPRESENT ITSELF AS THE CHAMPION OF THE WORKING CLASS

This proposition might help explain why the left in America is in such
mess. Far from promoting new visions of effacing the difference betwee
egoism and altruism, value and values, or providing a model for passing fro
one to the other, progressives cannot even seem to understand the problen
After the last presidential election, the big debate in progressive circles w
the relative importance of economic issues versus what was called "the cu
ture wars." Did the Democrats lose because they were not able to spell out ar

ausible economic alternatives, or did the Republicans win because they ccessfully mobilized evangelical Christians around the issue of gay marriage? ıe very fact that progressives frame the question this way not only shows ey are trapped in the right's terms of analysis; it demonstrates that they do ɔt understand how America really works.

Let me illustrate what I mean by considering the strange popular appeal, least until recently, of George W. Bush. In 2004 most of the American ɔeral intelligentsia did not seem to be able to get their minds around it. fter the election, what left so many of them reeling was their suspicion ıat the things they most hated about Bush were exactly what so many ısh voters liked about him. Consider the debates, for example. If statistics e to be believed, millions of Americans watched George Bush and John erry lock horns, concluded that Kerry won, and then went off and voted r Bush anyway. It was hard to escape the suspicion that, in the end, Ker- 's articulate presentation, his skill with words and arguments, had actual- counted against him.

This sent liberals into spirals of despair. They could not understand why ecisive leadership was equated with acting like an idiot. Neither could ıey understand how a man who comes from one of the most elite families ı the country, who attended Andover, Yale, and Harvard, and whose sig- ature facial expression is a self-satisfied smirk, ever convinced anyone he as a "man of the people." I must admit I have struggled with this as well. s a child of working-class parents who won a scholarship to Andover in the 970s and, eventually, a job at Yale, I have spent much of my life in the pres- ıce of men like Bush, every inch of them oozing self-satisfied privilege. But, ı fact, stories like mine—stories of dramatic class mobility through academic ccomplishment—are increasingly unusual in America.

America, of course, continues to see itself as a land of opportunity, and ertainly from the perspective of an immigrant from Haiti or Bangladesh it . But America has always been a country built on the promise of *unlimited* pward mobility. The working-class condition has been traditionally seen as way station, as something one's family passes through on the road to some- ıing else. Abraham Lincoln used to stress that what made American democ- ıcy possible was the absence of a class of permanent wage laborers. In Lin- ɔln's day, the ideal was that wage laborers would eventually save up enough ıoney to build a better life: if nothing else, to buy some land and become homesteader on the frontier.

The point is not how accurate this ideal was; the point is that most ımericans have found the image plausible. Every time the road is per- eived to be clogged, profound unrest ensues. The closing of the frontier ed to bitter labor struggles, and over the course of the twentieth century, ıe steady and rapid expansion of the American university system could e seen as a kind of substitute. Particularly after World War II, huge re- ɔurces were poured into expanding the higher education system, which rew extremely rapidly, and all this growth was promoted quite explicitly s a means of social mobility. This served during the Cold War as almost n implied social contract, not just offering a comfortable life to the work- ıg classes but holding out the chance that their children would not be ′orking class themselves. The problem, of course, is that a higher educa- ion system cannot be expanded forever. At a certain point one ends up ′ith a significant portion of the population unable to find work even re- ıotely in line with their qualifications, who have every reason to be an- ry about their situation, and who also have access to the entire history of adical thought. By the late Sixties and early Seventies, the very point ′hen the expansion of the university system hit a dead end, campuses ′ere, predictably, exploding.

What followed could be seen as a kind of settlement. Campus radicals ′ere reabsorbed into the university but set to work largely at training hildren of the elite. As the cost of education has skyrocketed, financial id has been cut back, and the prospect of social mobility through educa-

DRAMATIC CLASS MOBILITY THROUGH ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT IS INCREASINGLY RARE IN AMERICA

VIRTUALLY NO CHILDREN OF WORKING-CLASS AMERICANS WILL BECOME DRAMA CRITICS OR HUMAN-RIGHTS LAWYERS

tion—above all liberal arts education—has been rapidly diminished. T number of working-class students in major universities, which steadi grew until the Seventies, has now been declining for decades. The mat was further complicated by the fact that this overall decline of accessib ity happened at almost exactly the same time that many who had pre ously been excluded (the G.I. Bill of Rights, after all, had applied basica to white males) were finally being welcomed. These were the identities c ebrated in the campus "identity politics" of the Eighties and Nineties inclusiveness that notably did not extend to, say, Baptists or "redneck

Unsurprisingly, many focused their rage not on gover ment or on university administrations but on mino ties, queers, and feminists.

Why do working-class Bush voters tend to resent intellectu more than they do the rich? It seems to me that the answer is simple. Th can imagine a scenario in which they might become rich but cannot pos bly imagine one in which they, or any of their children, would becor members of the intelligentsia. If you think about it, this is not an unre sonable assessment. A mechanic from Nebraska knows it is highly unlik that his son or daughter will ever become an Enron executive. But it possible. There is virtually no chance, however, that his child, no matt how talented, will ever become an international human-rights lawyer or drama critic for the *New York Times*. Here we need to remember not ju the changes in higher education but also the role of unpaid, or effectiv unpaid, internships. It has become a fact of life in the United States that one chooses a career for any reason other than the salary, for the first ye or two one will not be paid. This is certainly true if one wishes to be i volved in altruistic pursuits: say, to join the world of charities, or NGOs, to become a political activist. But it is equally true if one wants to purs values like Beauty or Truth: to become part of the world of books, or th art world, or an investigative reporter. The custom effectively seals off suc a career for any poor student who actually does attain a liberal arts educ tion. Such structures of exclusion had always existed, of course, especial at the top, but in recent decades fences have become fortresses.

If that mechanic's daughter wishes to pursue something higher, more n ble, for a career, what options does she really have? Likely just two: She c seek employment at her local church, which is hard to get. Or she can jo the army.

This is, of course, the secret of nobility. To be noble is to be generou high-minded, altruistic, to pursue higher forms of value. But it is also to b able to do so because one does not really have to think too much abo money. This is precisely what our soldiers are doing when they give fr dental examinations to villagers: they are being paid (modestly, but ad quately) to do good in the world. Seen in this light, it is also easier to s what really happened at universities in the wake of the 1960s—the "settl ment" I mentioned above. Campus radicals set out to create a new socie that destroyed the distinction between egoism and altruism, value and va ues. It did not work out, but they were, effectively, offered a kind of com pensation: the privilege to use the university system to create lives that di so, in their own little way, to be supported in one's material needs whi pursuing virtue, truth, and beauty, and, above all, to pass that privilege o to their own children. One cannot blame them for accepting the offer. B neither can one blame the rest of the country for hating them for it. N because they reject the project: as I say, this is what America is all abou As I always tell activists engaged in the peace movement and counte recruitment campaigns: why do working-class kids join the army anyway Because, like any teenager, they want to escape the world of tedious wor and meaningless consumerism, to live a life of adventure and camaraderi in which they believe they are doing something genuinely noble. The join the army because they want to be like you.

MOBY-DUCK

OR,

THE SYNTHETIC WILDERNESS OF CHILDHOOD

BY

DONOVAN HOHN

We know exactly where the spill occurred: 4.7°N, 178.1°E. We know the day, January 10, 992, but not the hour. Neither do we know the ame of the ship nor of its captain nor of the hipping magnate who owned it. We o know the harbors from which it iled (Hong Kong) and to which it as headed (Tacoma). We know that espite its grandeur, when rocked by rty-foot waves, the colossal vessel, floating warehouse weighing 50,000 eadweight tons or more and pow- ed by a diesel engine the size of a arn, would have rolled and pitched d yawed about like a toy in a Jacuzzi.



We know that twelve of the colorful containers acked above deck snapped loose from their moor- ags and tumbled overboard. We can safely as- ume that the subsequent splash was terrific, like e splash a train would make were you to drive it f a seaside cliff. We know that each container easured forty feet long and eight feet wide and ay have weighed as much as 58,000 pounds, de- ending on the cargo, and that at least one of em—perhaps when it careened into another ontainer, perhaps when it struck the ship's stays, erhaps as it descended to high-pressure depths— urst open. We know that when it left port, this l-fated container had contained 7,200 little pack- ges; that, as the water gushed in and the steel box nk, all or most of these packages came floating the surface; that every package comprised a plastic shell and a cardboard back; that every shell housed four hollow plastic animals—a red beaver, a blue turtle, a green frog, and a yellow duck—each about three inches long; and that printed on the cardboard in multicolored lettering were the following words: FLOATEES. THE FIRST YEARS. FROM 6 MONTHS. EXPERT DEVELOPED ❤ PARENT PREFERRED. 100% DISHWASHER SAFE.

From a low-flying plane on a clear day, the packages would have looked like confetti, a great drift of colorful squares, exploding in slow motion across the waves. Within twenty-four hours, the water would have dissolved the glue. The action of the waves would have separated the plastic from the cardboard. There, in the middle of the North Pacific, in seas almost four miles deep, more than six hundred miles south of Attu Island, the western extreme of the United States, more than a thousand miles east of Hokkaido, the northern extreme of Japan, and more than two thousand miles west of Sitka, Alaska, 28,800 plastic animals produced in Chinese factories for the bathtubs of America—7,200 red beavers, 7,200 green frogs, 7,200 blue turtles, and 7,200 yellow ducks—hatched from their plastic shells and drifted free.

Eleven years later, more than 7,000 nautical miles to the east, an anthropologist named Bethe

Donovan Hohn teaches English at Friends Seminary in Manhattan. His last essay for Harper's Magazine, *"A Romance of Rust," appeared in January 2005.*

ustrations by Stéphane Humbert-Basset
ge borders: Details of "Ocean Study III," from the Adrift series, by Bruce Hayward

After months at sea, the ducks had whitened and the beavers had yellowed, but the frogs were still green and the turtles were still blue

med the reporter's speculations. Yes, indeed, a ipment of Floatees had been lost at sea. "Solved: ystery of the Wandering Bathtub Toys," ran e headline in the *Sentinel*'s "Weekend" section nonth after Punderson's ad first appeared. And at is where the story should have ended—as an tertaining anecdote in the back pages of a ovincial newspaper. Mystery solved. Case osed. But then something unexpected hap- ned. The story kept going.

In part the story kept going because Ebbesmey- and his beachcombers joined the hunt, in part cause the toys themselves kept going. Years lat- new specimens and new mysteries were still rning up. In the autumn of 1993, Floatees sud- nly began sprinkling the shores of Shemya, a tiny leutian island that lies about 1,500 miles



oser to Russia than to Sitka, not far from the site the original spill. In 1995, beachcombers in Vashington State found a blue turtle and a sun- leached duck. Dean and Tyler Orbison, a ther-son beachcombing team who every sum- ier scour uninhabited islands along the Alaskan oast, added more toys to their growing collec- on every year—dozens in 1992, three in 1993, venty-five in 1994, until, in 1995, they found one. The slump continued in 1996, and the Or- isons assumed they'd seen the last of the plastic nimals, but then, in 1997, the toys suddenly re- urned in large numbers.

Thousands more were yet to be accounted for. Where had they gone? Into the Arctic? Around he globe? Were they still out there, traveling the currents of the North Pacific? Or did they lie uried under wrack and sand along Alaska's wild, oarsely populated shores? Or, succumbing to the elements—freezing temperatures, the endless battering of the waves, prolonged exposure to the sun—had they cracked, filled with water, gone under? All 28,800 toys had emerged from that sinking container into the same acre of water. Each member of the four species was all but identical to the others—each duck was just as light as the other ducks, each frog as thick as the other frogs, each beaver as aerodynamic as the next. And yet one turtle had ended up in Signe Wilson's hot tub, another in the jaws of Betsy Knudson's labrador, another in the nest of a sea otter, while a fourth had floated almost all the way to Russia, and a fifth traveled south of Puget Sound. Why? What tangled calculus of causes and effects could explain—or predict—such disparate fates?

There were other reasons why the story of the toys kept going, reasons that had nothing to do with oceanography and everything to do with the human imagination, which can be as powerful and as inscrutable as the sea. In making sense of chaotic data, in following a slightly tangled thread of narrative to its source, Eben Punderson had set the plastic animals adrift all over again—not upon the waters of the North Pacific but upon currents of information. The Associated Press picked up the *Daily Sentinel*'s story. Newspapers across the country ran it. The Floatees eventually made brief appearances in *The Guardian* and *The New York Times Magazine*, and a considerably longer appearance in *The Smithsonian*. Like migrating salmon, they returned almost seasonally to the pages of *Scholastic News*, a magazine for kids, which has reported on the story seven times. They were spotted in the shallows of *People* and MSNBC, and in the tide pools of *All Things Considered*. They swirled around the maelstrom of the Internet and bobbed up in such exotic waters as an oceanography textbook for undergraduates and a newsletter for the collectors of duck-themed stamps.

These travels wrought strange changes. Dishwasher safe the toys may have been, but newspaper safe they were not. By the time they drifted into my own imagination, the plastic animals that had fallen into the Pacific in 1992 were scarcely recognizable. For one thing, the plastic had turned into rubber. For another, the beavers, frogs, and

turtles had all turned into ducks. It had begun the day Eben Punderson published an unusual ad in the pages of the Sitka *Daily Sentinel*—the metamorphosis of happenstance into narrative and narrative into myth.

Far across the ocean, in a toy factory made of red brick, a pinkly Caucasian woman in a brick-red dress and a racially ambiguous brown man in a sky-blue shirt work side by side at an assembly line. From a gray machine, yellow-beaked and lacking irises in the whites of their eyes, rubber ducks emerge, one by one, onto a conveyor belt. *Chuckedy-chuckedy-chuck* goes the rubber-duck machine. As the ducks roll past, the woman in the brick-red dress paints their beaks brick red with a little brush. The man in the sky-blue shirt paints their irises sky blue. It is beautiful, this unnamed country across the sea. Green grass grows around the factory. The people who work there clearly enjoy making rubber ducks. They are all healthy, well rested, and smiling. At the end of the assembly line another racially ambiguous brown man, lighter and yellower than the first, packs the ducks, ten to a cardboard box, onto a grass-green truck that carries them to a waiting ship named the *Bobbie*. The *Bobbie*'s crew consists of a racially ambiguous stevedore in a hard hat and a pinkly Caucasian, white-bearded captain whose blue cap matches his blue coat. There are two gold stripes around the cuffs of the coat and two red stripes around the smokestack of the ship. A few decades ago the captain would have been smoking a pipe. Now he waves jauntily from a porthole. Above him, a white puff rises from the smokestack into a sky-blue sky.

Away the *Bobbie* chugs, carrying five cardboard boxes across a blue-green sea, a white streamer of smoke trailing behind it. Smiling overhead is an enormous sun the color of a rubber duck. Then a storm blows up. Waves leap. The *Bobbie* tosses about. The captain cries and throws his hands in the air. Down goes a cardboard box. Ducks spill like candy from a piñata. The sea calms. Slowly, the ducks drift apart, across the ocean, to diverse and far-flung ecosystems. One duck frolics with a spotted dolphin. A second receives a come-hither look from a blueberry seal in a lime-green sea. A polar bear standing on an ice floe ogles a third. And so their journeys go, each duck encountering a different picturesque animal—a flamingo, a pelican, a sea turtle, an octopus, a gull, a whale. Finally, who should the tenth rubber duck meet but a brood of real ducks. "Quack!" says the mother duck. "Quack! Quack! Quack!" say the ducklings. "Squeak," says the rubber duck. "Press here," says a button on the rubber duck's wing, and when you do, a battery-powered computer chip embedded in the back cover of Eric Carle's *10 Little Rubber Ducks* emits what to my admittedly untrained ear sounds like the cry of a cormorant tangled in fishing line.

Published in the spring of 2005, shortly after my own duckie hunt began, Carle's picture book was inspired by a newspaper article, titled "Rubber Ducks Lost at Sea," that he'd happened upon in 2003. "I could not resist making a story out of this newspaper report," a brief author's note explains. "I hope you like my story." Beautifully illustrated with Carle's signature mixed-paint and paper tearings, the book is hard not to like. Studies have shown that the primary colors, smiling faces, and cute animals with which *10 Little Rubber Ducks* abounds—and of which the rubber duck may well be the consummate embodiment—have the almost narcotic power to induce feelings of happiness in the human brain. The myth had at last found if not its Aesop then at least its Disney.

"The loss of fantasy is the price we have paid for precision," I read one night in an outdated *Ocean Almanac* while investigating the journeys of the Floatees, "and today we have navigational maps based on an accurate 1:1,000,000 scale of the entire world." Surveying the colorful, oversized



landscape of my *National Geographic* atlas, a cartographic wonder made—its dust jacket boasted—from high-resolution satellite images and "sophisticated computer algorithms," I was unconvinced; fantasy did not strike me as extinct, or remotely endangered. The ocean is no less fathomable to my generation of Americans than it was when Herman Melville explored the "watery wilderness" a century and a half ago. Most of us are better acquainted with cloud tops than with waves. What our migrant ancestors thought of as the winds we think of as turbulence, and fasten our seat belts when the orange light comes on. Gale force, hurricane force—encountering such terms, we comprehend only that the weather is really, really bad and in our minds replay the special-effects sequences of disaster films or news footage of palm trees blown inside

t like cheap umbrellas. In growing more precise, manity's knowledge has also grown more spe-alized, and more fantastic, not less: the seas of y consciousness teem with images and symbols d half-remembered trivia as fabulous as those asts frolicking at the edges of ancient charts. ot even satellite photographs and computer al-rithms can burn away the mystifying fogs of abient information and fantasy through which om birth I have sailed.

Not long ago on the Op-Ed page of the *New rk Times*, the novelist Julia Glass worried that r fellow Americans, "impatient with flights of ncy," had lost the ability to be carried away by e "illusory adventure" of fiction, preferring the bloid titillation of the "so-called truth." Per-aps, concluded Glass, "there is a growing con-nsus, however sad, that the wayward realm of ake-believe belongs only to our children." By the ring of 2005, I had reached different conclu-ons. Hadn't we adults, like the imaginative eschoolers Glass admires, also been "encour-ged"—by our government, by advertisers, by the bulists of the cable news—"to mingle fact with ction"? Hadn't millions of adults bought the il-sory adventures of both Frodo Baggins and Don-d Rumsfeld? Medieval Europeans divided the man lifetime into five ages, the first of which was nown as the Age of Toys. It seemed to me that twenty-first-century America, the Age of Toys ever ends. Yes, stories fictional and otherwise an take us on illusory adventures, but they can lso take us on disillusory ones, and it was the latter sort of adventure that I craved.

I tracked down a phone number for Curtis bbesmeyer and asked him how the journey of the astaway ducks had ended. I'd read that some toys ere supposed to have crossed the Arctic, reach-ng the North Atlantic by the summer of 2003. lad they made it? Oh, yes, Ebbesmeyer assured ne, yes, they had. Right on schedule, he'd re-eived a highly credible eyewitness report from a ained anthropologist in Maine, which he'd pub-shed in his quarterly newsletter, *Beachcombers' lert!* He promised to send me a copy. But—he dded—if I really wanted to learn about things that oat, then I should join him in Sitka that July. "You an't go beachcombing by phone," he said. "You ave to get out there and look."

Since 2003, Sitka has played host to an annu-l Beachcombers' Fair over which Ebbesmeyer—art guru, part impresario—presides. Beach-ombers bring him things they've scavenged from ne sand, and Ebbesmeyer illuminates these dis-overies as best he can. "Everything has a story," e likes to say. When an object mystifies him, he nvestigates. At this year's fair, a local fisherman ould be ferrying a select group of beachcombers to the wild shores of Kruzof Island, where some of the toys had washed up. Ebbesmeyer, who would be leading the expedition, offered me a spot aboard the boat. Alaska—snow-capped mountains, icebergs, breeching whales, wild beaches bestrewn with yellow ducks. There was only one problem. The Beachcombers' Fair ended July 25, and my wife and I were due to have a baby on August 1, which was cutting it pretty close.

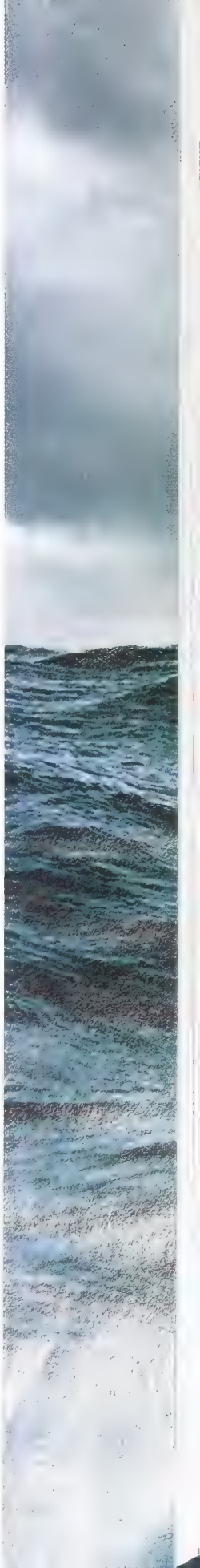
Soon thereafter an envelope with a Seattle postmark arrived. Inside, printed on blue paper, were a half-dozen issues of *Beachcombers' Alert!* Thumbing through this digest of the miscellaneous and arcane was a bit like beachcombing

The oceanographer had arrayed a scrapbook of sea-battered oddities—Japanese birch-bark fishing floats, land mines, a 350-pound safe

amid the wreckage of a storm. Alongside stories about derelict vessels and messages in bottles, the oceanographer had arrayed a photographic scrapbook of strange, sea-battered oddities, natural and man-made—Japanese birch-bark fishing floats, the heart-shaped seed of a baobab tree, land mines, televisions, a torn wet suit, a 350-pound safe. Many of these artifacts had accumulated colonies of gooseneck barnacles. Some were so encrusted they seemed to be made of the creatures: a derelict skiff of barnacles, a hockey glove of barnacles. A disconcerting number of the photographs depicted the plastic heads of mannequins and dolls, including the head of a plastic infant impaled like a candy apple on a stick.

At the end of an article titled "Where the Toys Are," Ebbesmeyer had published Bethe Hagens's letter. "You won't believe this," she'd written after hearing about the castaway toys on NPR, "but two weeks ago, I found one of your ducks." In fact, Ebbesmeyer *had* believed her, or wanted to. The details of her description matched the profile of a Floatee perfectly. Because Hagens had neglected to keep the evidence, however, her testimony remained in doubt. Accompanying the article was a world map indicating where and when the toys had washed up. Off the coast of Kennebunkport, Ebbesmeyer had printed a pair of question marks the size of barrier reefs.

There are two ways to get to the insular city of Sitka—by plane and by boat. In my dreams, I would have picked up the frayed end of that imaginary, 7,000-mile-long trail that led to Gooch's Beach and followed it, Theseus-style, to its source—sailing back across the Gulf of Maine, back through the Northwest Passage, that leg



endary waterway which the historian Pierre Breton has described as a "maze of drifting, misshapen bergs," a "crystalline world of azure and emerald, indigo and alabaster—dazzling to the eye, disturbing to the soul," a "glittering metropolis of moving ice." To Lieutenant William Edward Parry of the British Navy, who captained the *Alexander* into the maze in 1818, the slabs of ice looked like the pillars of Stonehenge.

By the summer of 2005, global warming had gone a long way toward turning that metropolis of ice into the open shipping channel of which Victorian imperialists dreamed. That September climatologists would announce that the annual summer melt had reduced the floating ice cap to its

It took Curtis Ebbesmeyer a year of diplomacy and detective work to find out when and where the Floatees fell overboard

smallest size in a century of recordkeeping. Nevertheless, even a transarctic journey aboard a Coast Guard ice breaker was out of the question if I wanted to make it to Sitka and back before the birth of my first child. Instead I booked passage on the M/V *Malaspina*, part of the Alaskan Marine Highway, which is in fact not a highway at all but a state-operated fleet of ferries. Sailing from Bellingham, Washington, the *Malaspina* would reach Sitka five days before the Beachcombers' Fair began. If I flew home as soon as the fair ended, I would be in Manhattan a week before the baby arrived—assuming it did not arrive early, which, my wife's obstetrician warned us, was altogether possible. My wife was not at all happy about my plan, but she consented on one condition: that if she felt a contraction or her water broke, I would catch the next flight home, no matter the cost.



On my way to Bellingham I stopped in Seattle to visit Curtis Ebbesmeyer. I met him at home, in a quiet neighborhood near the University of Washington, where he had earned his Ph.D. Navy blue awnings overshadowed the porch of his bungalow, and peering into the semidarkness I could see four matching Adirondack chairs, lined up, side by side, as if to behold the vista of the lawn. Ebbesmeyer himself greeted me at the door. "Come in, come in," he said.

His face was familiar to me from photogra
I'd seen in the press and in the pages of *Be*
combers' Alert!, where he makes frequent car
appearances, displaying a water-stained basketb
hoisting a plastic canister that was supposed
have delivered Taiwanese propaganda to the C
nese mainland, gazing down deifically at the f
Floatees perched upon his forearm. He ha
white beard, a Cheshire grin, and close-set e
that together make his face a bit triangular. Si
Ebbesmeyer likes to wear Hawaiian shirts an
necklace of what appear to be roasted chestn
but are in fact sea beans, the waterborne seeds
tropical trees that ocean currents disseminate
distant shores, pictures of him often bring
mind cartoons of Santa Claus on vacation.

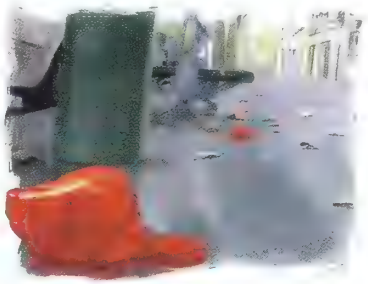
He brewed us each a cup of coffee and s
gested we adjourn to the back yard, which
refers to as his "office." Passing through his ba
ment, I saw many of the objects I'd read about
Beachcombers' Alert! Piled high on a booksh
were dozens of Nikes. Some of them had s
vived the 1990 container spill—the fi
Ebbesmeyer ever investigated—in which 80,0
shoes had been lost. Others came from later
cidents: 18,000 Nike sneakers fell overboard
1999; 33,000 more in December of 2002. In J
uary of 2000, some 26,000 Nike sandals—alo
with 10,000 children's shoes and 3,000 comp
er monitors, which float screen up and are po
ular with barnacles—plunged into the drink.

Nike's maritime fortunes are not unusua
calamitous; as many as 10,000 containers sp
from cargo ships annually. E
few commodities are both
seaworthy and as traceable a
pair of Air Jordans, which co
veniently come with nume
cal records of their provenan
stitched to the undersides
their tongues, and which
submerged up to the ank
laces aswirl—will drift for yea
It helps, too, that Ebbesmey
learned the serial numbers f
all the shoes in the 1990 spi
In his basement, Ebbesmey
selected a high-top at random and taught me h
to "read the tongue." "See the ID?" he aske
"'021012.' The '02' is the year. '10' is October. '1
is December. Nike ordered these from Indonesia
October of 2002 for delivery in December."

Next he pulled down a black flip-flop, ar
then a matching one that he had sliced in ha
Inside the black rubber was a jagged yellow co
resembling a lightning bolt—a perfect identif
ing characteristic. If Ebbesmeyer had discover
the coordinates of this particular spill, the sanda
would have provided a windfall of valuable dat
Unfortunately, the shipping company, fearing l

al liability, had "stonewalled" him, "like usual."

It took Ebbesmeyer a year of diplomacy and etective work to find out when and where the loatees fell overboard. Initially, the shipping ompany stonewalled him, like usual. Then one ay he received a phone call. The container ship n question was at port in Tacoma. On the condition that he never reveal its name or that of its wner, he was welcome to come aboard. For four ours, Ebbesmeyer sat in the ship's bridge interiewing the captain, a "very gracious" Chinese an who had a Ph.D. in meorology and spoke fluent nglish. The day of the spill he ship had encountered a severe winter storm and heavy eas, the captain said. The eadings on the inclinometer old the story best. When a hip is perfectly level in the ater, its inclinometer reads °. If a ship were keeled on s side, the inclinometer ould read 90°. Containers begin to break loose hen a ship rolls more than 35°, Ebbesmeyer has ound. When this particular spill occurred, the nclinometer would have registered a roll of 55° o port, then a roll of 55° to starboard. At that inlination, the stacks of containers, each one six ontainers tall, would have been more horizontal han vertical. Perhaps Dr. Ebbesmeyer would like o have a peek at the log book, the captain iscreetly suggested. He'd already opened it to January 10, 1992. There were the magic coordinates.



OSCURS could now reconstruct, or "hindcast," the routes various toys had traveled, producing a map of erratic trajectories that appeared o have been hand drawn by a cartographer with alsy. Beginning at the scattered coordinates here beachcombers had reported finding toys, he lines wiggled west, converging at the point of rigin, not far from where the International Dateine crosses the 45th parallel. The data that bbesmeyer's beachcombers had gathered also llowed NOAA's James Ingraham to fine-tune he computer model, adjusting for coefficients uch as the height at which the toys rode in the vater (an object with a tall profile will sail as vell as drift). The toys, it turns out, rode high, kating across the Gulf of Alaska at an average ate of seven miles a day, twice as fast as the curents they were traveling. Among other things, he simulation revealed that in 1992 those currents might have shifted to the north as a consequence of El Niño.

OSCURS could forecast as well as hindcast, nd in this respect, Ebbesmeyer and Ingraham were like clairvoyant meteorologists of the waves. OSCURS was their crystal ball. To the eyes of a driftologist, even the most state-of-the-art globe is in one respect as fabulous as the cartographic dreamscapes of the past. No clouds swirl across a map's invisible skies. The painted topography of its empty seas are not troubled by the wind. The polar ice does not thicken and thin with the seasons and the ages. There is no sign of "thermohaline circulation," the vertical movement of water layers caused by variations in density and temperature. A globe is a static illusion of permanence because it lacks a crucial dimension, the dimension that OSCURS was programmed to map—time.

By simulating "long-term mean surface geostrophic currents" (those currents that flow steadily and enduringly, though not immutably, like rivers in the sea) as well as "surface-mixed-layer currents that are functions of wind speed and direction" (those currents that change as quickly as the skies), OSCURS could project the trajectories of the toys well into the future. According to the simulator's predictions, some of the animals would drift south, where they would either collide with the coast of Hawaii in March of 1997, or, more likely, get sucked into the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre.

"'Gyre' is a fancy word for a current in a bowl of soup," Ebbesmeyer likes to say. "You stir your soup, it goes around a few seconds." The thermodynamic circulation of air, which we experience as wind, is like a giant spoon that never stops stirring. Comprising four separate currents—the southerly California Current, the westerly North Equatorial Current, the northerly Kuroshio Current, and the easterly North Pacific Drift—the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre travels from the coast of Washington to the coast of Mexico to the coast of Japan and back again. Some of the toys would escape the gyre's orbit, spin off toward the Indian Ocean, and, eventually, circumnavigate the globe. Others would drift into the gyre's becalming center, where a high-pressure system has created what Ebbesmeyer calls "the garbage patch"—a purgatorial eddy in the waste stream that is approximately the size of Texas. "It's like Jupiter's red spot," says Ebbesmeyer. "It's one of the great features of the planet Earth, but you can't see it."

A similar high-pressure calm at the center of the North Atlantic Gyre gave rise to the legend of the Bermuda triangle as well as to the Sargasso Sea, named for the free-floating wilderness of sargasso seaweed that the currents have accumulated there. *A Sargasso of the imagination*, I thought to myself as I listened to Ebbesmeyer describe the garbage patch. The phrase comes from

a scene in *Day of the Locust* in which Nathanael West is describing a Hollywood backlot jumbled with miscellaneous properties and disassembled stage sets.

The Atlantic is far shallower and narrower than the Pacific, and upwellings of cold, nutrient-rich water nourish the sargasso forest and the marine life that inhabits it. The center of the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, which circles around the deepest waters on the planet, is, by contrast, a kind of marine desert. If you go fishing in the garbage patch, all you're likely to catch aside from garbage is plankton.



In 1998, with help from Ingraham and Ebbesmeyer, a researcher named Charlie Moore began collecting water samples from the eastern edge of the North Pacific garbage patch, trawling along a 564-mile loop encompassing exactly one million square miles of ocean. Approximately 800 miles west of California, where the wind speed fell below ten knots, drifts of garbage began to appear. The larger items that Moore and his crew retrieved from the water included polypropylene fishing nets, "a drum of hazardous chemicals," a volleyball "half-covered in barnacles," a cathode-ray television tube, and a gallon bleach bottle "that was so brittle it crumbled in our hands." Most of the debris that Moore found had already disintegrated. Caught in his trawling net was "a rich broth of minute sea creatures mixed with hundreds of colored plastic fragments."

OSCURS's simulations predicted that relatively few of the bathtub toys would have contributed to this "plastic-plankton soup," as Moore calls it. The majority would have stayed well to the north, closer to the site of the spill, caught in the Sub-Polar Gyre, which travels counterclockwise between the coasts of Alaska and Siberia. Smaller and stormier than the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, the Sub-Polar Gyre does not collect vast quantities of trash at its center. Here, the Floatees would have remained in orbit, completing a lap around the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea once every three years, until a winter storm blew them ashore or they strayed onto one of the northerly currents flowing through the Bering Strait.

There, OSCURS lost them.

Ingraham had not programmed his model to simulate the Arctic. To follow the animals into the ice, Ebbesmeyer had to rely on more primitive oceanographic methods. He went to a toy store and purchased a few dozen brand-new Floatees to use as lab animals in various experiments. Several specimens he subjected to the frigid conditions inside his kitchen freezer in order to fi out whether cold would make them crack didn't). Others he bludgeoned with a hammer see what it would take to make them sink a lot). Even breeched and taking on water, th kept afloat. Able to withstand fifty-two di washer cycles, the toys, Ebbesmeyer conclud could also survive a ten-year voyage through t ice. Using data collected fro transarctic drift experime conducted in the late 197 he calculated that, once bes the toys would creep acr the North Pole at an avera rate of a mile per day. Wh they reached the North A lantic, the ice would melt al set the Floatees loose up the waters east of Greenlan Some would catch the G Stream to Europe. Others would ride the co southerly longshore current that flo past Gooch's Beach.

Although his library of shoes may sugg otherwise, Ebbesmeyer has not amassed a mus um of flotsam in his basement. He collects st ries and data, not things. Fat, three-ring binde occupy most of the shelf space. They contain small portion" of the studies he has conduct over the years. I saw binders labeled Fishi Floats and Vikings, Phytoplankton and Drift Coffins, Eddies and Icebergs. There was an e tire binder devoted to Isis and Osiris, the sta crossed Egyptian gods. Ebbesmeyer told me t tragic ending of their tale: "Osiris's brother kill him, put his body in a coffin, put the coffin in t Nile River, and it washed up 300 miles to t north of Lebanon. His wife, Isis, went to find i and she did. That's the first documented drift an object between point A and point B that know of."

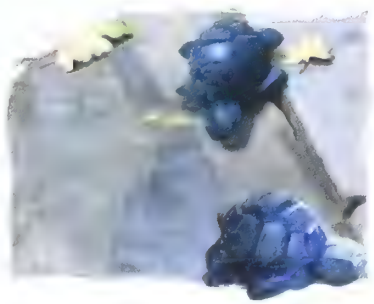
In the back yard, seated on the patio, where string of rubber duckie Christmas lights festoone a grape arbor and wind chimes made mournf noises on the breeze, Ebbesmeyer waxed eccles astical. "There's nothing new around," he sai Take Osiris. Even today, when the Nile flood flotsam follows that same route. Not even poll tion is new. He told me to think of volcanic eru tions, of the tons of pumice and toxic ash a eruption throws into the sea. No, when you stu ied the history of flotsam long enough you rea ized that only one thing was fundamentally di ferent about the ocean now, only one thing ha changed since the time of the ancient Egyptians "See, pumice will absorb water and sink," he sai "But 60 percent of plastic will float and the 60 pe cent that does float will never sink because i doesn't absorb water; it fractures into ever small

pieces. That's the difference. There are things loat now that will never sink."

Ebbesmeyer went inside and returned a moent later carrying what at first glance appeared be exotic produce—a new, flatter variety of antain or summer squash, perhaps. He spread ese yellowy lozenges out on the patio table. Remnants of high-seas drift-net floats," he said. here were four of them, in varying stages of dey. The best-preserved specimen had the hard een of polished bone. The worst was pocked d textured like a desiccated sponge that had en attacked with a chisel. Ebbesmeyer picked the latter float. "This is a pretty cool old ne," he said. By "cool" he meant that it told the ory of drift-net floats particularly well.

"High-seas drift nets were banned by the Unit-l Nations in 1992," his version of this story beın. "They were nets with a mesh size of about ur inches, but they were, like, fifty miles long. he Japanese would sit there and interweave ese for fifty miles. There were something like a ousand drift nets being used every night in the 980s, and if you do the math they were filtering ll the water in the upper fifty feet every year. Vell, they were catching all the large animals, and clearly could not go on."

According to Ebbesmeyer, those high-seas rift nets had not gone away, and not only beause pirate drift netting still takes place. Beore the moratorium, fishermen had lost about alf of their nets every year, and those lost nets ere still out there, still fishing. "Ghost nets," ey're called. When he tells stories like this, bbesmeyer will punctuate the most astonishing cts with his eyebrows. He'll say something like, What happens is, the nets keep catching anials, and then the animals die, and then after a hile, the nets get old, and they roll up on a oral reef, and the waves roll it along like a big valanche ball, killing everything in its path." Then his ushy eyebrows will spring p above his glasses and stay here while he looks at ou, wide-eyed with autoumbfoundment.



And killer drift-net balls re genuinely dumbfoundng, like something from a B orror movie—so dumbounding that, smelling a hyerbole, I later checked bbesmeyer's facts. A ghost net may not kill verything that crosses its path, but it sure can till a lot. News reports describe nets dripping vith putrefying wildlife. Just three months before showed up on Ebbesmeyer's doorstep, NOAA cientists scanning the ocean from the air with digital imaging system had spotted a flock of 100 or so ghost nets drifting through the garbage patch. When they returned to fetch them, they found balls of net measuring thirty feet across. "There is a lot more trash out there than I expected," one of the researchers, James Churnside, told the Associated Press. A few years earlier, Coast Guard divers had spent a month picking 25.5 tons of netting and debris—including two 4,000-pound, fifteen-mile-long, high-seas drift nets—out of reefs around Lisianski Island in the North Pacific. They estimated that there were 6,000 more tons of netting and debris still tangled in the reefs when they left.

In Ebbesmeyer's opinion, ghost nets may pose a still greater danger once they disintegrate. While we were conversing on his patio, he handed me the oldest of the drift-net floats. "Hold this a minute," he said. It weighed almost nothing. "Now put it down and look." On the palm of my hand, the float had left a sprinkling of yellow dust, plastic particles as small as pollen grains in which, if you believe Ebbesmeyer, the destiny of both the Floatees and of the ocean could be read.

Some of the Floatees would have remained in orbit, completing a lap around the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea once every three years

Out on his front lawn, as I was leaving, I asked him what he thought of *10 Little Rubber Ducks*. Despite the gloomy future he glimpsed in that handful of plastic dust, he thought Carle's cheerful picture book was "delightful," especially that little squeaker in the back, and he hoped that it would "make the ocean fun to kids." He did have one criticism. He couldn't figure out why Carle along with just about everyone else seemed compelled to turn the four Floatees into rubber ducks. Coverage of the story in newspapers and magazines almost always showed a picture of a solitary rubber duck, and usually not even the right kind of duck. What was wrong with the other three animals? "Maybe it's a kind of racism," Ebbesmeyer speculated. "Speciesism."

The Floatees are no longer on the market, but before I left, Ebbesmeyer loaned me a set that had survived his experiments, to be returned when I was done with them. I have been carrying them around with me ever since, and they are

at present perched before me on my desk as I write. Monochromatic and polygonal in a Bauhaus sort of way, they bear little resemblance to the rubber ducks in Carle's book or, for that matter, to any other plastic animal I've ever seen. Although blow-molded out of a rigid plastic (probably polyethylene), they look whittled from wax by some artisanal tribesman. The frog's four-fingered hands (the left smaller than the right) seem folded in prayer. The limbs of the turtle are triangular stubs. The duck's head, too large for the flat-bottomed puck of a body it sits upon, is imperfectly spherical, the flat plane of its beak continuing like a crew-cut mohawk over the top of the skull. Poke an axle through the duck's puffed cheeks and its head would make a good wheel. Wildly out of scale and dyed a lurid, maraschino red, the beaver seems altogether out of place in this menagerie, a mammalian interloper from somebody's acid trip. A seam left by the split mold bisects all four animals asymmetrically, and there's a little anal button of scarred plastic where the blow pin, that steel umbilicus, withdrew.

"Why do precisely these objects we behold make a world?" Thoreau wonders in *Walden*. "Why has man just these species of animals for his neighbors; as if nothing but a mouse could have filled this crevice?" Since Thoreau's time, ecologists have explained why that mouse filled that crevice, and since then Walden woods have grown far less bewildering. For Thoreau the distinction between the natural world and the man-made one matters less than that between the subjective experience within and the objective world without. For him, both rocks and mice are objects that he perceives as shadows flickering on the walls of his mind. For him, anthropomorphism is inescapable. All animals, he writes, are "beasts of burden, in a sense, made to carry some portion of our thoughts."

The word "synthetic" in its current sense of "chemically unnatural" would not appear in print until 1874, twenty years after the publication of *Walden* and five years after the invention of celluloid, the first industrial synthetic. In its 137-year history, the synthetic world has itself grown into a kind of wilderness. With the exceptions of our fellow human beings and our domestic pets, the objects that make the worlds we behold today are almost entirely man-made. Consider the following: In nature, there are 142 known species of Anatidae, the family to which ducks, swans, and geese belong. Of those species only one, the white Pekin duck, a domesticated breed of mallard, produces spotless yellow ducklings. Since the invention of plastic, four known species of Anatidae have gone extinct; several others survive only in sanctuaries created to save them. Meanwhile, by the estimates of one collector, the makers of r
elties and toys have concocted more than 5,
different varieties of novelty duck, nearly al
which are yellow, and most of which are not m
in fact from rubber but from plasticized polyv
chloride, a derivative of coal. Why has man
these species of things for his neighbors, a lat
day Thoreau might ask, as if nothing but a yel
duck could perch on the rim of a tub?

Let's draw a bath. Let's set a rubber duck afl
Look at it wobbling there. What misanthro



what damp, misty November of a sourpuss, up
beholding a rubber duck afloat, does not feel
crayola ray of sunshine brightening his gloo
heart? Graphically, the rubber duck's closest r
ative is not a bird or a toy but the yellow happ
face of Wal-Mart commercials. A rubber duck
in effect a happy face with a body and lips
which is what the beak of the rubber duck has b
come: great, lipsticky, bee-stung lips. Both t
happy face and the rubber duck reduce facial e
pressions to a kind of pictogram. They are bo
emoticons. And they are, of course, the san
color—the yellow of an egg yolk or the eye o
daisy, a shade darker than a yellow raincoat,
shade lighter than a taxicab.

Like the eyes of other animals (rabbits, for example, or deer) and unlike the eyes of a happy face, the rubber duck's eyes peer helplessly from the sides of its spherical head. Its movement is also expressive—joyously erratic, like that of a bouncing ball, or a dancing drunk. So long, that is, as it doesn't keel over and float around like a dead fish, as rubber ducks of recent manufacture are prone to do. It's arguable whether such tipsy ducks deserve to be called toys. They have retained the form and lost the function. Their



value is wholly symbolic. They are not so much rubber ducks as plastic representations of rubber ducks. They are creatures of the lab, chimeras synthesized from whimsy and desire in the petri dish of commerce.

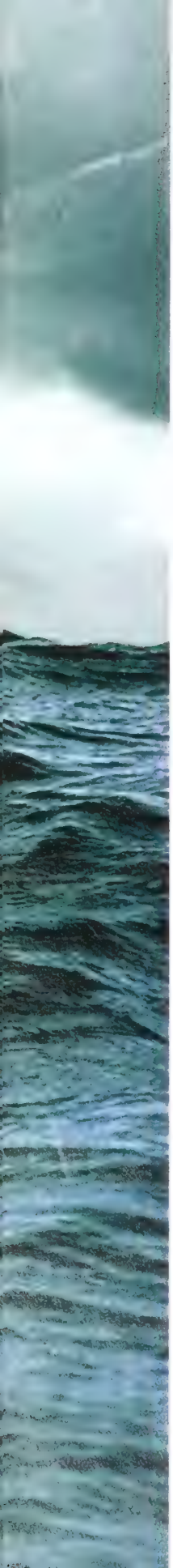
Apologists for plastics will on occasion blur the semantic lines between the antonyms "synthetic" and "natural." Everything is chemical, they rightly say, even water, even us, and plastic, like every living creature great and small, is carbon-based and therefore "organic." But to my mind the only meaningful difference between the synthetic and the natural is more philosophical than chemical. A loon can symbolize madness, and a waddling duck can make us laugh. But the duck and the loon exist outside of the meanings with which we burden them. A loon is not really mad. A duck is not really a clown; it waddles inelegantly because its body has evolved to swim. A rubber duck, by comparison, is not burdened with thought. It *is* thought, the immaterial made material, a subjective object, a fantasy in 3-D.

One night, during the thirty-third week of her pregnancy, my wife and I attended a practicum in infant CPR. With the other expectant parents, we sat around a conference table set with babies—identical, life-size, polyethylene babies, lying there on the formica like lobsters. The skin of these infantile mannequins was the color of graphite. Even their eyeballs were shiny and gray. Their mouths had been molded agape, so that they seemed to be gasping for air. To dislodge an imaginary choking hazard, you were supposed to lay the baby facedown over your left forearm and strike its back with the heel of your right hand. If you struck too hard, its hollow head would pop from its neck and go skittering across the linoleum. The morning after my visit with Ebbesmeyer, hurtling up the eastern shore of Puget Sound aboard the Amtrak Cascades bound for Bellingham, it occurs to me that "garbage patch" sounds like "cabbage patch," and for a moment I am picturing a thousand silvery, gape-mouthed heads bobbing on the open sea.

The old woman across the aisle, a retired high school chemistry teacher from Montana, tells me that she and her husband are traveling the globe. They have been to every continent but Antarctica. She teaches me how to say "I don't have any money" in Norwegian. She tells me about the mural she saw in Belfast depicting a masked man and a Kalashnikov. She tells me about her nephew, who has in fact been to Antarctica. He spent a night dangling from the ice shelf in something like a hammock. *National Geographic* named him one of the top mountain climbers in the world, she says. Then he died in an avalanche in Tibet. Left three little boys. She smiles as she says this. In the window behind her, the blue waters of Puget Sound flash through the green blur of trees.

The train groans into a curve. Suddenly there are green and orange and blue containers stacked atop flatbed train cars parked on a neighboring track. The polyglot names of shipping companies speed by: Evergreen, Uniglory, Maersk. Then, at a clearing in the trees, the great brontosaural works of a gantry crane loom up above a Russian freighter loaded with what looks like modular housing. PORT OF SEATTLE, a sign on the crane reads.

We are somewhere east of the Strait of Juan de Fuca—Juan de Fuca, whom I read about in one of my books. He was a Greek sailor in the Spanish navy whose real name was Apostolos Valeri



anos. He claimed to have discovered the entrance to the Northwest Passage at the 47th parallel in 1592. The transit from the Pacific to the Atlantic had taken a mere twenty days, he reported, and the northern lands between these oceans were filled with riches. Despite how familiar this tale must have sounded, for centuries people actually believed him. Although no one knows for certain whether the Greek sailor ever even visited the North Pacific, his description of the entrance to the passage, then known as the Strait of Anian, bears a superficial resemblance to the entrance of Puget Sound, and so the Strait of Juan de Fuca memorializes the pseudonymous perpetrator of a hoax.

Viewed from the patio of the Bellingham ferry terminal, the M/V *Malaspina* is a splendid sight, its white decks gleaming, a yellow stripe running the length of its navy-blue hull, its single smokestack painted in the motif of the Alaskan state flag—gold stars of the Big Dipper and the North Star against a navy-blue sky. All the motor vessels in the Alaska Marine Highway system are named for Alaskan glaciers, and the *Malaspina* is named for the largest, a 1,500-square-mile slow-moving mesa of ice, which is in turn named for an eighteenth-century Spanish navigator, Alejandro Malaspina, whose search for the Northwest Passage ended in 1791 at the 60th parallel, in an icy inlet that he christened *Bahía del Desengaño*, Disappointment Bay. When I wheel my suitcase down the gangway that evening, the splendor of the M/V *Malaspina* diminishes with every step. The ferry is, I see upon boarding it, an aging, rust-stained hulk, repainted many times. Posted in a display case of documents near the cocktail lounge one can read a disconcerting open letter in which "past and present crew members . . . bid farewell to this proud ship." Queen of the fleet when it was first launched in 1962, the *Malaspina*, the letter explains, "will cease scheduled runs of Alaska's Inside Passage on October 27, 1997." Why the old ferry is still in service eight years later the documents in the display case do not say.

The *Malaspina*'s diesel engines rumble to life. I am going to sea! Who can resist an embarkation? The thrill of watery beginnings? Not me. The evening is cool and exhilarating, the sky clear save for a distant, flat-bottomed macaroon of a cloud. The wavelets on Bellingham Bay are as intricate as houndstooth, complicated by cross breezes and by ripples radiating from the hulls of anchored boats. The dock falls away. I stand at the taffrail and think to myself, *taffrail*, enjoying the union of a thing and its word. Out on the sundeck, at the mouth of the Plexiglas solarium where I will spend the next three nights sleeping for free in a plastic chaise longue, backpackers are pitching their tents, duct-taping them down so that the wind doesn't toss them overboard. Soon a rustling nylon village of colorful domes has sprung up. "Tent city," the veteran ferry-riders call it. On the forested hills of Bellingham, the houses come on the harbor. How festive the ferry must look from up there! As the ship turns and slithers toward the horizon, the low sun moves across the windows of the town, igniting them one by one.

During the middle of the first night, off the eastern shore of Vancouver Island, the temperature drops, a fog shuts down, and my cell phone loses reception. So much for daily phone calls to my pregnant wife. A plastic deck chair, it turns out, makes for a miserable mattress. Cold air seeps between the slats. The government-issue cotton blanket I rented from the ship's purser for a dollar is far too thin. Some of my neighbors in the solarium move inside to sleep like refugees on the carpeted floor of the recliner lounge. I rent a second blanket for the second night, but it hardly makes a difference. Shivering in a fetal position, I think about that mountain climber dangling from the Antarctic ice shelf in a hammock and feel faintly ridiculous. After two nights in the solarium of a cruise ship—a state-operated, poor man's cruise ship, but a cruise ship nonetheless—I have already had my fill of adventuring.

What is childhood? Developmental psychologists will tell you that infancy and toddlerhood and childhood and adolescence are neurologically determined states of mind. Sociologists and historians, meanwhile, tell us that childhood is an idea, distinct from biological immaturity, the meaning of which changes over time. In his seminal 1960 study of the subject, French historian Philippe Ariès argued that childhood as we know it is a modern invention, largely a by-product of schooling. In the Middle Ages, when almost no one went to school, children were treated like miniature adults. At work and at play, there was little age-based segregation. "Everything was permitted in their presence," according to one of Ariès's sources, even "coarse language, scabrous actions and situations; they had heard everything and seen everything." Power, not age, determined whether a person was treated like a child. Until the seventeenth century, the European idea of childhood "was bound up with the idea of dependence: the words 'sons,' 'varlets,' and 'boys' were also words in the vocabulary of feudal subordination. One could leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence." Our notion of childhood as a sheltered period of innocence begins to emerge with the modern education system, Ariès argues. As the period of economic dependence lengthened among the educated classes, so too did childhood. These days education and the puerility it entails often last well into one's twenties, or longer.

Twenty-two years after Ariès published his

ook, media critic Neil Postman announced in *he Disappearance of Childhood* that modern child-ood as Ariès described it had gone extinct, killed f by the mass media, which gave all children, ed-ated or otherwise, premature access to the vi-ent, sexually illicit world of adults. Children still isted, of course, but they'd become, in Post-an's word, "adultified." I was ten years old when ostman published his book, and in many re-ects my biography aligns with his unflattering nerational portrait. In Postman's opinion the ris-g divorce rate indicated a "precipitous falling off the commitment of adults to the nurturing of ildren." My parents divorced just as the Amer-an divorce rate reached its historical peak. Af-r my mother moved out for good, my brother d I came home from school to an empty house here we spent hours watching the sorts of tele-sion shows Postman complains about (*Three's ompany, The Dukes of Hazzard*). Reading Post-an's diagnosis, I begin to wonder if he's right. laybe my childhood went missing.

But then I think of Joshua the Mouse. One day the school where I teach I stopped to admire a ulletin board decorated with construction-aper mice that a class of first graders had made. bove one mouse there appeared the following aption: "My mouse's name is Joshua. He is 20 ears old. He is afraid of everything." I love this aption. I love how those first two humdrum sen-nces do nothing to prepare us for the emotion-revelation of the third. And then there's the age: venty years old. What occult significance could at number possess for Joshua's creator? When you re six, even eight-year-olds look colossal. A venty-year-old must be as unfathomable as a od. And contemplating poor, omniphobic, venty-year-old Joshua, I am convinced that chil-ren may impersonate adults but they will never ecome them. I doubt that childhood has ever een the safe, sunlit harbor adults in moments of rgetfulness dream about. I suspect that it will al-ays be a wilderness.

"For as this appalling ocean surrounds the ver-ant land," Ishmael philosophizes midway through is whale hunt, "so in the soul of man there lies ne insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but en-ompassed by all the horrors of the half known fe. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, hou canst never return!" We canst never return, ut oh, how we try, how we try.

Postman does not only argue that television roduced "adultified children"; paradoxically, it lso produced "childified adults." As evidence, e points to the absence on television of char-cters who possess an "adult's appetite for serious nusic" or "book-learning" or "even the faintest igns of a contemplative habit of mind." One vonders what he would have made of the popu-ar culture of centuries past—the pornographic peep-show boxes, the slapstick vaudeville acts, the violent and salacious Punch and Judy shows, the bearbaitings and cockfights, the dime novels and penny weeklies. The great difference to me seems one not of quality but of quantity: entertainment has become so cheap and ubiquitous that it is inescapable. Even the material world has become a "Sargasso of the imagination." Life is still half known.

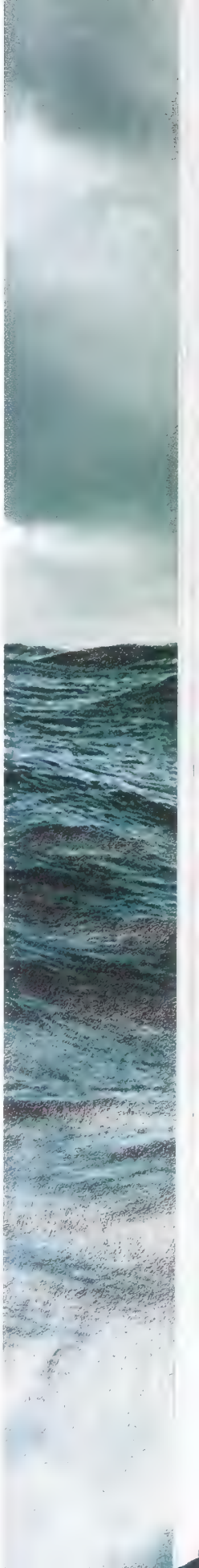
The Alaskan stretch of the Inside Passage snakes through the Alexander Archipelago, a chain of 1,000 or so thickly forested islands, some as small as tablecloths, some as large as Hawaii. These are, in fact, the tops of underwater mountains, part of the same snowcapped range visible on the mainland to the east. Most rise steeply from the water and soar to cloudy heights. Before going there, I expected southeast Alaska to feel like

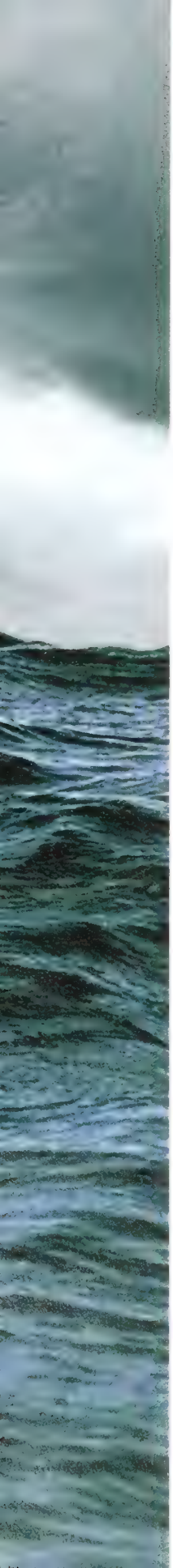
The wavelets on Bellingham Bay are as intricate as houndstooth, complicated by cross breezes and ripples from the hulls of boats

a giant outdoor theme park—Frontierland—and the shopping districts of the resort towns where the gargantuan cruise ships dock confirm my worst expectations. Cruise-ship companies now own many of the businesses in those districts and may soon be able to "imagineer" (as the folks at Disney call it) every aspect of your vacation experience. But the backwaters of the Inside Passage, too narrow and shallow for the superliners to enter, contain lost worlds.

In the narrowest of the narrows, it feels as though we are motoring down an inland river rather than along the ocean's edge—some Amazon of the north. Although this is the Pacific, the water doesn't look, smell, or sound like the sea. Neither waves nor flotsam get past the outer islands to the placid interior. In the summer, streams of glacial melt freshen the channels, and in places the minerals those streams carry turn the channels a strangely luminous shade of jade. The banks sometimes loom so close you could play Frisbee with a person standing on shore. Hours go by when we see no other ships, or any sign of civilization besides the buoys that mark the way among the shoals.

Early in the morning, fog rises here and there from the forests of hemlock, cedar, and spruce. It is as if certain stands are burning, except that the fog moves much more slowly than smoke. On the far side of one mountain, a dense white column billows forth like a slow-motion geyser that lev-





els off into an airborne river flowing into a sea of clouds. I've begun to notice currents everywhere, a universe of eddies and gyres. Phytoplankton ride the same ocean currents that carried the Floatees to Sitka. Zooplankton follow the phytoplankton. Fish follow the zooplankton. Sea lions, whales, and people follow the fish. When, at the end of their upriver journey, salmon spawn and die en masse, their carcasses—distributed by bears, eagles, and other scavengers—fertilize the forests that make the fog, which falls as rain, which changes the ocean's salinity. All deep water travels along what oceanographers call the "conveyor belt," which begins with warm water from the

The only essential difference between rock, water, air, life, galaxies, economies, civilizations, plastics—I decide—is the rate of flow

Gulf Stream draining into the North Atlantic, where evaporation increases the salinity and makes it sink to the ocean floor, where it creeps south into the Antarctic circumpolar stream. After a thousand years—a millennium!—the conveyor belt ends here, in the North Pacific, where the ancient water wells up, carrying nutrients with it. Oceanographers learned much of this from studying radioactive isotopes released into the sea as fallout from nuclear tests. I'm becoming a devout driftologist. The only essential difference between rock, water, air, life, galaxies, economies, civilizations, plastics—I decide, standing on the *Malaspina*'s deck, totally sober, watching the fog make pretty shapes above the trees—is the rate of flow.

Everywhere they look, archaeologists find them—buffalo sprayed with pigments onto the walls of caves, killer whales cut from cedar or stone, horses molded from terra-cotta or plaited out of straw. Our primal fear of predators and our hunger for prey cannot alone account for this menagerie. Three thousand years ago in Persia, someone carved a porcupine out of limestone and attached it to a little chassis on wheels. Four thousand years ago in Egypt, someone sculpted a mouse and glazed it blue. Why blue? Whoever heard of a blue mouse? Is this the forebear of the red beaver and the yellow duck? In fact, many of the figurines that look to us like toys turn out to have been totemic gods or demigods, used in religious ceremonies or funerary rites. To make the archaeological record all the blurrier, some totems in some cultures were given to children as playthings once the festivities had ended.

One thing is clear: animals held an exalted p tion in the lives of both children and adu Even after the missionaries came and clean them from the temples, the animistic gods vived, adapting to the altered cultural la scape. In Europe of the Middle Ages, one of most popular books after the Bible was *Bestiary*, a kind of illustrated field guide to medieval imagination, wherein the animals table and myth were reborn as vehicles Christian allegory. From the *Bestiary* came idea that after three days a pelican could res rect a dead hatchling with her blood, and fr the *Bestiary* we learned that only a virgin can tame a unicorn. Even Aesop, that pag remained a favorite with old and young al well into the seventeenth century.

Gradually, as allegory gave way to zoology farming to industry, we decided that animals w for kids. "Children in the industrialised world surrounded by animal imagery," notes John Be er in "Why Look at Animals?" Despite the tiquity of zoomorphic toys and the "apparen spontaneous interest that children have in a mals," it was not until the nineteenth cent that "reproductions of animals became a regu part of the decor of middle class childhoods and then, in [the twentieth] century, with the vent of vast display and selling systems l Disney's—of all childhoods." Berger traces t phenomenon to the marginalization of anima which the age of industrialism either incarcer ed as living spectacles at the public zoo, treate raw material to be exploited, processed as co modities on factory farms, or domesticated as fa ily pets. Meanwhile, "animals of the mind" which since the dawn of human consciousn had been central to our cosmologies—were s without supper to the nursery. Animals both l ing and imaginary no longer seemed like myste ous gods. They seemed, increasing like toys.

Go bird-watching in the pre-industr libraries of literature and myth, and you w find few ducks, which is puzzling, consideri how popular with the authors of childre books ducks have since become. Search, instance, the fields and forests of Aesop, wh talking beasts are the ancestors of bo Chanticleer the Rooster and Walter the Farti Dog, and you will meet ten cocks, a cote doves, several partridges, a caged songbird, crows, three ravens (one portentous, anoth self-loathing), a dozen or so eagles, five jac daws (one of whom wishes he were an eagl many kites, flocks of cranes, two storks, thr hawks, a cote of pigeons, three hens, a sparr with a bad case of schadenfreude, five swallov many peacocks, a jay who wishes he were a pe

ck, many swans, two nightingales, two larks, o owls, a gluttonous seagull, a thrush en- ared in birdlime, and nary a single duck.

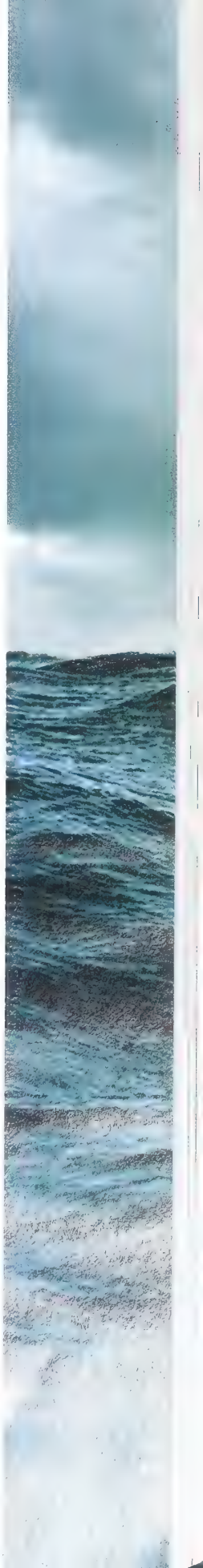
Aesop's fables exhibit considerable ornitho- gical knowledge, but their primary aim is to nsmute animal behavior into human mean- g—to burden them, as Thoreau would say, th some portion of our thought. "The lot of ch has been assigned by the will of the Fates," e god Juno explains to an insecure peacock in e fable, "—to thee, beauty; to the eagle, ength; to the nightingale, song; to the raven, vorable, and to the crow, unfavorable guries." The closest to ducks that Aesop gets is ese, which invariably end up on dinner plates. Even Aesop's most famous goose, the one who ys the golden egg, succumbs to the carving ife. In a Kashmiri version of the same tale, esop's barnyard variety Anatidae becomes the ucky-Bird Humá, a visitor from the magical ian kingdom of Koh-i-Qáf. A Buddhist ver- on of the tale replaces the egg-laying goose th one of the only mythical ducks I have



und, a mallard plumed in gold, which turns ut to be a reincarnation of the Bodhisattva.

In all three versions of the fable, the human eneficiaries sacrifice their magically profitable wa- rfowl on the altar of their greed. The farmer kills he goose, cuts it open, and finds no eggs. Dream- ng of rupees, a Kashmiri woodcutter accidental- asphyxiates the Lucky-Bird Humá while car- ying him to market in a sack. A family of rahmin women decide to pluck out all of the odhisattva's golden feathers at once; they turn into the feathers of a crane. Unlike the others, the Buddhist version tells the fable from the bird's point of view, and for that reason it is peculiarly affecting. Both Aesop's fable and the Kashmiri one show us the folly of human desire, and it is satisfying, reading them, to watch our wicked, bumbling protagonists endure dramatically ironic reversals of fortune. The Buddhist fable shows us the folly of human desire, but it also makes us experience that folly's cost, the debt of suffering our appetites can incur. The tone of the final sentences is more sorrowful than ironic. Trying to escape, the once golden mallard stretches his plucked wings but, featherless, finds he cannot fly. His captors throw him into a barrel. With time, his feathers grow back, but they are plain white ones now. He flies home, never to return.

On the morning that I disembark from the *Malaspina* at Sitka, Tyler and Dean Orbison are just returning from a two-week, 300-mile beachcombing expedition to Latuya Bay and back. They go on such expeditions every summer, traveling farther and farther afield every year, poking around in bunkers abandoned at the end of World War II, walking beaches where the only footprints in the sand are animal tracks. They have a cabin cruiser big enough to sleep in and a skiff for going ashore. From the cruiser, they look for V-shaped coastlines that funnel the tides, and they look for "jackstraw"—driftwood logs jumbled like a pile of pick-up-sticks—and, most important of all, like prospectors panning in the tailings, they look for "good color," their term for plastic debris visible from afar. Where there's some color, there's sure to be more. Their style of beachcombing is by necessity a two-man job. One person has to stay in the skiff to keep it from foundering on the rocks while the other person wades in and combs. They take turns. Dean prefers to hunt high up, in the purple fireweed, where storms will throw objects out of the reach of tides. Tyler, Dean's son, is "a digger." Like a human metal detector, he's learned to divine the location of buried objects by reading the terrain. This year, for the first time, Tyler and Dean started combing in seaside caves where tangled driftwood will form a kind of flotsam trap. It's dark in the caves. You have to beachcomb with a flashlight. It's also cold, but the labor of log-lifting keeps you warm. The effort's worth it. Every cave the Orbisons searched contained a farrago of wrack—a Dawn dish detergent bottle, glass fishing floats, Floatees. Half a water pistol turned up in one cave, the other half in another. By far the most common objects the Orbisons find are polyethylene water bottles. They have begun keeping the screw-tops, cataloguing the varieties. On this last trip they identified seventy-five different brands, many of them foreign in origin. Up in



Latuya Bay they saw a black wolf and the bones of a whale, and they picked wild strawberries, and when their cooler ran out of ice they floated alongside a glacier and broke off a chunk.

Now, at the end of my first day ashore, they've fetched me from my hotel. "Growing up here, I mean, there's nothing," Tyler tells me from the back seat of his father's truck while we're waiting for his parents to emerge from Sitka's only supermarket. "I mean we don't even have a mall. So I took to the outdoors pretty hard." It is clear that Tyler has never given much thought to the marginalization of animals. You wouldn't either if you'd grown up in southeast Alaska, where bears make off with household pets, and ravens alighting on transformers cause power outages, and bald eagles sometimes come crashing through dining room windows. If anything, it's the people who occupy the margins here. Just look at a map: Sitka perches on the coastal brink of Baranof Island, wedged between mountainous wilderness to the east and watery wilderness to the west. Sitkans share their island with an estimated 1,200 grizzly bears—more than are found in all of the lower forty-eight states combined. In May and June, eagles and ravens—the supreme deities in the pantheon of the native Tlingit—wheel overhead. In July and August, the creeks grow dark with spawning sockeye and chum. In November, the whales and the whale watchers arrive. People like me may feel sorry for the 1.2 million sea otters that the Russian American Company parted from their pelts in the early 1800s, but Sitka's otters have replenished themselves with such procreative gusto that local fishermen now regard them as pests—crop-thieving, net-wrecking vermin of the sea.

Like most beachcombers of the Pacific rim, the Orbisons started out collecting Japanese fishing floats, the glass balls that you sometimes see hanging in nets from the ceilings of seafood restaurants, or decorating the window displays of maritime boutiques. The popularity of glass floats owes partly to their delicate, soap-bubble beauty, partly to the Kuroshio Current that sweeps them across the Pacific and bowls them up the beaches of the American West Coast, and partly to Amos L. Wood, an aeronautics engineer and beachcombing enthusiast whose books *Beachcombing for Japanese Floats* and *Beachcombing the Pacific* have become to beachcombers what Audubon guides are to bird-watchers.

A century and a half ago, beachcombers tended to be transcendental weirdos like Ellery Channing and Henry Thoreau. Back then, much of New England's shoreline was as wild as Alaska's is today and more treacherous to passing ships. Just before Thoreau arrived at Provincetown in 1849, a ship carrying Irish immigrants sank off Cohasset. The bodies of the drowned lay strewn along the beach, torn asunder by the surf and fish. "There are more consequences to a shipwreck than the underwriters notice," Thoreau observed. "The Gulf Stream may return some to their native shores, or drop them in some out-of-the-way cave of Ocean, where time and the elements will write new riddles with their bones." Even where no shipwrecks had occurred, a Cape Cod beach in 1849 was "a wild rank place" littered "with crabs, horse-shoes and razor clams, and whatever the sea casts up—a vast *morgue*, where famished dogs may range in packs, and crows come daily to glean the pittance which the tide leaves them."

Still a recent coinage, the word "beachcomber" in 1849 meant approximately what we mean by "beach bum": it evoked a character like the narrator of Melville's *Omoo*, a transient ne'er-do-well who'd fled from civilization hoping to sample tropical women and tropical fruits and loaf around beneath the blowsy palms. "Idle, drunken, vagabond," Edward J. Wakefield wrote in 1845, "he



wanders about without any fixed object, cannot get employed by the whaler or any one else, as it is out of his power to do a day's work; and he is universally known as 'the beach-comber.'" The local Cape Codders whom Thoreau met on his seaside rambles usually took him for a traveling salesman. What other explanation could there be for a vagabond with a walking stick and a knapsack full of books?

The Orbisons gave up collecting for driftology in the summer of 1993, when they began discovering bath toys. Tyler was just twelve at the time, but he was the one to find their first toy, a beaver, and he remembers the moment vividly. "We were on Kruzof Island, looking for glass balls," he says. "We didn't really know what else to look for. It was beautiful weather; the reason we went to Kruzof is because it's really hard to get ashore, and that's where we go when the weather's good. We were up beyond the high-tide line. It was in the driftways. It had been there for a little bit. And I thought, This is cool. It was

bleached out, exactly like the beavers we find now. I would say it had been there since the winter storms."

They assumed that their beaver was a solitary castaway, but when they arrived back in town, talk of the mysterious invasion was in the air. Dean and Tyler went looking for more plastic animals, and found them. They started keeping meticulous records, treating the Floatees as data, which they eventually reported to Ebbesmeyer. About three years later, the oceanographer began publishing *Beachcomber's Alert!*, and the Orbisons were among his first subscribers. They own every issue. "Curt tells us what to look for, and we go out there and find it," Dean explains. This year, at Ebbesmeyer's bidding, they searched for and found a computer monitor, Japanese surveying stakes, hockey gloves, "antisandals" (a sheet of rubber from which flip-flop–shaped blanks have been stamped), part of a naval sonar buoy, and six new Floatees, including a turtle they'd chiseled from the ice. After cataloguing the junk on their porch and showing it to Ebbesmeyer, they'll take most of it to the dump.

Back in the 1970s, when I was a child, rubber ducks were wilder than they are now. There was nothing iconic or nostalgic about them. Some rubber ducks of the Nixon era were white, some were calico. Some had swan-like necks and rosy circles on their cheeks. Some came with rococo feathers molded into their wings and tails. No one used them to sell baby clothes or soap. Normal adults did not give them to one another, or decorate their desks with them. As far as I can remember, no one I knew even owned a rubber duck. I did own one, however, on account of the pet name my mother had given me: Donovan Duck. My duck was a somewhat hideous specimen, with white plumage, a green topcoat, a big head, and the posture of a penguin. It resembled a Hummel figurine that had sprouted a beak.

Not long ago, my mother sent me a photograph in which, naked, eight months old, sitting in the bath across from my brother, I appear to be attempting to gnaw through my rubber duck's skull. The picture is dated January 1973. Most exotic varieties of rubber duck have since gone extinct—they are the dodos and carrier pigeons of the nursery—and what new ones have evolved share a single, yellow ancestor whose pop-cultural apotheosis was by January 1973 already under way. It had begun three years earlier, in 1970, when an orange puppet named Ernie appeared on PBS and said, "Here I am in my tubby again. And my tubby's all filled with water and nice, fluffy suds. And I've got my soap and washcloth to wash myself. And I've got my nifty scrub brush to help me scrub my back. And I've got a big fluffy towel to dry myself when I'm done. But there's one other thing that makes tubby time the very best time of the whole day. And do you know what that is? It's a very special friend of mine. My very favorite little pal"—at which point Ernie reaches into the suds and, brandishing his yellow duck, bursts into song.

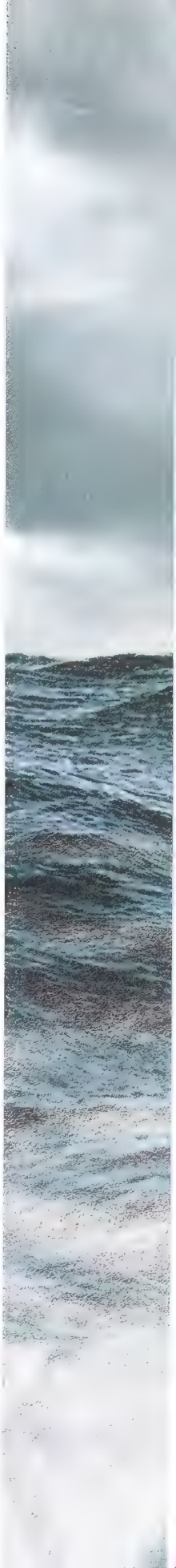
You can watch a video clip of the number online. A pink towel hangs from a wooden post at the left edge of the frame. The post looks like something out of an old Western. There is no other scenery to speak of. Behind the bathtub—which is huge, presumably claw-footed, and decorated with three pink daisies—hangs a sky-blue backdrop. Bubbles of the sort you blow with a wand come floating up from the bottom of the screen, and the gurgle of water accompanies the music. Although I watched my share of *Sesame Street* as a child, I far preferred Super Grover's mock-heroic pratfalls to Ernie's snickering bonhomie, and I have no memory of the rubber duckie number. My wife, on the other hand, still knows the song by heart.

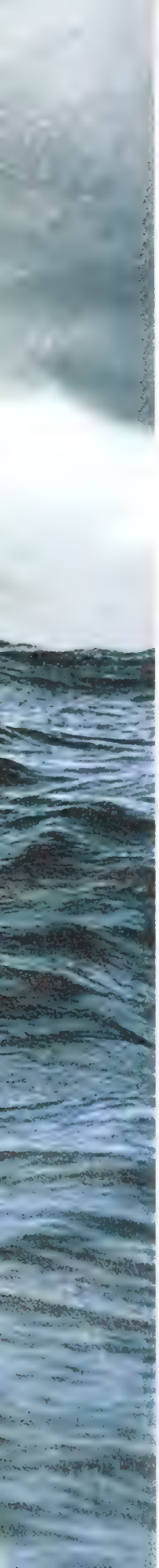
In 1849 "beachcomber" evoked a character like the narrator of Melville's Omoo, *a transient ne'er-do-well who'd fled from civilization*

"Rubber Duckie, joy of joys," Ernie sings. "When I squeeze you, you make noise,/Rubber Duckie, you're my very best friend, it's true." It's all so synthetic, so lonely, so imaginary, so clean. And apparently children loved it. In the 1969 pilot episode of *Sesame Street*, in which a version of the rubber duckie song appeared, children in the test audience responded so enthusiastically to Ernie and Bert and so tepidly to segments featuring the live actors that the show's creators redesigned it, giving the puppets a starring role.

However novel the medium, however inventive Jim Henson's puppetry, Ernie's bathtub serenade draws upon a history of representation that can be traced back to the eighteenth century, when British portraitists stopped painting children as diminutive adults and turned them into puppy-eyed personifications of Innocence. In the Romantic era, no longer was innocence merely the antithesis of guilt; it was also the antithesis of adulthood and modernity. Children became little noble savages and childhood became a place as well as an age—a lost, imaginary, pastoral realm.

It is striking how much the modern [illegible] of childhood resembles that of animals. [illegible]





[illegible] industrialized civilization," John Berger writes, "animals were used as machines. As also were children." In the latter stages of industrialism, poor children who escaped the factory often took to the street, where they formed what social historians call "child societies," gangs of feral children—like feral cats—invented a social order all their own. Partly in fear of child societies, middle-class parents of the Gilded Era began treating their children increasingly like pets. Nurseries and playrooms became more common, and toy chests began to overflow.

In 1869, a printer from Albany, New York, named John Wesley Hyatt mixed ground camphor with nitrocellulose, thereby inventing celluloid. In 1873, the first Pekin ducks were

Ducklings are the aquatic equivalent of kittens and bunnies. In fact, it's hard to think of a smaller, cuddlier animal that can swim

imported to the United States from China. And in the 1880s, bathtubs began appearing in middle-class homes along with indoor plumbing. Celluloid eventually evolved into the plastics industry. The Pekin duck eventually became the preferred species of American duck breeders, making yellow ducklings a familiar symbol of birth and spring. And the average American bathroom, which had once consisted of a washtub and an outhouse, was consecrated as a temple of cleanliness. Much as the modern nursery sheltered children from the social contamination of the street, so the modern bathroom protected their naked, slippery bodies from germs. In the first decades of the twentieth century, public-health campaigns and soap advertisements—usually illustrated with pudgy little tots—exhorted parents to bathe their

Ted Ashton, [illegible] Peter Stearns, [illegible] Anxious Parents: A History of Modern Child-rearing in America, "were widely appealing at a time when parents were trying to [illegible] new psychological arrangements for babies and also to guard against unduly fervent emotional attachments to mothers. The decline in paid help for young children also opened the door to the use of toys as surrogate entertainment." One commentator at the time speculated that toy animals helped children overcome primal fears of scary predators, turning lions and tigers and bears into snuggly sidekicks. Perhaps the most astute psychological profile of the child consumer appeared in Playthings, the trade journal of the American toy industry, which in 1913 was predicting that "the nervous temperament of the average American child and the rapidity with [illegible] market in to

children often. Little boys, the thinking went, were naturally indisposed to bathing. Bath toys not only made hygiene boyishly fun; they helped overcome the naughty urges that bathing tended to arouse: "The baby will not spend much time handling his genitals if he has other interesting things to do," one government-issue child-care manual advised in 1942. "See that he has a toy to play with and he will not need to use his body as a plaything." Enter the rubber duck.

Ducklings are the aquatic equivalent of kittens and bunnies. In fact, it's hard to think of a smaller, cuddlier animal that can swim. Most of the frogs and turtles of children's literature are middle-aged men, whereas even in nature ducklings are model offspring: obedient, dependent, vulnerable to predation, clumsy, soft, a little dumb. Just think of them waddling in a train behind a mother duck, a familiar image memorialized by Robert McCloskey's best-selling children's book *Make Way for Ducklings*. McCloskey's baby mallards, penciled in black and white, look like real baby mallards—a little stylized, but real. Like the ducks depicted in other venerable children's books, they bear little resemblance to Ernie's Day-Glo squeak toy. Beatrix Potter's Jemimah is a white Pekin duck in a bonnet and shawl. Donald Duck, the most famous water fowl at mid-century, was also a white Pekin, and the most common toy duck was still the ancient bird-on-a-leash, a wooden pull-toy with wheels instead of feet. Before the rubber duck could eclipse it, plastic had to replace wood as the preferred material for toys, which, following the technical innovations spurred by World War II, it did.

McCloskey published his book in 1941. That same year, at the beginning of the war, two British chemists, V. E. Yarsley and E. G. Couzens, prophesied with surprising accuracy and quaintly utopian innocence what middle-class childhood in the 1970s would be like. "Let us try to imagine a dweller in the 'Plastic Age,'" they wrote in the British magazine *Science Digest*.

> This creature of our imagination, this 'Plastic Man,' will come into a world of colour and bright shining surfaces, where childish hands find nothing to break, no sharp edges or corners to cut or graze, no crevices to harbour dirt or germs, because, being a child his parents will see to it that he is surrounded on every side by this tough, safe, clean material which human thought has created. The walls of his nursery, all the articles of his bath and certain other necessities of his small life, all his toys, his cot, the moulded perambulator in which he rides the air, the teething ring he bites, the unbreakable bottle he feeds from . . . all will be plastic, brightly self-coloured and patterned with every design likely to please his childish mind.

Here, then, is one of the meanings of the duck. It represents this vision of childhood—the hygienic childhood, the safe childhood, the brightly colored childhood, in which everything, even bathtub articles, have been designed to please the childish mind, much as the golden fruit in that most famous origin myth of paradise "was pleasant to the eyes" of childish Eve. Yarsley and Couzens go on to imagine the rest of Plastic Man's life, and it is remarkable how little his adulthood differs from his childhood. When he grows up, Plastic Man will live in a house furnished with "beautiful, transparent, glass-like materials in every imaginable form," he will play with plastic toys (tennis rackets and fishing tackle), he will, "like a magician," be able to make "what he wants." And yet there is one imperfection, one run in this nylon dream. Plastic might make the pleasures of childhood last forever, but it could not make Plastic Man immortal. When he dies, he will sink "into his



grave hygienically enclosed in a plastic coffin." The image must have been unsettling, even in 1941; that hygienically enclosed death too reminiscent of the hygienically enclosed life that preceded it. To banish the image of that plastic coffin from their readers' thoughts, the utopian chemists inject a little more technicolor resin into their closing sentences. When "the dust and smoke" of war had cleared, plastic would deliver us "from moth and rust" into a world "full of colour . . . a new, brighter, cleaner, more beautiful world."

For new parents who had themselves grown up during the Depression and the war, the fantasy of childhood as consumer paradise exerted a powerful appeal. Browsing through issues of *Parents Magazine* from 1950, I came upon an ad campaign for Heinz baby food ("Scientific Cooking Gives Finer Flavor, Color and Texture to Heinz Strained Carrots"). In one Heinz ad, targeted at new mothers, cartoon butterflies, fairies, and dolls encircle the photograph of a baby girl. "Wee elfin creatures go riding on butterfly wings," the copy reads, "dolls speak in a language all their own and something altogether new and wonderful happens everywhere a baby looks . . . your child lives in a magic world where everything's enchanted." Then came television, enchantment in a box. Annual toy sales in America shot from $84 million in 1940 to $1.25 billion in 1960. Peg-and-socket pop beads sold to girls as costume jewelry consumed 40,000 pounds of polyethylene resin per month in 1956. In 1958, "twirling hoops" consumed 15 million pounds of the stuff. Polystyrene replaced balsa wood as the material of choice for model cars and planes. Plasticized polyvinyl chloride, the material from which the brand-new Barbie doll was made, provided a cheaper, more durable alternative to latex rubber, rendering traditional molded rubber animals and dolls obsolete except in name.

Not long after PBS first broadcast it, Ernie's rubber duckie song went to number 16 on the *Billboard* charts. Radio stations were playing it, adults were buying it. And, unlike the other *Sesame Street* characters, Ernie's rubber duck could not be licensed. Producers had picked up the prop at a local dimestore, which meant that even as it became a recurring character and a pop music phenomenon, it remained in the public domain, free for the taking, no fees required. Does that mean that if Ernie had gone bathing with a white duck or a green one, our iconic ducks would be white or green? I'm not sure. The threads of chance and meaning are hard to disentangle. On the album cover of the single of the song, Ernie, for some reason, is holding a different duck, a white one with burnt-orange spots. Perhaps there is more to the message in this particular bottle than the medium. Perhaps Ernie alone does not explain the yellowness of the duck.

"Ideals of innocent beauty and the adorable have changed little in a hundred years or more," the historian Gary Cross writes. "Many today share with the Victorian middle class an attraction to the blond, blue-eyed, clear-skinned, and well-fed child and are appalled by, uninter-



subsidizes his fishing with profits earned in the building-supply business, Calvin embodies an old brand of American individualism that seems to flourish in the strange democratic conundrum that is maritime Alaska, a place both rural and coastal, both red and blue, Western and Tlingit, industrial and aquacultural and wild. On Calvin's black ball cap a fish leaps above the words

With us aboard the Mommie Mist are eleven

or so scholars—oceanographers, archaeologists, anthropologists, linguists, historians—who have come to Sitka for the annual Paths Across the Pacific Conference, an academic symposium scheduled to coincide with the Beachcombers' Fair. The organizing theory of the conference is this: People started crossing the Pacific Ocean by boat tens of thousands of years ago, far earlier than was previously thought. Some Asian immigrants sailed to America by mistake when blown astray. Some came on purpose, paddling along the coast of the Beringian ice shelf, traveling a little farther east with every generation. Comparatively little is known about these ancient migrations, and on the way to Kruzof Island, an oceanographer named Thomas Royer tells me one reason why. Sea levels have risen so much since the last ice age that the earliest settlements in Alaska are now 100 meters underwater.

Another passenger, an archaeologist, interrupts to contest Royer's figures. Sedimentation adds about a centimeter a year to the ocean floor, this archaeologist says, which means you'd have to dig deeper than 100 meters. You'd have to dig about 400 meters to find any artifacts.

Most of the chitchat aboard the *Morning Mist* is similarly quibbling, interdisciplinary, and esoteric. When did people first begin using boats—40,000 years ago? 50,000 years ago? What does it take to start a migration—a critical mass, or a few individuals with the itch to explore? Why did people migrate in the first place—the profit motive? hunger? exile? Ebbesmeyer and Ingraham's computer simulations may help these marine archaeologists reconstruct the routes of those transoceanic migrations, the history of which is inseparable from the history of global climate change. In other words, it is humanity's own past and future that the oceanographers are scrying in the tangled drift routes of the toys.

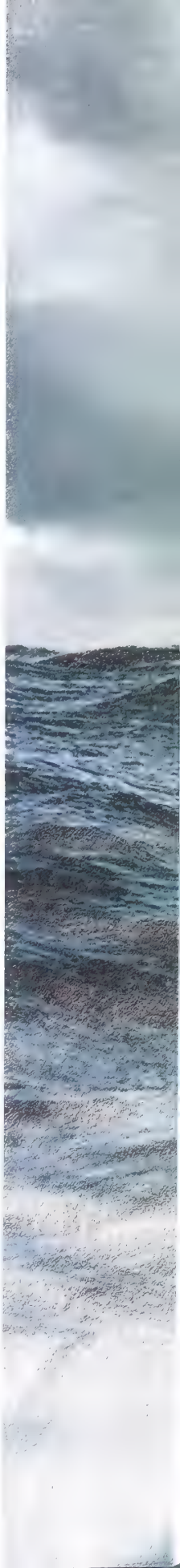
Looking out from the cabin of the *Morning Mist*, Royer teaches me how to read the surface of the sea. "You see that smooth area there?" he asks. "Either temperature or the salinity will change the surface tension of the water, so the same wind will ruffle the water in one spot but not in another." All variations in the surface are the effects of hidden causes. What to me looks simply like an expanse of water is in fact a kind of shifting, aquatic topography, like an enormous lava lamp, only far more complex and subtle. Instead of one liquid suspended in another, there are slopes of dense, salty water and rivers of light, brackish water, and all of it, over the course of centuries, will eventually intermingle. As in all complex systems, minute changes to the ocean—in salinity, in temperature, in air pressure—can entail grand and unpredictable climate events. Because of melting glaciers, for instance, the salinity in the 18-mile-wide coastal current that flows north along the Alaskan seaboard is presently decreasing, making the water fresher and lighter. Counterintuitively, however, sea levels in Alaska are falling—or so it seems—because the land, relieved of the weight of ice, is lifting, the way an air mattress resumes its shape after you stand up.

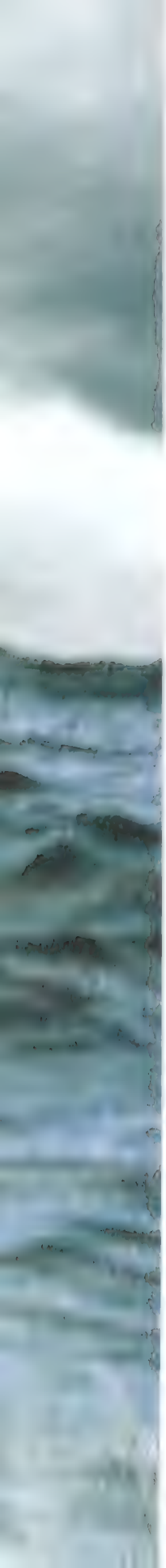
In the half hour or so it takes us to get to Kruzof, centuries seem to recede. Sitka disappears into a blur of blue horizon. The world out here would not have looked much different a millennium ago, I think to myself. It resembles the opening verses of Genesis. There is only the land, the water, the trees. And then, at the edge of my peripheral vision, an orange figure swoops and dives. It's a kite. A kite shaped like a bird, and

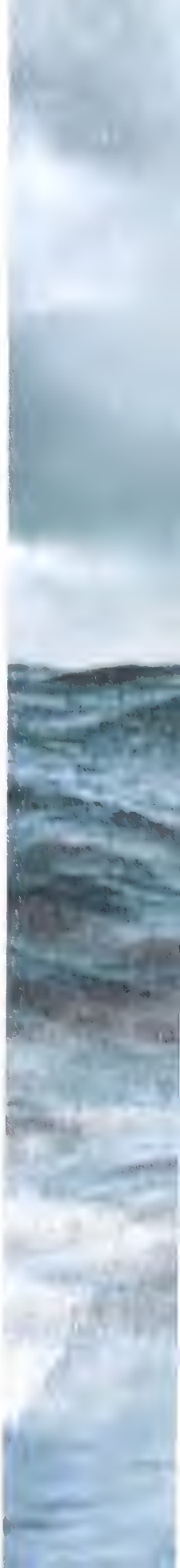
Is it too much of a stretch to see in the yellowness of the rubber duck a visual reminder of that well-fed, blue-eyed, yellow-haired Victorian ideal?

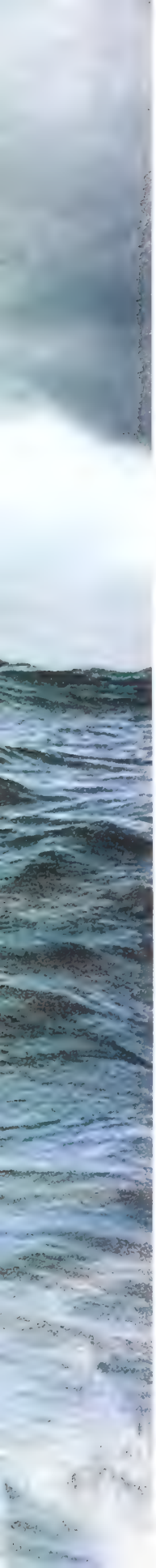
there on the beach below it are three figures, a father and his children, dressed in colorful swimsuits. They have rented one of the four rustic cabins that the National Forest Service maintains on Kruzof Island. The cabin itself becomes visible now, tucked back into the trees. Here, in the forest primeval at the foot of a dormant volcano, is a scene from the New Jersey Shore. Larry Calvin anchors the *Morning Mist* well away from the rocky shallows and ferries us in several at a time aboard his aluminum skiff. The father flying the kite hollers hello, the children eye us warily. Ebbesmeyer hands out white plastic garbage bags in which to collect our discoveries. Dean Orbison will lead one beachcombing party to the south. I join Ebbesmeyer's party, headed north.

I try to remember what the Orbisons and Amos Wood have taught me. Up ahead, where the beach curves and tapers into a sickle, there's lots of jackstraw and even a little color—a fleck of blue, a daub of red. To get there we have to cross Fred's Creek, which spills down through the trees over terraces of rocks before carving a delta of rivulets and bluffs through the sand. The delta is perhaps a dozen yards wide, and those of us without Sitka sneakers have trouble getting across. I manage to leap from rock to rock. Curtis Ebbesmeyer, who ambles along somewhat effortfully, is in no state to go rock jumping. He hikes up into the trees and crosses where the creek narrows. Reuniting on the far shore, we make our way down the beach in a line, scanning the sand. Ebbesmeyer launches into one of his litanies of facts. Bowling balls float, he informs us, or rather the nine-, ten-, and eleven-pounders do. Heavier ones sink. And did you know th









The flotsam Ebbesmeyer and his beachcombers find is not only incongruous, it's uncanny, in the Freudian sense—a repressed fact breaking forth with the shock of strangeness into our conscious minds. As he, Charlie Moore, and other oceanographers can tell you, the ocean does not so easily forget. Chemically, it remembers. An environmental geochemist at the University of Tokyo has shown that on the open sea polyethylene acts as a toxin sponge, attracting and concentrating free-floating non-water-soluble chemicals such as DDT and PCB, and plastics themselves contain a host of known carcinogens, including PCBs, that are safe only as long as they remain inert. Some of these compounds have also been recently identified as "gender-bending" endocrine disruptors. The American Plastics Council has called such findings "fascinating" but inconclusive, and many concerned scientists agree. A PVC duck in the bathtub may well be harmless to your child, but no one yet knows how post-consumer plastics that escape the landfill are altering the chemistry of the environment. The experiment, which began a century or so ago, is ongoing. In the meantime, Ebbesmeyer worries that plastics could do to our civilization what lead did to the Romans. He thinks the garbage patch may betoken nothing less than "the end of the ocean." The seas have become synthetic. The planet is sick. It can no longer recycle its ingredients, or purge itself of pollutants.

Some of the archaeologists in our beachcombing expedition have studied the midden heaps of shells that prehistoric seafarers left around the Pacific Rim. Garbage often outlasts monuments, and if 10,000 years from now archaeologists come looking for us, they will find a trail of plastic clues. It will be easy to date us by our artifacts. At the rate we're burning and extruding fossil fuels, the age of petrochemical plastics promises to be relatively short.

I have yet to reach the end of my own trail of clues. I'd like to go farther. I'd like Larry Calvin to ferry me 2,000 miles west, to that spot in the middle of the North Pacific where thirteen years ago a container of bath toys tumbled into the sea. I'd like to ride a container ship through a winter storm and return with it to Guangdong Province, where low-wage factory workers manufacture 70 percent of the toys we Americans buy—about $12 billion worth—71 percent of which are made of plastic. I've read disturbing reports about the Chinese toy industry, and now when I read Eric Carle's *10 Little Rubber Ducks*, which was itself manufactured in China, and come to the scene of the woman in the brick-red dress painting brick-red leaks with her little paint brush, I can't help but think of Huangwu No. 2 Toy Factory, where, according to the nonprofit China Labour Watch, in order to earn the legal minimum wage of $3.45 for an eight-hour day, a piece-rate worker in the spray department "would have to paint 8,920 small toy pieces a day, or 1,115 per hour, or one every 3.23 seconds."

Did workers make the Floatees under similar conditions? Before leaving for Sitka, I called The First Years, Inc., which has recently been bought out. The current management seemed to know less about the Floatees than I did, or pretended to. There was no way they could tell me which factory produced that yellow duck of mine, they said. I would like to know the provenance of everything. I would like to follow the duck back into the blow molding machine, back into the resin extruder, back to the petroleum refinery, back to the oil field or coal mine whence it came. But for now, it's time to give up the chase. In 1827, returning from another failed attempt to find the Northwest Passage, Lieutenant Parry, upon learning that he was to become a father, sent a letter home to his pregnant wife: "success in my enterprize is by no means essential to our joy, tho' it might have added something to it; but we cannot, ought not to have *everything* we wish. . . ."

On Kruzof Island, I find that for the first time since Bellingham my cell phone is picking up a signal. I call my wife and tell her I've decided to fly home sooner than planned, just to be safe. A week after my return, following a difficult, thirty-hour labor, my wife will give birth to a son, the sight and touch of whom will dispel my usual, self-involved preoccupations and induce a goofy, mystical, sleep-deprived euphoria. My wife will cry, and when she does so will I. These will be tears of joy, of course, but also of exhaustion and of awe and, truth be told, of sadness. Holding my son for the first time, I will feel diminished by the mystery of his birth and by the terrible burden of love, a burden that, requiring hopefulness, will feel too great to carry, but which I will take up nonetheless.

In the meantime, back on Kruzof Island, there is Fred's Creek to cross.

Tired, loaded down with our plastic bag of scavengings, Ebbesmeyer is having a hard time fording the stream. He picks his way carefully up into the trees, places his foot on a partially submerged rock, but hesitates. His breath is short and his footing poor. The rest of our party has continued on without us. I wait. "Throw me the bag," I call to him, and he does. It lands with a splash at the edge of the creek. I met the aging oceanographer in person only a week ago, but I feel oddly protective of him, oddly filial. I watch the trees for bears. Finally he is over to the other side, and we walk together back to the landing on the beach and wait for Larry Calvin to come for us. ■

REPUBLIC OR EMPIRE

A National Intelligence Estimate on the United States[1]

By Chalmers Johnson[2]

KEY JUDGMENTS

The United States remains, for the moment, the most powerful nation in history, but it faces a violent contradiction between its long republican tradition and its more recent imperial ambitions.

The fate of previous democratic empires suggests that such a conflict is unsustainable and will be resolved in one of two ways. Rome attempted to keep its empire and lost its democracy. Britain chose to remain democratic and in the process let go its empire. Intentionally or not, the people of the United States already are well embarked upon the course of non-democratic empire.

Several factors, however, indicate that this course will be a brief one, which most likely will end in economic and political collapse.

Military Keynesianism: The imperial project is expensive. The flow of the nation's wealth—from taxpayers and (increasingly) foreign lenders through the government to military contractors and (decreasingly) back to the taxpayers—has created a form of "military Keynesianism," in which the domestic economy requires sustained military ambition in order to avoid recession or collapse.

The Unitary Presidency: Sustained military ambition is inherently anti-republican, in that it tends to concentrate power in the executive branch. In the United States, President George W. Bush subscribes to an esoteric interpretation of the Constitution called the theory of the unitary executive, which holds, in effect, that the president has the authority to ignore the separation of powers written into the Constitution, creating a feedback loop in which permanent war and the unitary presidency are mutually reinforcing.

Failed Checks on Executive Ambition: The U.S. legislature and judiciary appear to be incapable of restraining the president and therefore restraining imperial ambition. Direct op-

[1] *The CIA's website defines a National Intelligence Estimate as "the most authoritative written judgment concerning a national security issue prepared by the Director of Central Intelligence." These forecasts of "future developments" and "their implications for the United States" seldom are made public, but there are exceptions. One was the NIE of September 2002 "Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction," which became notorious because virtually every word in it was false. Another, an April 2006 NIE entitled "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States," was partly declassified by President Bush because its main conclusion—that "activists identifying themselves as jihadists" are "increasing in both number and geographic dispersion"—had already been leaked to the press.*

[2] *The CIA is prohibited from writing an NIE on the United States, and so I have here attempted to do so myself in standard format for such estimates. I have some personal knowledge of NIEs because from 1967 to 1973 I served as an outside consultant to the CIA's Office of National Estimates. I was one of about a dozen so-called experts invited to redraft NIEs in order to provide quality control and prevent bureaucratic logrolling.*

Chalmers Johnson is the author of Blowback, The Sorrows of Empire, *and, most recently,* Nemesis: The [illegible] of the American Republic, *which will be published in February by Metropolitan Books. His last article for* [illegible] Magazine, *"The War Business: Squeezing a Profit from the Wreckage in Iraq," appeared in the Nov*[illegible]

cause the television and print media have by and large found it unprofitable to inform the public about the actions of the country's leaders. Nor is it likely that the military will attempt to take over the executive branch by

Bankruptcy and Collapse: Confronted by the limits of its own vast but nonetheless finite financial resources and lacking the political check on spending provided by a functioning democracy, the United States will within a very short time face financial or even political collapse at home and a significantly diminished ability to project force abroad.

DISCUSSION

Military Keynesianism

The ongoing U.S. militarization of its foreign affairs has spiked precipitously in recent years, with increasingly expensive commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. These commitments grew from many specific political factors, including the ideological predilections of the current regime, the growing need for material access to the oil-rich regions of the Middle East, and a long-term bipartisan emphasis on hegemony as a basis for national security. The *domestic* economic basis for these commitments, however, is consistently overlooked. Indeed, America's hegemonic policy is in many ways most accurately understood as the inevitable result of its decades-long policy of military Keynesianism.

During the Depression that preceded World War II, the English economist John Maynard Keynes, a liberal capitalist, proposed a form of governance that would mitigate the boom-and-bust cycles inherent in capitalist economies. To prevent the economy from contracting, a development typically accompanied by social unrest, Keynes thought the government should take on debt in order to put people back to work. Some of these deficit-financed government jobs might be socially useful, but Keynes was not averse to creating make-work tasks if necessary. During periods of prosperity, the government would cut spending and rebuild the treasury. Such countercyclical planning was called "pump-priming."

Upon taking office in 1933, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, with the assistance of Congress, put several Keynesian measures into effect, including socialized retirement plans, minimum wages for all workers, and government-financed jobs on massive projects, including the Triborough Bridge in New York City, the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, a flood-control and electric-power-generation complex covering seven states. Conservative capitalists feared that this degree of government intervention would delegitimate capitalism—which they understood as an economic system of quasi-natural laws—and shift the balance of power from the capitalist class to the working class and its unions. For these reasons, establishment figures tried to hold back countercyclical spending.

The onset of World War II, however, made possible a significantly modified form of state socialism. The exiled Polish economist Michal Kalecki attributed Germany's success in overcoming the global Depression to a phenomenon that has come to be known as "military Keynesianism." Government spending on arms increased manufacturing and also had a multiplier effect on general consumer spending by raising worker incomes. Both of these points are in accordance with general Keynesian doctrine. In addition, the enlargement of standing armies absorbed many workers, often young males with few skills and less education. The military thus becomes an employer of last resort, like Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps, but on a much larger scale.

Rather than make bridges and dams, however, workers would make bullets, tanks, and fighter planes. This made all the difference. Although Adolf Hitler did not undertake rearmament for purely economic reasons, the fact that he advocated governmental support for arms production made him acceptable not only to the German industrialists, who might otherwise have opposed his destabilizing expansionist policies, but also to many around the world who celebrated his achievement of a "German economic miracle."

In the United States, Keynesian policies continued to benefit workers, but, as in Germany, they also increasingly benefited wealthy manufacturers and other capitalists. By the end of the war, the United States had seen a massive shift. Dwight Eisenhower, who helped win that war and later became president, described this shift in his 1961 presidential farewell address:

> Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.
>
> Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on mili-

tary security alone more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

Eisenhower went on to suggest that such an arrangement, which he called the "military-industrial complex," could be perilous to American ideals. The short-term economic benefits were clear, but the very nature of those benefits—which were all too carefully distributed among workers and owners in "every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government"—tended to short-circuit Keynes's insistence that government spending be cut back in good times. The prosperity of the United States came increasingly to depend upon the construction and continual maintenance of a vast war machine, and so military supremacy and economic security became increasingly intertwined in the minds of voters. No one wanted to turn off the pump.

Between 1940 and 1996, for instance, the United States spent nearly $4.5 trillion on the development, testing, and construction of nuclear weapons alone. By 1967, the peak year of its nuclear stockpile, the United States possessed some 32,000 deliverable bombs. None of them was ever used, which illustrates perfectly Keynes's observation that, in order to create jobs, the government might as well decide to bury money in old mines and "leave them to private enterprise on the well-tried principles of laissez faire to dig them up again." Nuclear bombs were not just America's secret weapon; they were also a secret economic weapon.

Such spending helped create economic growth that lasted until the 1973 oil crisis. In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan once again brought the tools of military Keynesianism to bear, with a policy of significant tax cuts and massive deficit spending on military projects, allegedly to combat a new threat from Communism. Reagan's military expenditures accounted for 5.9 percent of the gross domestic product in 1984, which in turn fueled a 7 percent growth rate for the economy as a whole and helped reelect Reagan by a landslide.

During the Clinton years military spending fell to about 3 percent of GDP, but the economy rallied strongly in Clinton's second term due to the boom in information technologies, weakness in the previously competitive Japanese economy, and—paradoxically—serious efforts to reduce the national debt.[3] With the coming to power of George W. Bush, however, military Keynesianism returned once again. Indeed, after he began his war with Iraq, the once-erratic relationship between defense spending and economic growth became nearly parallel. A spike in defense spending in one quarter would see a spike in GDP, and a drop in defense spending would likewise see a drop in GDP.

To understand the real weight of military Keynesianism in the American economy today, however, one must approach official defense statistics with great care. The "defense" budget



"B-52 'Bone Yards,' Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson, Ariz., 1994"
© Alex S. MacLean/Landslides

[3] *Military Keynesianism, it turns out, is not the way to boost an economy.*



to finance foreign armies and militarily related development or the Treasury Department's payment of pensions to military retirees and widows and their families (an amount not fully disclosed by official statistics). Still to be added are interest payments by the Treasury to cover past debt-financed defense outlays. The economist Robert Higgs estimates that in 2000 such interest payments amounted to $1,353 billion.

Even when all these things are included, I intentionally underestimate the true dependency on military spending. In 2000 the Government Accountability Office reports, it "could not properly account for billions of dollars in transactions" and "did not adequately support billions of dollars in adjustments" that the Department of Defense made to its accounts. For the Department of Veterans Affairs, responsibility for the lifetime care of the casualties (300 billion). Nor does it include the billions of dollars the Department of Energy spends each year to maintain the nuclear weapons stockpile. Nor does it include the billions of dollars the Department of Homeland Security spends on the military "defense" of the United States. Still, billions of the Department of Veterans Affairs responsibility for the lifetime care of the casualties (300 billion). Nor does it include the billions of dollars the Department of Energy spends each year

matched the available budget. Such actions seem absurd in terms of military logic. But they are perfectly logical responses to the requirements of military Keynesianism, which places its emphasis not on the demand for defense but rather on the available supply of money.

The Unitary Presidency

Military Keynesianism may be economically destructive in other means, but it does very other

lead to real war, or, if not real war, then a significantly warlike political environment. This creates a feedback loop. American presidents know that military Keynesianism tends to concentrate power in the executive branch, and so presidents who seek greater power have a natural inducement to encourage further growth of the military-industrial complex. As the phenomena feed on each other, the usual outcome is a real war, based not on the needs of national defense but rather on the domestic political logic of military Keynesianism. As U.S. Senator Robert La Follette Sr. observed, "In times of peace, the war party insists on making preparation for war. As soon as prepared for war, it insists on making war."

George W. Bush has taken this natural political phenomenon to an extreme never before experienced by the American electorate. Every president has sought greater authority, but Bush—whose father lost his position as forty-first president in a fair and open election—appears to be

ieve that increasing presidential authority is both a birthright and a central component of his historical legacy. He is supported in this belief by his vice president and chief adviser, Dick Cheney.

In pursuit of more power, Bush and Cheney have unilaterally authorized preventive war against nations they designate as needing "regime change," directed American soldiers to torture persons they have seized and imprisoned in various countries, ordered the National Security Agency to carry out illegal "data mining" surveillance of the American people, and done everything they could to prevent Congress from outlawing "cruel, inhumane, or degrading" treatment of people detained by the United States. Each of these actions has been undertaken for specific ideological, tactical, or practical reasons, but also as part of a general campaign of power concentration.

Cheney complained in 2002 that, since he had served as Gerald Ford's chief of staff, he had seen a significant erosion in executive power as post-Watergate presidents were forced to "cough up and compromise on important principles." He was referring to such reforms as the War Powers Act of 1973, which requires that the president obtain congressional approval within ninety days of ordering troops into combat; the Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, which was designed to stop Nixon from impounding funds for programs he did not like; the Freedom of Information Act of 1966, which Congress strengthened in 1974; President Ford's Executive Order 11905 of 1976, which outlawed political assassination; and the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980, which gave more power to the House and Senate select committees on intelligence. Cheney said that these reforms were "unwise" because they "weaken the presidency and the vice presidency," and added that he and the president felt an obligation "to pass on our offices in better shape than we found them."

No president, however, has ever acknowledged the legitimacy of the War Powers Act, and most of these so-called limitations on presidential power had been gutted, ignored, or violated long before Cheney became vice president. Republican Senator John Sununu of New Hampshire said, "The vice president may be the only person I know of that believes the executive has somehow lost power over the last thirty years."

Bush and Cheney have made it a primary goal of their terms in office, nonetheless, to carve executive power into the law, and the war has been the primary vehicle for such actions. John Yoo, Bush's deputy assistant attorney general from 2001 to 2003, writes in his book *War By Other Means*, "We are used to a peacetime system in which Congress enacts laws, the President enforces them, and the courts interpret them. In wartime, the gravity shifts to the executive branch." Bush has claimed that he is "the commander" and "the decider" and that therefore he does not "owe anybody an explanation" for anything.[4]

Similarly, in a September 2006 press conference, White House spokesman Tony Snow engaged in this dialogue:

> Q: Isn't it the Supreme Court that's supposed to decide whether laws are unconstitutional or not?
> A: No, as a matter of fact the president has an obligation to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. That is an obligation that presidents have enacted through signing statements going back to Jefferson. So, while the Supreme Court can be an arbiter of the Constitution, the fact is the president is the one, the only person who, by the Constitution, is given the responsibility to preserve, protect, and defend that document, so it is perfectly consistent with presidential authority under the Constitution itself.

Snow was referring to the president's habit of signing bills into law accompanied by "statements" that, according to the American Bar Association, "assert President Bush's authority to disregard or decline to enforce laws adopted by Congress." All forty-two previous U.S. presidents combined have signed statements exempting themselves from the provisions of 568 new laws, whereas Bush has, to date, exempted himself from more than 1,000.

Failed Checks on Executive Ambition

The current administration's perspective on political power is far from unique. Few, if any, presidents have refused the increased executive authority that is the natural byproduct of military Keynesianism. Moreover, the division of power between the president, the Congress, and the judiciary—often described as the bedrock of American democracy—has eroded significantly in recent years. The people, the press, and the military, too, seem anxious to cede power to a "wartime" president, leaving Bush, or those who follow him, almost entirely unobstructed in pursuing the imperial project.

Congress: Corrupt and indifferent, Congress, which the Founders believed would be the leading branch of government, has already entirely forfeited the power to declare war. More recently, it gave the president the legal right to [illegible] anyone, even American citizens, [illegible]

[4] *In a January 2006 debate, Yoo was asked if anything could stop the president, if he "deems that he's got to torture somebody," from, say, "crushing the testicles of the person's child." Yoo's response: "I think it depends on why the president thinks he needs to do that.*

to detain non-citizens without recourse to [illegible] interrogation methods that he could define, at his sole discretion, to be or not be torture.

The Courts: The judicial branch is hardly more effective in restraining presidential ambition. The Supreme Court was active in the installation of the current president, and the lower courts increasingly are packed with judges who believe they should defer to his wishes. In 2006, for instance, U.S. District Judge David Trager dismissed a suit by a thirty-five-year-old Canadian citizen, Maher Arar, who in 2002 was seized by U.S. government agents at John F. Kennedy Airport and delivered to Syria, where he was tortured for ten months before being released. No charges were filed against Arar, and his torturers eventually admitted he had no links to any crime. In explaining his dismissal, Trager noted with approval an earlier Supreme Court finding that such judgment would "threaten 'our customary policy of deference to the President in matters of foreign affairs.'"

The Military: It is possible that the U.S. military could take over the government and declare a dictatorship.[5] That is how the Roman republic ended. For the military voluntarily to move toward direct rule, however, its leaders would have to ignore their ties to civilian society, where the symbolic importance of constitutional legitimacy remains potent. Rebellious officers may well worry about how the American people would react to such a move. Moreover, prosecutions of low-level military torturers from Abu Ghraib prison and killers of civilians in Iraq have demonstrated to enlisted ranks that obedience to illegal orders can result in their being punished, whereas officers go free. No one knows whether ordinary American soldiers would obey clearly illegal orders to oust an elected government or whether the officer corps has sufficient confidence to issue such orders. In addition, the present system already offers the military high command so much—in funds, prestige, and future employment via the military-industrial revolving door—that a perilous transition to anything resembling direct military rule would make little sense under reasonably normal conditions.

The People: Could the people themselves restore constitutional government? A grassroots movement to break the hold of the military-industrial complex and establish public financing of elections is conceivable. But, given the conglomerate control of the mass media and the difficulties of mobilizing the United States' large and diffuse population, it is unlikely. Moreover, the people themselves have enjoyed the Keynesian benefits of the U.S. imperial project and—in all but a few cases—have not yet suffered any of its consequences.

[illegible] it.

Bankruptcy and Collapse

The more likely check on presidential power, and on U.S. military ambition, will be the economic failure that is the inevitable consequence of military Keynesianism. Traditional Keynesianism is a stable two-part system composed of deficit spending in bad times and debt payment in good times. Military Keynesianism is an unstable one-part system. With no political check, debt accrues until it reaches a crisis point.

In the fiscal 2006 budget, the Congressional Research Service estimates that Pentagon spending on Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom will be about $10 billion per month, or an extra $120.3 billion for the year. As of mid-2006, the overall cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since their inception stood at more than $400 billion. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize–winning economist, and his colleague, Linda Bilmes, have tried to put together an estimate of the real costs of the Iraq war. They calculate that it will cost about $2 trillion by 2015. The conservative American Enterprise Institute suggests a figure at the opposite end of the spectrum—$1 trillion. Both figures are an order of magnitude larger than what the Bush Administration publicly acknowledges.

At the same time, the U.S. trade deficit, the largest component of the current account deficit, soared to an all-time high in 2005 of $782.7 billion, the fourth consecutive year that America's trade debts set records. The trade deficit with China alone rose to $201.5 billion, the highest imbalance ever recorded with any country. Meanwhile, since mid-2000, the country has lost nearly 3 million manufacturing jobs. To try to cope with these imbalances, on March 16, 2006, Congress raised the national debt limit from $8.2 trillion to $9 trillion. This was the fourth time since George W. Bush took office that the limit had to be raised. Had Congress not raised it, the U.S. government would not have been able to borrow more money and would have had to default on its massive debts.

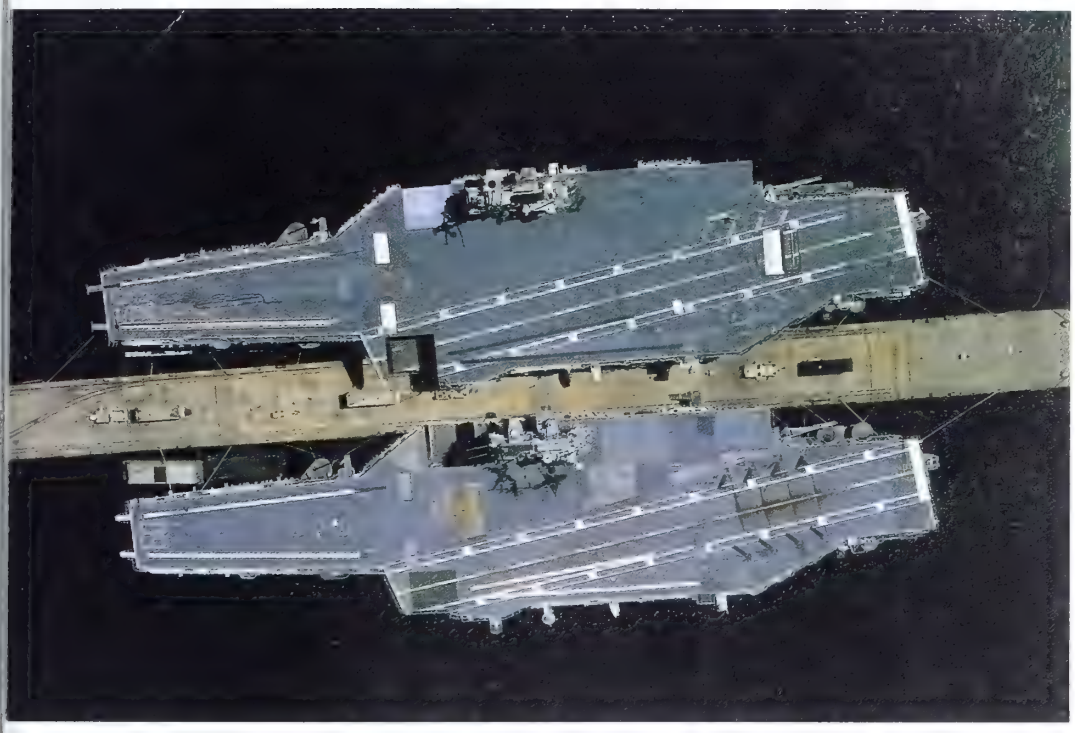
Among the creditors that finance this unprecedented sum, two of the largest are the central banks of China ($854 billion in reserves of

In 2003, when the Iraq war began, the citizens of the United States could at least claim that it was the work of an administration that had lost the popular vote. But in 2004, Bush won that vote by more than 3 million ballots, making his war ours.

ollars and other foreign currencies) and Japan $850 billion), both of which are the managers of the huge trade surpluses these countries enjoy with the United States. This helps explain why he United States' debt burden has not yet triggered what standard economic theory would predict, which is a steep decline in the value of the J.S. dollar followed by a severe contraction of the

British Isles did choose democracy over imperialism, and that nation continues to thrive as a nation, if not as an empire.

It appears for the moment, however, that the people of the United States prefer the Roman approach and so will abet their government in maintaining a facade of constitutional democracy until the nation drifts into bankruptcy.



American economy—the Chinese and Japanese governments continue to be willing to be paid in dollars in order to sustain American demand for their exports. For the sake of domestic employment, both countries lend huge amounts to the American treasury, but there is no guarantee how long they will want or be able to do so.

CONFIDENCE IN KEY JUDGMENTS

It is difficult to predict the course of a democracy, and perhaps even more so when that democracy is as corrupt as that of the United States. With a new opposition party in the majority in the House, the country could begin a difficult withdrawal from military Keynesianism. Like the British after World War II, the United States could choose to keep its democracy by giving up its empire. The British did not do a particularly brilliant job of liquidating their empire, and there were several clear cases in which British imperialists defied their nation's commitment to democracy in order to keep their foreign privileges—Kenya in the 1950s is a particularly savage example—but the people of the

Of course, bankruptcy will not mean the literal end of the United States any more than it did for Germany in 1923, China in 1948, or Argentina in 2001. It might, in fact, open the way for an unexpected restoration of the American system, or for military rule, revolution, or simply some new development we cannot yet imagine. Certainly, such a bankruptcy would mean a drastic lowering of the current American standard of living, a loss of control over international affairs, a process of adjusting to the rise of other powers, including China and India, and a further discrediting of the notion that the United States is somehow exceptional compared with other nations. The American people will be forced to learn what it means to be a far poorer nation and the attitudes and manners that go with it.[7] ■

[7] *National Intelligence Estimates seldom contain startling new data. To me they always read like magazine articles or well-researched and footnoted graduate seminar p[illegible] When my wife once asked me what was so secret about them, I answered that perhaps it was the fact that this is the best we could do.*

"Twin Aircraft Carriers at Dock, Middletown, R.I., April 2001"
© Alex S. MacLean/Landslides

CATCHING OUT

Travels in an open boxcar

By William T. Vollmann



What do you need? I don't know! the woman in the bar lobby

Escape from

Successfully pursued

The other bucket people were like me, even more than I wanted. But in seconds. They were mad like me, crystal-bright and willing, like Fire Peak Candy Mountain Taco Locks, to tell where the freight train stopped.

So we went south along the rail, the three of us, all the way to the overpass from which I could decide whether we hoped to see the tell-tale clean U-channel and we entered the scattered warren beneath. I'd never performed this before, couldn't be sure, but the glowstones that cracked and haunted only me and perhaps the Fire Fracture told me I had to. Either I [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

would probably die instantly, so there was nothing to fear. Moreover, Steve had ridden the gondolas many times and seemed unworried, so I let it go, relishing the open air and the smell of fresh lumber around me.

A flare of evening sun in the Gabilan Range (pink chalcedony), the white loveliness of rain birds blowing spray in elongated flower petals, the leaden darkness of a lettuce field, all these perceptions granted to me right next to the freeway became my loveliest treasures, which I hope to hoard right up to the cemetery lights amidst the last golden green of the fields.

That was the great thing about this sort of ride: breathing the air of reality. In the Gilroy country the evening smelled of garlic; later on, near Santa Barbara, the dawn would smell of anise. Freight-train rides are parables. Why have we chosen to live behind walls and windows? For an answer, imagine the shocking blackness and feeling of asphyxiation when a freight train enters a tunnel! An old man once told me about riding a freight in some nebulous northern realm where a tunnel was so long that the hobo on top of the gondola fell off dead; the old man had succeeded in becoming an old man because he rode in a boxcar full of air! Was that a tall tale? I don't know. But I can assure you that the tunnel darkness beyond the window of a subway car or passenger car, however eerie it might be, is quite innocuous compared with the *real* blackness that wrenches breath away. Reality caresses and reality stings!

At dusk the train halted alongside a dingy white wall whose graffiti had been whitewashed into irregular shapes of a different griminess, and on the far side of that wall and its weeds, a beautiful young Hispanic woman stood holding her daughter's hand and gazing at the train. I waved to them, and they smiled and waved back. My loneliness drained away from me, and even now I feel gladdened by the memory of that moment. After a time their men came out. They, too, stood and waved. I never said a word to them, and I will remember them forever.

Into the dark went the train now, accompanied by few and pale lights and by more darkness that compressed the already flattened ground. I inhaled the darkness of vegetation and pallid darknesses of fields, the corpse-white dirt roads, everything glimpsed between stacks of lumber, in the cut between high ridges of darkness. Halfway up my lumber stack I suddenly spied the lemony-yellow lights of a small ranch and wondered what it would be like to live there for the rest of my life. Like the lumber piles shifting subtly back and forth, neither solid enough to be entirely safe nor sufficiently yielding to avoid crushing me if they should fall, the lives I could have lived teased me; in two steps I could have leaped off the rusty metal train bed and made landfall in sight of that ranch if I'd really wanted to; then I would have lived out my life there in truth, for the fall at that speed would have killed me. But nothing felt inimical, except occasionally those lashed-down towers of Canadian Douglas fir around me—and when I say *me* this is not to deny the presence of my two companions, with whom I shared my pleasures; but just as a family can go to church together and sit side by side on the pew while experiencing (or not) separate communions with the many-faced Spirit, so too my friends and I, although we shared food, water, booze, cigars, and vigilance, remained gloriously alone in that nightscape. I saw a tall palm silhouetted in the night, then a tall forest. I saw it, and then it was gone. How could I know what my companions saw?

Slowly chewing a date, wrapped up in all my jackets, I stretched out on bare steel that was a truly luxurious bed thanks to the soft shadow of the darkness. My friends were sleeping as I rode the trestle bridge's black shadow on the silver river. I rode it through the smell of river and grass, and a bright star in the sky kept me company, turning bluish-white for my delight, until a sudden invasion of road lights drowned it in alien brightness. Happily, those excrescences fell behind quickly. My star returned to me. The moon was playing hide-and-seek with the ridge, then came a canyon with moon-white grass and trees as richly leaved as thunderheads, the night sky almost white by comparison; and I hoped never to see this place by day because it was so perfect in its night incarnation, being not merely my past but the vanished American West itself where I would have homesteaded with my pioneer bride; I would have planted orchards and drunk from the artesian well of dreams.

The freight kept going right through Santa Barbara, and we thought we might have to ride to Ventura or beyond, but just south of Carpinteria it slowed, and what increased our motivation to get off just then was that a man with a walkie-talkie was standing in the gravel, staring into each car, and his eyes met mine, at which point he raised the walkie-talkie to his mouth. The train kept traveling southward at about the same speed as a running man, so when the walkie-talkie man was the merest dot behind us we jumped out, landing either erect or on our hands and knees, as we thought best. Then we began to walk away from that life. It was half past seven in the morning. Crossing the highway, we regrouped against the wall of a gated community, and Steve called his daughter on a cell phone while I pissed on a tree.

My good and patient friends waited for me without recriminations while I toiled over the breakwater's boulders, anxious not to crack my pelvis again. A series of small strokes had wrecked my balance, and what would have taken them fifteen minutes took me an hour. Then we went out for breakfast with Steve's wife and daughter, and slept all afternoon in Steve's daughter's apartment, I on the floor, Brian on the couch, Steve upstairs in the bed. When I woke up it was a great pleasure to lie a little longer on the soft carpet, safe from reality.

The next morning we took the Amtrak first from Santa Barbara to Goleta, then, when we saw no double track, changed our minds and stayed on the train, buying new tickets for San Luis Obispo. The conductor silently admired my orange bucket. It was a comfortably innocuous ride along an extraordinarily [illegible] greenish-white [illegible] the [illegible] beach we [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

luxuriously drank them. Once again I saw schools of porpoises. At about one-fifteen we arrived in San Luis Obispo.

A fine always hides when the freight enters a yard. I particularly remember how from my rathole between lumber piles I'd observed the sinister illumination of this very station as my friends snored. It had then seemed as daunting as an enemy military installation. Now it was a harmless afternoon place, open to the public, because we were there legally. It was high time for that to end.



Discreetly paralleling the train yard on the nearest street, we walked northward for a block or two, then rejoined the tracks out of sight of the station. There was no litter here, unfortunately; this must not be a spot that had brought good luck to our vagrant colleagues. And south of the station we'd seen a large track crew. It seemed best to lie low for a while. My more agile companions went over the fence and I slithered under it, my oilskin pants getting good and muddy, and down we all ducked into the creekside's poison oak and up the other bank, up the steep eucalyptus hill to the parking lot, where a girl with a bicycle had told us that one locked-looking gate wasn't really locked, and it wasn't, so we went down the hill and ran across the clearing that was bordered on one side by a fenced house with a NO TRESPASSING sign and on the other by the tracks themselves, from which we were screened by a narrow oasis of eucalyptus, geranium, and palm. There we lurked like rodents, watching the tracks in the sun, framed by brightly graveled whiteness, rusty rails, and birdsong. I felt edgy whenever a pickup door slammed on the tracks; that pickup was angled toward us, and what if it belonged to someone with the authority to remove us? Next came the sound of a woodpecker, and engine noises far and close. We were not so much hopeful as ready.

Hours went by without any train at all. Lying in the pine needles, I breathed the honeyed hours of illegal time. I argued that we should lurk near the overpass, so that we could board a long train near the rear without being seen; but my companions pointed out, with good reason, that the oasis where we had spent the afternoon, and indeed that entire east side of the tracks, was less exposed. So I was outvoted.

When night came, Steve saw a locomotive with an open door and proposed that we hide in there, but as soon as we'd entered its darkness a light came on across the tracks and Brian was sure that we'd been seen, so we ran back down and along the right-hand side of the tracks, hoping to reach our oasis, but by the time we'd reached the shed, here came a man with a giant flashlight! Another Amtrak was coming south, its lights aimed at us. The conductor dismounted. Brian and I froze against the darkest wall of the shed; Steve was already gone. The man ap-

proached and shined his light; I was ure that he'd seen me, but he did nothng. He was a steward; he locked the gates to some of the tracks. As soon as he was gone, we threw ourselves down n the grass. The Amtrak tolled its bell nd hauled its two tiers of yellow winlows down the tracks to bed, hissing and snoring in front of us for a long time. Suddenly the conductor was walking toward us down the gravel; my heart was pounding. Officials with flashlights came straight toward us.

Trust me, said Steve. Their eyes aren't adjusted. They can't see us.

He was right. I experienced a surprisingly extreme fear, commingled with the fascination of observing a rare phenonemon: namely, our own supernatural power of invisibility. These men in uniform, I could almost have touched their ankles! They were so close now that their various yellow probes of wrist light puddled around them and caught the grass around my elbows. They were an island of authority in the night, with immense theoretical power over us, but, like us, they were small and alone; the night was bigger than any of us. And we were more a part of the night than they were.

We crouched in the undergrowth. Here came more functionaries with flashlights. *That last gate*, one of them said. That was our gate. Steve and I ran up the hill as fast as we could and threw ourselves down into the leaves. But this time the man with the flashlight saw Steve's pack and my cursed orange bucket.

Someone's HIDIN', he said, and laughed.

In a fright, we ran into the weeds and clung together like lovers. The man shone his flashlight directly on us. But we were in the shadows and our clothing was dark. We waited through the pale white lights, the blinking blue light on the track, the yellow light through the palm fronds, and we spied on the rusty tracks that were now milk-silver in the security lights. Again menacing silhouettes with caps and flashlights advanced upon us, and our hearts pounded. They shone their lights in our faces, but once again they failed to catch us. A century later the track steward returned, locked the gates to the Amtrak, and retreated into his place behind the dark window. Life was the whish of air, the rustle of grass, and I hoped I was not lying in poison oak.

Now it was midnight and the freight finally came, but behind a passenger train. Shit, shit, said Steve; Bill, you were right. A crew swarmed around that train, which was southbound. A man's voice said: There's a freight ahead of us. It's a-goin' over the hill to Oakland.

I abandoned my orange bucket. We ran around the head of the train, and the engineer either failed to see us or else out of pity or indifference refrained from making a report. We strolled down the west side of the tracks and into the darkness, passing through the parking lot on the side of the station. Now the stopped freight stretched infinitely southward.

THE MAN SHONE HIS FLASHLIGHT DIRECTLY ON US. BUT WE WERE IN THE SHADOWS AND OUR CLOTHING WAS DARK

Finally we found the darkness of an open boxcar. Steve hated boxcars and wanted to look for something better, but we'd gone only a few cars south of it when the brakes began to hiss. I persuaded the other two to come back, and while they tapped the door open with a railroad spike I wriggled up and in, as proud of doing this without my bucket as a toddler is of walking; and I flicked on my flashlight just for a moment, to make sure that there was no excrement or broken glass and saw graffiti of a naked woman's ass and a white, rather friendly skull on the white walls.

There came another hiss of air, and after ten hours of *hidin'* in San Luis Obispo the freight began to move. Through the wide-open door I saw a vast square wall of vivid life. All the waiting, that living fieldmouse-small in the grass, was a necessary part of the experience, because it made the journey feel like salvation. And I wondered whether life could be good without the hard times.

Dark and lovely tree-shadows raced across the long white gallery, and the shadows of my two comrades continually glided toward me, getting devoured by the pursuing shadow of the doorframe. Then all of a sudden, red signal-luminescence rushed into the boxcar and flushed us with the blood of the entire world.

That night the boxcar seemed to be speeding upward like a rocket under attack from anti-rocket missiles; it roared at what felt like an ever-increasing velocity, took evasive action by shaking from side to side, and every now and then lurched horribly, as if it had just been hit. Sometimes I would be awakened from a light doze by the boxcar's sudden slamming, as if there had been an accident. Amidst all this shrieking and creaking, the immense open door, the lighted city of the men's prison immediately to the west, then the multitude of foggy pictures before dawn, I felt as if every possibility were offering itself through the open door, but without Mephistophelian trickery. The infinities available to me paraded as beguilingly as clock figures on a medieval church tower.

My friends woke me up again because we were coming into Salinas. I leaped up, fully clothed and shoed like a soldier, slung my pack to my shoulder, and I was ready! But the train kept going. My friends stood dismayed. Well, it was nice while it lasted, I said, and went back to sleep.

Six hours later we glimpsed cornfields and then half-constructed houses, the ever-swarming California; and though the boxcar was still, objectively speaking, huge, all the obscene drawings could now be seen from one end to the other, and our traveling gallery seemed to have shrunk. Its grimy, rusty floor was drearier, and even the fabulous rectangle of real life projected upon its open movie screen seemed less enchanting, in part because so many California [illegible] are ugly, in part because I had hardly slept, and surely in some measure because riding the rails, like any attempt to escape from life, must taste of failure every now and then.

Presently we [illegible] ing into Hayward and [illegible] the yard, targ[illegible] consider [illegible] velocity again, [illegible]

yard with its many tracks, fences, and thousands of excrement, a hateful place that I would not want to be wandering through at night. Passing through Jack London Square, the train slowed to ten or fifteen miles an hour, but by now we were already in Emeryville, with the blue giraffes of container shipping cranes ahead. My friends feared that the train would not stop here either, so we decided to jump off by a vote of two to one. I voted no because I was fearful. I have always avoided jumping on or off moving trains, but there was nothing for it. Brian went first, fell, hit his head, and slammed his hand against his bloody face, falling far behind us now. We couldn't leave him, so now we had to go. Steve went next and landed erect, tough and bold on the day after his fifteenth birthday, but later admitted to having hurt his ankle. I, solicitous for my knees and pelvis, landed in a ball on the gravel, twisting my knee. I limped well enough, and we all slithered under the yard's fence quite adequately.

Did you ever ride the rails? I asked the hobo.

Yeah. I rode the freights. Shitty. Like just plain dirty. When Burlington Northern and Santa Fe merged, they tightened all the screws. They see you, you go straight to jail. Right now I just hitchhike. I'm stranded here. Maybe I'll clear seven or eight bucks a day. When I left Seattle I only had twenty and that wasn't enough. I wanna make at least fifty-sixty bucks here before I hit the next town.

I talked with that hobo awhile, and then I gave him money, got into a car, and off I went, down the freeway, right out of Missoula, Montana; and the feeling within me as I departed his sad life resembled the feeling when the train accelerates and the yard is safely behind; I am free, and for the moment my own sad life, with its own rules, necessities, and railroad bulls, will not be able to catch me.

Havre, Montana, was a long narrow town whose spinal column consisted of a railroad line and a dozen metal grain silos shaped like stubby pencils. The railroad yard itself lay just north of Main Street, where Mrs. Gregory, proprietress of the Silver Thimble sewing shop, had once kept her establishment. Hoboes sometimes used her outside water tap, because on the far side of the tracks lay the hobo jungle. She'd tried turning the tap off but then they came inside to ask for water, and Mrs. Gregory, who really was a friendly enough sort, turned the tap back on and left them to it. Once a customer came and cried out that a naked hobo woman was washing herself outside. Mrs. Gregory said to let her be; she wasn't doing any harm.

I never to my knowledge met any of Mrs. Gregory's guests, but I made repeated acquaintance of the hobo Ira, who, clothed in his slimy blue windbreaker and in his smell of old sweat and burning garbage, loped along the side of the road, away from the locomotive from which he'd leaped, trotting and then running *and running* cross-country from his fear, happy to be asked about himself but afraid to answer, hanging his head, twisting away. He was a pitiable curiosity to me when I first met him nearly a decade ago; now I begin to see that he is my brother. Ask him how life was on the rails these days and he'd quickly insist that he usually took Greyhound. He was toothless, and his weathered, swollen face had darkened until it resembled one of those frozen mummies they'd found in a cave in Greenland. Someone had stolen his false teeth. He said that Nevada was a dangerous place, filled with "litters," but when I inquired whether someone in Nevada had lifted his false teeth he ducked his head and equivocated, afraid to give up this secret. Where had he been? Well, all over. He was headed for Glacier National Park, where there might be a cabin he could sleep in while he repaired his finances. What were his plans? Well, get a rest, get a little snack, try to improve his finances. All he carried was his bedroll, because he didn't really need to drink water that much. The worst thing about riding the rails was risking falling asleep. He seemed terrified of failing in his vigilance, whether because of railroad bulls or of gangsters or simply of his own nightmares I never learned. I asked him whether he liked boxcars or grainer cars better, and in terror he murmured something about hotels and riding Greyhound. His meaningless evasions repeated themselves, like his odor of burned cooking and of sooty, dirty concrete underpasses whose ceilings were charred perfectly black.

In the narrow strip of mosquitoey trees and grass between the south bank of the river and the old Great Northern tracks there in Havre, Montana, the wind came through sweet-smelling trees and cooled a NO TRESPASSING sign. Dogs barked across the brown-green river. Gnats attacked my throat. Past the NO TRESPASSING sign there was a bend around which the narrow grassy strip widened into a plain too mucky for camping, plastered with old dogprints and footprints and a few fresh raccoon tracks. Mosquitoes danced golden like evening river-ripples; train bells sang by. Between the river and the tracks lay a shrunken scrap of forest through which a trail led alongside a barbed-wire fence, and though I saw grimy cardboard flats and scraps of plastic hidden under pines and in dandelion thickets, the only shelter I could find, roofed by a plastic tarp weighted down with old tires, held nothing but a farmer's hay bales. There were no hoboes in the hobo jungle anymore.

There is no hobo jungle, a woman said. They cut down a lot of the trees and widened the road about three years back, to discourage 'em.

An old man in Shelby, Montana, said: Oh, those hobo jungles just kinda dried up. Self-destructed. Alcohol abuse, missing children.

Oh, it's in full swing now, said the officer behind glass at the same town's police station. We see ten or fifteen hoboes a week. They're going across the Hi-Line. It always picks up after April.

I'd heard about the Hi-Line from a woman in Townsend, who'd sighed: There used to be more of an honor code. You know, honor among thieves. And people used to be more prepared. I was a Hi-Line *winter* rider! I'd get on at thirty below. Never froze, because I carried what I needed. Now people don't ride with gear, and since they don't have any they want yours.

How often do they get arrested? I sked the officer in Shelby.

We've only arrested one in the last ear. Felony assault on a citizen with knife.

Does the railroad call you in to ar- est the train riders?

As long as they keep their feet up n the car or the flatbed, they just let em go.

And I saw them going, and I want- d to go, like silvery rain blowing off an verpass. I wanted to ride the Hi-Line nd get away from this world.

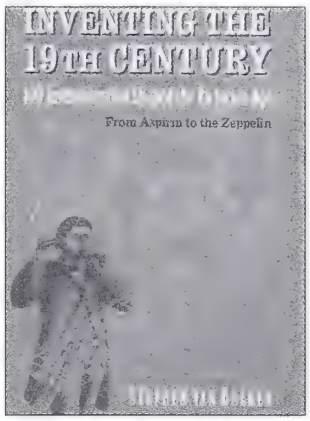
I had one more question for the fficer.

He scratched his head. — Did we have a hobo jungle? I dunno.

No, there were no hoboes in the obo jungle in Havre. The next morn- ng, returning with my sweetheart, Lizzy, vith the sky as steely as the silos of the armers Grain Exchange, I set out to ex- plore every inch. We found a camp earth with a cooking pot still on the shes, as if the hobo there had had to eave suddenly. — It reminds me of ompeii, said Lizzy mournfully. — Pass- ng two kids fishing, we ducked under he bridge and waited by somebody's edroll for hours. Graffiti proclaimed he self-expression of Gros Ventre In- dians, and a camouflage jacket lay in he sand. On the concrete wall it read:

I'm an unhappy hobo
I just have no luck
Even when I ride the train
I ride like old people fuck.

But amidst other graffiti wriggled a pair of SS lightning-bolts beside the ominous letters FTRA, which re- ferred to an organization described by Spokane police detective Bob Grandinetti as *a very dangerous group of people. They are highly mobile and fierce- ly violent. . . . Many FTRA members are basically cold-blooded serial killers who could definitely pose a dangerous threat to police officers*. The same wall memo- rialized FTRA KOMO HOPPER 97 EAST- BOUND 8-21-97 and FREIGHT TRAIN PENNY. How dangerous were Komo and Penny? How might they have com- pared with Ira or the hobo woman who'd washed her only set of clothes behind Mrs. Gregory's store? To the townspeople of Havre, none of whom



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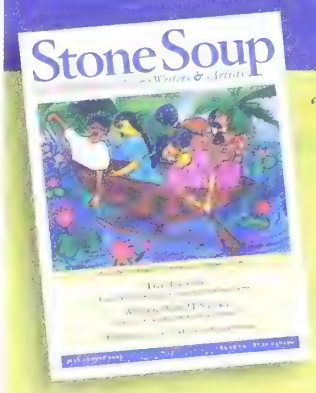
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seemed to have heard of the FTRA, they all might as well have been trolls.

I looked down an alley, and so I saw an alley tramp. The other homeless ones I'd seen in Sacramento were busy and unfriendly, but this man took his time, slowly sawing at a pack strap with his razor knife as he sat among shopping bags, guarding a woman's purse, so I wandered over to him and said: Pardon me, sir, do you know anything about the FTRA?

I know they're a bunch of motherfuckers, he said. I never hopped trains, so other than that I don't know much. But my girlfriend's going to be back in a minute. She knows. She used to hang around them FTRA. She's out getting Chinese food.

When the girlfriend came back, he said to her: He wants to know about FTRA.

Why?

I'm a reporter, I said.

The two of them recoiled, and the man said: I swear I didn't tell him nothin'. He looked me up and down and said: What are you, some college kid?

Something like that, I said. Are the FTRA around everywhere?

Sure, the woman said. They're just ordinary people. Good folks to hang with if you're catching out.

Why did you used to catch out?

To get from here to there.

I hear they wear bandanas.

Yeah, around their necks. Red or black. The bag-and-tag, they call it. They can be a little bit rough.

That's what I told him, the man said. They got a bad rep.

If I see somebody with a red bandana around his neck, can I just go up to him and say, Are you *FTRA?*

You goddamned doofus! shouted the man. That's the stupidest fucking thing I ever heard. You wanna commit suicide or what? I'm not even FTRA and you're already starting to piss me off. Don't you get it? We hate you.

Why's that?

Because you're just a goddamned *citizen*.

The woman might have pitied me. She said: They're fine people. Just like anybody else. They only have a different set of ethics.

Like what?

Well, bag-and-tag is the hardest. Hard-core. Everybody gets to beat you up, and then they take a red bandana and everybody pisses on it. Then they stuff it up your face. After that, you're FTRA.

You ever run into the FTRA? I asked the hobo in Missoula.

Yeah. I met T. All he is is an overgrown kid with a bad attitude. And I know the Goon Squad. If they know you got five dollars' worth of food stamps in your backpack, they'll kill you. Goon Squad runs from Portland to Seattle. FTRA goes all the way up through Montana. Wrecking Crew goes everywhere. They're the same. They're nothing but killers. When I ran into the Goon Squad, I ran into Choo-Choo and Catfish. I bought them Mad Dogs all day long. I got them drunk. Then I had to sleep, and the next thing I knew, they was using my head for a football. I said, I'm comin' back. I got a two-by-four and smashed Catfish on the head. I thought I killed him. I went to the mission and turned myself in and said: I killed someone. But when they went to look, Catfish was gone . . .

Pachacos, they're the worst, he said. They're the enemies of all. It's a family name. They're the big enemies of everybody. I ran into Red. He was on crutches in Spokane. He took off his shirt and on his arm there was a tattoo of a cross and dots underneath it for confirmed kills.

How many dots?

About thirty.

The woman in Townsend who used to ride the Hi-Line was named Cinders. — Comin' off the train in East Glacier, she'd said, that water's so cold, that spring water, that everybody jumps off the train a minute to taste some.

That was what Cinders said. She was the recently anointed Great Grand Duchess of the Hoboes. Frog, the King of the Hoboes, had chosen her. She was fifty-five years old when I met her. When she was thirteen she'd run away from home, wandering the streets of New York City, sad and lost. Then one night in a shelter she met long-bearded men with piercing blue eyes who sat around sharpening their machetes, carrying knives and guns and the other tools of their trade. Something happened, she said. They became her brothers. She'd been broken like Humpty Dumpty, and they put her back together again.

She got a reputation for defending herself—that is, for fighting as needed. She said that a rep didn't need to be true. Whatever you'd really done got whispered into strange ears and magnified, like the messages in the party game called Telephone, until you sounded superhuman. That protected you.

She had fine memories. Through open boxcar doors and in hobo camps she'd seen elk at sunrise, eagles. She remembered a boy who'd jumped off the freight to pick her a rose.

Yeah, you think a lot, because you're alone a lot. Even the couples. One's gotta go searchin' the dumpsters for food, while the other has to watch the gear.

Heavyset, her red hair going gray, her high blood pressure and her many pets whose needs helped keep her off the rails, Cinders still longed to ride the rails, but she was afraid to now, and maybe unable to. She'd broken her back twice, and she suffered from a spinal fusion. She hated "those young guys," "those wannabes," who spray-painted switches black just for the hell of it to cause train accidents, who broke into buildings, who solved arguments with guns instead of punches.

From a certain open boxcar in a freight train heading the wrong way, I have enjoyed pouring rain, then birds and frogs, the fresh yellow-green wetnesses of fields. A jackrabbit hopped right past our open door, pursued after the fact by a dog whose modest velocity expressed resignation to the fact of the fence between pursuer and pursued. And I, chronicler of nature's great doings, have seen it all, at my ease and guarded from rain. The interior of the boxcar was thick with an unknown white powder, probably gypsum or talc, that frosted my pants quite nicely, and at dusk kept the walls cheerily visible for a prolonged interval. After a handful of miles, the train stopped. Steve and I stood pissing out the doorway, twin sovereigns of still mirror-ponds and shiny clean gravel somewhere between Marysville and Wheatland. Lat-

r he drank whiskey from my flask and smoked one of his cigars. When the rain began to move again, the rainy darkness had come, and Steve's shadow was a pillar of deeper darkness marching round and round the walls. Then we stopped again, close by the water-shining headlights and taillights of Highway 65. We ducked out of sight of a cop car. Then nothing happened. Or, if you like, everything happened; there were any number of hissing and sizzling cars in the rain, and an unknown story inside each one.

In winter, my freight dreams are very different than in summer. The act of train-hopping in and of itself stimulates the same feelings in me that a schoolboy has in spring when he contemplates summer: an infinite, wild green freedom will soon be within reach! But it is only in summer that that freedom is actually infinite and green. In winter my freedom remains wild, to be sure, but the cold darkness constricts me; my body reminds me of its vulnerability. I must not get so wet that I cannot dry off. I must not get too cold. The lone tree with the farmhouse light beneath it no longer invites me into an imaginary possession of the property as it would in summer; instead, it seems like a dismal, even dangerous spot; I want the train to speed on to the safe warm place I feel drawn to. My boxcar becomes more conveyance than shelter, and instead of thinking about what might be, I interest myself in what is. I remember that on that end-of-the-year night, Steve and I talked about our lives and what we had and had not found possible. Although in most ways I hardly know him, I felt close to him and happy with him. The qualities of a good road companion—considerateness, friendliness, generosity, openness, patience, determination—are such as to make him immediately and deeply a friend. This man's religion, politics, and moral views differed considerably from mine. That was, as it always should be, utterly unimportant. I would gladly have ridden all the way across Canada with him. I trusted him with my backpack; I counted on him to help pull me up into a boxcar when my muscles were aching; I shared my water with him. If he got arrested I would cheerfully come forward to share his fate.

So we chatted, smoked, drank, and rubbed that unknown white dust out of our eyes. I asked Steve how many people he knew who would envy us if they could see us now, and he thought awhile and said: zero. That made me even happier.

It was about nine o'clock, nearly seven hours after we had first climbed in, when we slid off the lip of the boxcar's square mouth and began walking along the tracks into an inexpressibly refreshing night whose frog songs were as rich in tones, volumes, and multitudes as all the recordings of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. When we reached the head locomotive, we saw that it was dark; the engineer must have gone home long since; our decision to leave this cold dead train was thus proven to be in the same spirit of prudence manifested by lice leaving a corpse. What proud train parasites we were! After an hour we packed away our jackets, drinking in the air with every inch of exposed skin; I especially remember the bliss of cool oxygen, seasoned with occasional raindrops, on the backs of my hands and on my sweaty throat. It felt wonderful simply to move. My body's happiness became mine. After another hour the horizon grew poisoned by the false dawn of city lights, and the tracks, which had long since gone from double to single, were isolated by flooded ditches on either side. We remembered that somewhere hereabouts was a trestle, and after briefly mistaking a distant headlight for a locomotive lamp, it occurred to me that this might not be the best place to meet an oncoming train. When a side spur gave us our chance, I prevailed on Steve to forsake the tracks for the road. Soon enough we had entered the outskirts of Roseville, California, and could hear the whistles of locomotives and the slamming clanks of assembling and disassembling trains. At eight minutes past midnight we stood beneath the clock at the Amtrak station, gazing into the freight yard. We had already probed our target's perimeter two or three blocks earlier, where in the midst of a grim fence stood a gate with a NO TRESPASSING sign, the lock conveniently jimmied for us by our predecessors. The detritus of a hobo jungle was all underwater there, and since the track was single and trains were as absent as [illegible] bush or overhang to shelter us from the drizzle for however many hours might be required, we pressed on.

Although Steve was restored to all his determination the instant we entered the yard, I was now beginning to tire, and the rain began falling much harder, so the next three and a half hours grew progressively more unpleasant for me. The Roseville yard runs a full six miles from end to end, and we did not know it. A kindly carman whom Steve and I approached for help warned us that we would be jailed. He said that people had no idea how important Roseville yard was. Why, it was Freight Central for everything west of the Mississippi! If the terrorists ever blew it up, there would be hell to pay. We assured him that we didn't wish to blow up any trains in Roseville, and that we would never litter or piss in his boxcars. The young carman, a giant with a shaved head, decided that he liked us. He asked us which way we were going, and we said that northbound would be just great but any of the other three directions would work about as well. *You ride freights for fun!* he cried with a smile. He advised us to walk the gravel on the south side of the yard, just off the first track, and keep going until the tracks dead-ended, then swing right for the departure yard. It was about a mile, he thought. He called over to his partner, who said that a West Colton train would be leaving from track 9; so we set out in good hope, water shining gold on cold wet tracks of night; but the ballast gradually grew sharper beneath our shoes, the rain fell harder and harder, the way narrowed, then went toe-deep and heel-deep with water, so we had to clamber over the outermost train and continue westward down our iron-walled alley.

By a quarter past three we were both longing for a rest, I more so than Steve, and every time we reconnoitered across another train the sweat burst out all over my body because my oilskin pants, superb though they were at keeping [illegible] l, so I had to cling and feel my way

[illegible] Steve and [illegible] passed [illegible] me. The trouble with me is that I was getting old, tired, and fat. All I want is an open box, Steve was saying, any open box. After that they can fucking arrest me; I don't care. He trudged slowly on, and I limped after, feeling every gravel-point in the soles of my shoes, hating the trains around me and the rain on my neck, until finally we got to the end of a train and saw that there was still no sign of any departure yard. Once upon a time near Townsend, Montana, up the slanting green plateau at the base of mountains, a long train headed by four dark locomotives rushed by like a string of windblown clouds and I would have given almost anything to be on it; now I didn't care about whether my predestined train went to the mountains; I simply wished for its magic to carry me away from here.

We stopped to rest under a tree, and Steve sighed that he could almost sleep here, when just then we saw a long train crawling westward, many of its boxcars gaping most welcomingly. The train stopped. We ran for it and jumped into the nearest box. We should have spiked the door open, but there were no spikes in sight and we were very tired and any minute now this train was going to take us all the way to wherever it was that we were going! Our train now began to move, and we exulted. Sighing, Steve lay down. The bright yellow rectangle of light projected through the doorway slowly narrowed and angled backward, dwindling into a single line of twenty-four-carat gold, then dying into darkness. Then there came more lights, too bright and too familiar.

Steve, I said, *We're going backward*

Oh, shit, he yawned.

We didn't care; we went to sleep. In the morning the rain was still sizzling down, and we were in the middle of the yard. At noon we walked back to the Amtrak station and took a bus home.

Such is train hopping, with its many reversals of fortune and feeling. Because these impress themselves on me so intensely, I never perceive even defeated attempts to catch out — my [illegible] future, for one truly [illegible] occasions, whose memories, however colorated by night and rain, remain in my mind's tracks as numerous as the trains themselves. This one night alone offered ever so many other experiences, no less precious for being brief: a glimpse of an ancient Pullman car, as fabulous to us as a woolly mammoth, the sudden sweetness of breathing night air after a rest, and, best of all, a spectacular shadow show on our boxcar wall when the adjacent train began to move; every grainer car silhouetted itself in succession, stencil cuts of perfect beauty whose beauty in fact consisted of simplifying reality until I with my human stupidity became capable of marveling at it. How many grainers had we passed that night, and how many had *reached* me? What am I missing in my rattle-clank journey through life? Almost everything.

Shortly before I set out on that little adventure through Roseville, my father telephoned me, trying to talk me out of it because it was December. That was how it had been when I set off to visit the North Magnetic Pole; he wrote me a long letter saying that if I went, I would surely freeze to death. Needless to say, I myself was dreading that possibility, and the burden of reassuring him when I wanted reassurance myself brought me nearly to tears. But all that had been for the best; his apprehensions and mine impelled us to a camping store with a shopping list, where my father generously bought me such items as a spare stove, which served me excellently at my destination. This time there was nothing he could do for me but beg me not to go; once again he was afraid I would freeze to death. I was irritated - I'd come back from the Magnetic Pole, hadn't I?—and sad for him for worrying so irrelevantly, incidentally increasing my own fears—and wasn't that one reason I rode the freights, to cut fear down to size? The latter operation is not unlike brushing one's teeth. It must be done over and over.

Life spends a perfect moment of itself in Karen's Cafe (Shelby, Montana): What will you *lovely* people have on this *lovely* day? demands the grim waitress. And I think: How awful it would be to live in Shelby. And I know that if I did live there, life would be no more or less time for me than anywhere. In the meantime, how perfect it is to *pass through* Shelby and then run to the tracks when I hear a train bark in the darkness! I have camped near Shelby wind, fire and moon, rain of sparks, choking smoke smell, lovely rushing wind, the mountains cloud-smudges in the night; in short, I have escaped from Shelby.

Montana trains crawl high under the rainy sky, heading toward stumpy gray peaks like bear claws. White water keeps exploding between the moss-bearded firs and spruces, pillowing upon rocks and ledges, then speeding blindly on beneath that gloomy sky. Where does everything go? I want to find out. I want to get to Everyplace, not just Anyplace with its gravelly sidings.

I ride freight trains in the belief that I can trust myself, that I deserve to be trusted even to be a reckless fool if circumstances so turn out—and, after all, if I am dead as a result of my own folly, I am no worse off than if I died sately and soberly. The most cogent thing that can be said against train-hopping is that it is the unauthorized borrowing of others' property—that of corporations, not fellow citizens who would be inconvenienced. I am a microbe hitching a ride on an elephant's trunk! Besides, so many of my proudest deeds have been unauthorized by somebody that I now subscribe to an aphorism by Georg Lukács: Breaking a law is approximately as weighty a matter as missing a train. And when the train throbs and hisses on the track, I'm not going to miss it, not unless some other law begs me for violation! All the same, I am proud to say that I have always followed the advice of an old black hobo I once met in Roseville: *Never steal anything but a ride*.

And because the character of the night ride ahead remains unknown—indeed, it might not happen at all—my life, which, like yours, is constrained, approaches the verge of vastness; the future will offer me a bouquet of possibilities both real and illusory. And so the evening turns as yellow as Union Pacific locomotives in palm-tree light just before the sun goes down—look! Those yellow, yellow machines are tinged with darkening green; at this moment they turn the color of peaches, alive like fruit. ■

THE SWIM TEAM

By Miranda July

This is the story I wouldn't tell you when I was your girlfriend. You kept asking and asking, and your guesses were so lurid and specific. Was I a kept woman? Was Belvedere like Nevada, where prostitution is legal? Was I naked for the entire year? The reality began to seem barren. And in time I realized that if the truth felt empty then I probably would not be your girlfriend much longer.

I hadn't wanted to live in Belvedere, but I couldn't bear to ask my parents for money to move. Every morning I was shocked to remember I lived alone in this town that wasn't even a town it was so small. It was just houses near a gas station, and then about a mile down there was a store, and that was it. I didn't have a car, I didn't have a phone, I was twenty-two, and I wrote my parents every week and told them stories about working for a program called R.E.A.D. We read to at-risk youth. It was a state-funded pilot program. I never decided what R.E.A.D. stood for, but every time I wrote "pilot program" I kind of marveled at my ability to come up with these phrases. *Early intervention* was another good one.



This story won't be very long, because the amazing thing about that year was that almost nothing happened. The citizens of Belvedere thought my name was Maria. I never said it was Maria, but somehow this got started, and I was overwhelmed by the task of telling all three people my real name. These three people were named Elizabeth, Kelda, and Jack Jack. I don't know why Jack twice and I am not completely sure about the name Kelda, but that's what it sounded like and that's the sound I made when I called her name. I knew these people because I gave them swimming lessons. This is the real meat of my story, because of course there are no bodies of water near Belvedere and no pools. They were talking about this in the store one day, and Jack Jack, who must be dead by now because he was really old, said it didn't matter anyways because he and Kelda couldn't swim, so they'd be liable to drown themselves. Elizabeth was Kelda's cousin I think. And Kelda was Jack Jack's wife. They were all in their eighties at least. Elizabeth said that she had swum many times one summer as a girl while visiting a cousin (obviously not cousin Kelda). The only reason I joined the conversation was that Elizabeth claimed you had to breathe underwater to swim.

That's not true, I yelled out. These were the first words I'd spoken out loud in weeks. My heart was pounding like I was asking someone out on a date. You just hold your breath.

Elizabeth looked [illegible] and then said she'd been kidding.

Kelda and Jack Jack seemed to

Miranda July is a filmmaker, performing artist, and writer. Her first feature film, Me and You and Everyone We Know, *was released in 2005.* No One Belongs Here More Than You, *a book of stories, is forthcoming from Scribner in May.*

Illustration by Luke Best

breath too long in a Hold-Your-Breath contest.

Jack Jack asked if she actually believed this, and Kelda said, Yes, yes I do. Jack Jack said, You just died of a stroke, I don't know where you get these stories from, Kelda.

Then we all stood there for a little while in silence. I was really enjoying the companionship and hoped it would continue, which it did because Jack Jack said: So you've swum.

I told them about how I'd been on swim team in high school and even competed at the state level but had been defeated early on by Bishop O'Dowd, a Catholic school. They seemed really, really interested in my story. I hadn't even thought of it as a story before this, but now I could see that it was actually a very exciting story, full of drama and chlorine and other things that Elizabeth and Kelda and Jack Jack didn't have first-hand knowledge of. It was Kelda who said she wished there was a pool in Belvedere, because they were obviously very lucky to have a swim coach living in town. I hadn't said I was a swim coach, but I knew what she meant. It was a shame.

Then a strange thing happened. I was looking down at my shoes on the brown linoleum floor and I was thinking about how I bet this floor hadn't been washed in a million years and I suddenly felt like I was going to die. But instead of dying I said: I can teach you how to swim. And we don't need a pool.

We met twice a week in my apartment. When they arrived I had three bowls of warm tap water lined up on the floor, and then a fourth bowl in front of those, the coach's bowl. I added salt to the water because it's supposed to be really healthy to snort warm saltwater, and I figured they would be snorting accidentally. I showed them how to put their noses and mouths in the water and how to turn a breath to the side. And then we added the legs, and then the arms. I admitted these were not perfect conditions for learning to swim, but, I pointed out, this was how Olympic swimmers trained when there wasn't a pool nearby. Yes yes yes, this was a lie, but we needed it because we were four people lying on the kitchen floor, kicking it loudly as if angry, as if furious, as if disappointed and frustrated and not afraid to show it. The connection to swimming had to be reinforced with strong words. It took Kelda several weeks to learn how to put her face in the water. That's okay, that's okay! I said. We'll start you out with a kickboard. I handed her a book. That's totally normal to resist the bowl, Kelda. It's the body telling you it doesn't want to die. It doesn't, she said.

I taught them all the strokes I knew. The butterfly was just incredible, like nothing you've ever seen. I thought the kitchen floor would finally give in and turn liquid and away they would go, with Jack Jack in the lead. He was precocious to say the least. He actually moved across the floor, bowl of saltwater and all. He'd come pounding back into the kitchen from a bedroom lap, covered with sweat and dust, and Kelda would look up at him, holding her book in both hands, and just beam. Swim to me, he'd say, but she was too scared, and it actually takes a huge amount of upper body strength to swim on land.

I was the kind of coach who stands by the side of the pool instead of getting in, but I was busy every moment. If I can say this without being immodest, I was *instead* of the water. I kept everything going. I was talking constantly, like an aerobics instructor, and I blew the whistle in exact intervals marking off the sides of the pool. They would spin around in unison and go the other way. When Elizabeth forgot to use her arms, I'd call out: Elizabeth! Your feet are up, but your head is going down! And she'd madly start stroking, quickly leveling out. With my meticulous, hands-on coaching method, all dives began with perfect form, poised on my desktop, and ended in a belly flop onto the bed. But that was just for safety. It was still diving, it was still letting go of mammalian pride and giving in to gravity's hug. Elizabeth added a rule that we all had to make a noise when we fell. This was a little creative for my taste, but I was open to innovation. I wanted to be the kind of teacher who learned from her students. Kelda would make the sound of a tree falling if that tree were female. Elizabeth would make "spontaneous noises" that always sounded exactly the same, and Jack Jack would say, Bombs away! At the end of the lesson we would all towel off and Jack Jack would shake my hand and either Kelda or Elizabeth would leave me with a warm dish, like a casserole or spaghetti. This was the exchange, and it made it so that I didn't really have to get another job.

It was just two hours a week, but all the other hours were in support of those two. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings I'd wake up and think: Swim Practice. On the other mornings I'd wake up and think: No Swim Practice. When I saw one of my students around town, like at the gas station or the store, I'd say something like: Have you been practicing that needle-nose dive? And they would respond: I'm working on it, Coach!

I know it's hard for you to imagine me as someone called "Coach." I had a really different identity in Belvedere, that's why it was so hard to talk about it with you. I never had a boyfriend there, I didn't make art, I wasn't artistic at all. I was kind of a jock. I was totally a jock—I was the coach of a swim team. If I had thought this would be at all interesting to you I would have told you earlier, and maybe we would still be going out.

It's been three hours since I ran into you at the bookstore with the woman in the white coat. What a fabulous white coat. You are obviously completely happy and fulfilled already even though we just broke up two weeks ago. I wasn't even totally sure we were really broken up until I saw you with her. You seem incredibly far away to me, like someone on the other side of a lake. A dot so small that it isn't male or female or young or old; it is just smiling. Who I miss now, tonight? is Elizabeth, Kelda, and Jack Jack. They are dead, of this I can be sure. What a tremendously sad feeling, I must be the saddest swim coach in all of history. ■

NEW BOOKS

By John Leonard



Yes, the new year's just beginning, but it's hard to imagine a better novel being published in the months to come than Z[illegible] (Random House, $24.95). Colum McCann has not only imagined Romany culture in Eastern Europe from the 1930s to the twenty-first century, with its storytellers, tinsmiths, horse thieves, and musicians, its caravans and harps; he's also imagined the charnel houses and bone fields of fetishistic fascism, barbed wire flying "little flags of skin" and slippers made of hair. And the rise and fall of police-state Communism, with folk dancers digging canals, professors on dairy farms, poets in armaments factories, and Gypsies forcibly resettled in government block-tower housing. Not to neglect the subversion of art by politics, the ruination of intellectuals who indentured themselves to power, the mystery of "otherness" and the death of community, as well as silence, madness, dispossession, and a nightmare passage of refugee peoples across borders that, "like hatred, are exaggerated precisely because otherwise they would cease to exist altogether."

If you need an image, take your pick among indelibles: When the Slovakian fascists tell the Romany that they must be licensed to make music, they bury their harps in the forest, and Zoli writes a song about harps listening to grass grow. When the Czech Communists decide that these nomads should stay put permanently, soldiers remove the wheels from their wagons, leave the wagons, and *burn* the wheels—oak spokes, elm hubs, ash rims, iron hoops, rubber ooze, melted nails. When Stránský, the cultural commissar who transcribes and publishes Zoli's songs, falls from official favor, he beckons to the firing squad: "Come closer, it will be easier for you." When Zoli, briefly famous among *gadže*, a poster girl for assimilation and a pop-star pet, visits her first bookshop in Bratislava, she wanders the rows of shelves in a daze: "It's like not having any walls," she says.



But there are walls everywhere, and borders, too, plus "whole matrices of lost things." It's easier for Colum McCann, an Irish writer living in New York, to cross borders and jump over walls than it is for Zoli, the Slovakian songbird based on a real-life Polish Gypsy poet, sentenced to "Pollution for Life" and cast out by her own people, "walking in some terrible otherness" from Hungary to Italy: "I have sold my voice . . . to the arguments of power." In such remarkable novels as *Songdogs* (1995), *This Side of Brightness* (1998), and *Dancer* (2003), McCann has dreamed his way into the heads of photographers in Mexico, mole people in the subway tunnels under Manhattan, Rudolf Nureyev, and Andy Warhol. Although any sweet tooth in him for the Celtic lugubrious seems to have been removed during his sojourn in Japan, in favor of Tanizaki and a sort of tender sonar, not a book of his goes by without someone loving somebody else he or she cannot possess; without lost love, stricken memory, and radiant regret. No one in pursuit of Zoli is worthy of her. And she's harder on herself than you will be. But from notched bones and bundled straw to nettle soup and sour cherries, from the printing mill to the chocolate factory to [illegible] on memory in Paris, she signifies at once the Displaced Person in a shattered century and the urgent, redemptive necessity of [illegible].

Romanian Gypsies" © Austrian Archives/CORBIS; [illegible], by Alex Katevsky. Courtesy [illegible] artist/Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco; [illegible] de Bellefeuille, Montreal

For Barbara Ehrenreich, the ur- ecstatic ritual, communal cele bration, costumes, feasts, carnival, and mask. She argues in her wonderful canvass of revels,

(Metropolitan, $26), that what has always really bothered anal-retentive white men of the Eurocentric persuasion about "primitive"/"peasant"/"savage"/"oriental"/"cannibalistic" *athusiasm* is just mee. Aboriginal corroborees, Jamaican plantation *myal* dances, Polynesian frenzies unto trance, ecstatic Moroccan drumming of the Hamadsha brotherhoods, the Hogbetsotso festival of the Anlo-Ewe, !Kung healing rituals, African American "ring-shouts," even heavy-metal rock concerts—is that their social inferiors have assembled to enjoy themselves, assert their unembarrassed autonomy and camaraderie, ridicule their hierarchs, and so alter the state of their consciousness that they might prove to be a protest movement or, like the French Revolution, a genuine threat.

To develop this argument, and to poke with a sharp stick any number of well-known and uptight sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and globocops, she goes back to the archaic roots of ecstasy and "danced religion" in Stone Age cave-show "conga lines" of female dancers; Old Testament tambourines and circle dancing; the effervescent worship of Isis (from Egypt), Cybele (from Asia Minor), Mithras (from Persia), Shiva (from India), and Dionysus, along with his many maenads and various "itinerant charismatics" in ancient Greece, as well as the Great Pan until Tiberius, and Jesus Christ before the Church fathers ditched his "hedonic" vision of community and his "sweet and spontaneous form of socialism." From there, it's a wild and witty ride through cross-dressing, goat-songs, mystery cults, glossolalia, inversion rituals, medieval carnivals, Black Death flagellation, bowling, bear-baiting, exuberant hair, and many other ways to stun yourself toward God, all the way up to the Reformation and a repression that lasted from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, with a sidelong look at what the Wahhabi movement did to "purify" Islam of Sufi dervishing. It should not surprise you that expansionist empires, clockwork armies, and "gun-based warfare" required social discipline and obedience.



Ehrenreich, who must never sleep in order to produce books as good as this one almost every year, is at some pains to distinguish between healthy group activities and, say, Nuremberg rallies. A spectacle is not a dance; nor is a lynching bee. I can't share her weird hope that games televised in sports bars might turn into ecstatic rituals; the new hooliganism suggests instead Thugee. And I'm more worried than she is about a World Wide Web that promises affinity groups but delivers solitude and echo chambers; the pixels may dance, but we do not. Still, I do wish I'd been there, with my mother-in-law, a turtle suit, and a Frisbee, at the 1999 Seattle WTO protest.

From what Wendy Lesser tells us about herself in (Pantheon, $23.95), she is not inclined to jump and shout. A fifty-two-year-old teacher, critic, and founding editor of *The Threepenny Review*, she is clear about "my love of order, my brusque aggressiveness, my linear mode of thought, my insistence on constantly distinguishing better from worse." She tells us further that "I am not used to thinking that there are things beyond my powers"; that although she is full of "stored-up melancholy," "regret has never been much of a factor in my psychological make-up"; that she seldom bothers to imagine the future, suspects a "lack of inherent kindness," is "rather difficult for other people to work with, or even play with," finds herself "imposing my personality on everything around me," and thinks "there is something pathetic . . . about someone who . . . best friends, at the present mo- ment in time, are Henry James and David Hume."

It's an odd, fascinating, unclassifiable book of counterintuitions. An intellectual watches the devious way her mind works. She watches it in Berlin for several months, where she thought she would write a book about the philosopher David Hume but decided instead to write about her late difficult friend, the writer of fiction and professor of literature Leonard Michaels. A fine mind in passing casts a deft shadow over Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Brecht, the Berlin Wall and her secular Jewishness, Beethoven and Shostakovich, Margaret Thatcher and Rupert Murdoch, Mies van der Rohe and Rem Koolhaas, D. H. Lawrence and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Averroës and Lewis Carroll. Her book on Hume would have been terrific. What she says about Michaels, who was so much larger than life that he surprised himself and everybody else when he died suddenly, suggests that Lesser is either impossibly forgiving or a closet masochist. I say this as someone who found Michaels's first novel, *The Men's Club*, much funnier than she does, but someone who felt that serving with him on an awards panel was even more unpleasant than she did. When our friends turn into bullies we find new friends or learn to sneeze. *Room for Doubt* is a brilliant sneeze.

If you missed Calvin Trillin's celebration of his wife, ABOUT (Random House, $14.95) in *The New Yorker* last March, here's a slightly longer version to be cherished. *About Alice* is only incidentally concerned with her death from what radiation had done to her heart in order to save her lungs from a cancer she hadn't deserved in the first place. Mostly it concerns her life, as teacher, mother, wife, lover, fixer and exemplar. She didn't play games except occasionally charades, and she was at best indifferent to religion "except that she claimed to believe that you could hear what your children said about you at your funeral." Her husband considers himself lucky and I do, too. If *About Alice* is a miniature—well, then, so are my favorite Vermeers.

Museum of Modern Art, New York; Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Art Institute of Chicago; New York City

THE USUAL SUSPECT

Edgar Allan Poe, Consulting Detective

By *Arthur Krystal*

Discussed in this essay:

The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe, and the Invention of Murder, by Daniel Stashower. Dutton. 326 pages. $25.95.



Illustration by Steven Dana

It is possible, if one is so disposed, to argue about who wrote the first poem or the first novel, or who was the first to use stream-of-consciousness in fiction. But there's no disputing who invented the formal detective story. Until "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" materialized in 1841, nothing like it had ever been seen. Literature had its share of plays and stories dealing with crime and punishment, but the intermediate step of figuring out "whodunit" had never come up. Audiences knew who'd poisoned the king or strangled the mistress because it either happened onstage or was described on the page. Then, suddenly, there was Edgar Allan Poe, who held back the identity of the murderer and challenged the reader to guess it. His innovation was to treat murder as a purely intellectual or aesthetic exercise; murder most foul could now become murder most ingenious.

Before Poe drew up the blueprint, criminous literature—say, William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) or Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Eugene Aram* (1832)—was more concerned with society's flaws (which helped produce the criminal) than with the criminal's own flaws. Vice and virtue, not the bad guy's or the police's modus operandi, were the cornerstones of their books. It wasn't until Eugène François Vidocq, a thief-turned-policeman, published his *Mémoires* in 1828 that attention began to be paid to the methods used to hunt down miscreants. Poe, however, didn't give a fig about the conditions that made the criminal or what motivated him, or even about how to apprehend him. What Poe cared about was the unriddling or the cerebral pursuit of truth. Prior to Poe, not only was there no amateur detective; there were no literary heroes defined by their analytical intelligence. Odysseus was wily, Solomon wise, Falstaff shrewd, and Robinson Crusoe resourceful, but poets and writers didn't spend their time extolling or demonstrating the brainpower of their protagonists. In creating the chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, Poe gave us a hero who conspicuously *thinks* rather than feels and who would be endlessly reconfigured by future generations of mystery writers.

Within the scope of five stories—"The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," "The Purloined Letter," "The Gold-Bug," and "Thou Art the Man" (Dupin appears in the first three)—all the conventions of the formal detective story take shape. There is the genial and admiring narrator who somewhat uncomprehendingly follows the action; the detective whose intelligence, recondite interests, and specialized knowledge make him superior to the local constabulary; the body discovered in a locked or "hermetically sealed" room; the trail of circumstantial evidence or false clues (red herrings) that point to the wrong man; the unlikely person who turns out to be the murderer; the seemingly trivial or irrelevant detail that holds the key to the mystery; and the unexpected stratagem the detective employs to solve the case. And, as all students of the mystery genre know, it's in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" that the two great principles of detective fiction germinate: (1) When all impossible scenarios have been eliminated, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the answer; and (2) The more bizarre the crime, the easier it is to solve.

The formal detective story [illegible] one of delayed [illegible] reader ponders the [illegible] as the detective, but the moment of comprehension—the *Ah-ha!* instant of recog-

Arthur Krystal's new book of essays, The Half-Life of an American Essayist, *will be published in March.*

less intellectually nimble sidekick, the narrator. And therein lies the suspense. Suspense exists, on some level, in all novels—Will Elizabeth Bennet finally realize Darcy's true intentions? Will Jean Valjean continue to elude [illegible]—but this has more to do with the reader's investment in the characters than with the novelist's own designs. In the formal detective story, suspense is the point: holding back the identity of the criminal and the reason for the crime in order to spring them on us at the end. To purists of the mystery genre, a true mystery works best as short fiction, because once the detective is yoked to the novel, the art of observation and deduction begins to take a back seat to such novelistic concerns as the hero's background and relationships, the psychology of the criminal mind, and the familial or social forces that factor into the commission of a crime. As Poe saw it, and as Arthur Conan Doyle restated it, the pure story of detection is about problem-solving, not about solving the problems of society.

Poe's own considerable analytical abilities were first put on display in his article about a popular sideshow automaton capable of defeating human opponents. Poe's deduction in "Maelzel's Chess Player" wasn't earth-shattering (how many scenarios could there be?), but he brought to the table a methodology that was decidedly Dupin-like, including the intuitive leap that distinguishes a great from a merely competent logician. For Poe, genius wasn't characterized merely by superior reasoning; it required an imaginative component that enabled one person to see the figure in the carpet where others saw only colored fibers. When Poe described the analyst as "fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics," he was also speaking of himself. As editor of various publications, he challenged readers to send him cryptograms they thought beyond his abilities.

Although casual readers of Poe's work might be aware that he created the amateur detective, how many know that he took it upon himself to solve a real crime existing about it? The victim was a twenty-[illegible] New York woman by the name of Mary Cecilia Rogers, whose body was discovered on July 28, 1841, in the waters along the New Jersey shore, near Hoboken. The tragedy of her death and the sensation it created were enough to inscribe Mary's name in the annals of New York City history. But unless you're a student of that history, your knowledge of the murder has probably been filtered through "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt." As Daniel Stashower puts it in *The Beautiful Cigar Girl*, "[Poe's] story rose above the chaos that attended its composition and took on the air of established fact. Later critics would marvel over the manner in which Poe . . . solved a crime." In a sense, Poe did the murdered girl a disservice: as the years passed, the emphasis on the crime shifted from the facts to Poe's presentation of them, and Marie Rogêt gradually became more real than Mary Rogers. Although books about the murder have appeared sporadically—Raymond Paul's *Who Murdered Mary Rogers?* and Amy Gilman Srebnick's *The Mysterious Death of Mary Rogers*—it's hard, at least for mystery buffs, not to see it through the eyes of Dupin.

Stashower's book is not quite sui generis, but it is different. He's written an entertainingly offbeat and sometimes just-short-of-scholarly disquisition that nicely dovetails Poe's hectic life and stalled career into a civic lesson about old New York. *The Beautiful Cigar Girl* is part biography, part true crime, part history of tabloid journalism. Nevertheless, Stashower's detailed examination of the murder and Poe's exploitation of it seems to miss the point that without the confluence of those events—the factual and the fictional—the detective genre might have taken a different turn. Cold comfort, perhaps, to the shade of the murdered girl, but there it is: if Mary had lived out her life or if her murder had been resolved expeditiously, Monsieur Dupin might not have been reprised.

Mary Cecilia Rogers and Edgar Allan Poe both came to New York in 1837; she with her widowed mother from Lyme, Connecticut; he with his young wife and mother-in-law/aunt from Richmond, Virginia. Mary found a job as a shopgirl in Anderson's Tobacco Emporium at 319 Broadway, while Poe, as usual, scrambled to make ends meet. Although respectable young women did not take jobs in male-dominated establishments, the Emporium's proprietor, John Anderson, promised Mary's mother that Mary would never be left alone and would always be escorted home. Whatever his other motives, Anderson figured that the dark-haired stunner would attract customers, whether they smoked or not. He was right. With Mary behind the counter, Anderson's store became a downtown back room for the journalists and politicos who worked nearby.

Because so many reporters hung out at the Emporium, "the comely segar vendor" soon began to appear in their dispatches. One even resorted to poetry: "She's picked for her beauty from many a belle,/And placed near the window Havanas to sell." Mary Rogers not only sold cigars but became something of a commodity herself, a precursor of today's celebrities whose only recommendation is being well known. "It is a most curious thing," one article noted. "Her notoriety is unencumbered by position or achievement." Mary wasn't the first American beauty, but she may have been the first one to be celebrated lavishly in print. And on October 6, 1838, her notoriety went up a notch when her mother found a suicide note on Mary's dressing-room table and hurriedly notified the police. Mary eventually showed up for work late that afternoon, but no one, it seemed, knew where she had been. Mary herself remained tight-lipped, which only fueled speculation. Had she been jilted? Was the suicide note a mean-spirited trick perpetrated by a lover whom *she'd* jilted? Or was it nothing more than a newspaper hoax? In time the commotion subsided. Mary continued to work at the cigar store, quitting only when her mother opened a boardinghouse on Nassau Street in the summer of 1839.

Poe never mentions running into Mary Rogers, but it's a good bet that he did. His stay in New York overlapped Mary's tenure at the cigar store, and though he lived in the West Village, he spent a fair amount of time downtown. Poe, a shameless literary operator, certainly stopped by the Shakespeare Tavern at the corner of

Nassau and Fulton streets to talk shop with Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, and he probably accompanied them uptown to the Tobacco Emporium, where they would have chatted up Horace Greeley and cast amorous glances at Mary Rogers. In 1839, Poe left New York to take a job in Philadelphia and, in all likelihood, forgot about the beautiful cigar girl until his memory was jogged by her second disappearance.

As before, the incident was shrouded in mystery. On the morning of July 25, which happened to be a Sunday, Mary purportedly told one of the tenants of the boardinghouse, a Mr. Daniel Payne, who later claimed to be her fiancé, that she was off to visit an aunt who lived some fifteen minutes away. A violent thunderstorm flared up that afternoon, and when Mary didn't return home, her mother and Payne assumed that she had stayed the night. But by late Monday afternoon, with no word from her, Payne gave up searching the streets and placed a missing person's ad in the *New York Sun*.

Three days later a woman's waterlogged and battered body was towed to shore. The features were disfigured beyond recognition and the corpse, according to the coroner on the scene, was "nightmarish in its injuries." The body lay on the ground until Alfred Crommelin, a former boarder and would-be suitor of Mary's, rushed up and identified it by Mary's "delicate feet" and the "pattern of hair" growing on one of her arms. Later that day, the coroner would note "a mark about the size and shape of a man's thumb on the right side of the neck, near the jugular vein, and two or three marks on the left side resembling the shape of a man's fingers." The dress was torn in several places and a piece of it "was tied round her mouth, with a hard knot at the back part of the neck." Mary's bonnet, it seemed, had been removed and then replaced after death. Examining "the feminine region," the coroner found that Mary had been "brutally violated by no fewer then three assailants, and finally murdered"; and since "there was not the slightest trace of pregnancy," the victim "had evidently been a person of chastity and correct habits."

What had happened to Mary after

Harper's Magazine is accepting applications from college students and graduates for its editorial and art internship programs.

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Chance that an American would rather be mugged than audited:

1 in 2

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SOLUTION TO THE DECEMBER PUZZLE

N	A	R	C	I	S	S	U	S	F	A	T	A	L	
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NOTES FOR "MORPHOLOGY":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

The unclued Across entries are mythological characters who got transformed. The unclued Down entries are the creatures they were transformed into. NARCISSUS, FLOWER (38D); HECUBA, FEMALE DOG (8D); DAPHNE, LAUREL (11D); CALLISTO, BEAR (43D); CORNIX, CROW (3D); ARACHNE, SPIDER (4D); ACTAEAN, STAG (47D); ASTERIA, QUAIL (25D).

ACROSS 8. hidden, 12 *, 14. hidden, 16. w-him, 18. a V-O-wed, 19. Pe-g-a-sus-ed-den; 24. s(quad)r-on, 26. *, 27. *; 30. mi-r-ro-r-s, 36. *, 40. *, 42. *, 44. *, 45. *, 46. two mngs.; 48. *; 52. *; 53. (s)oaring.

DOWN 1. no(m.ad)s[e], 2. pome-(compute)r (rev.), 5. h-e-m-p-[p-e-r-s-o-n, 10. Tu(rre[rev.])t; 15. f-end-i; 17. reversal; 21. h(all-Jule[rev.])ah; 22. go-at; 27. rac(e)s, rev.; 28. to-Ga; 29. t(r)ick(t)er; 30. (c)inch; 31. Di(a-n)e; 32. ax(l)e; 34. two mngs.; 37. reversal; 40. *; 42. *; 44. hidden; 45. a-L.A.-(movi)e; 49. (a)s-in.

While all these events were transpiring in New York and Weehawken, Edgar Allan Poe was engaging in interludes of relative prosperity. Workers at *Graham's Magazine* with an annual salary of $800 he was able temporarily to support his small family. Like everyone else who followed the Mary Rogers case, he didn't know what to make of it. At some point, however, when the investigation seemed to bog down, Poe decided to step in. In June of 1842 he sent a letter to a few newspapers. His idea was ingenious, indeed, even postmodern. He would construct "a series of nearly exact parallels" between the murder in Paris

> [how] under pretence of having been Dupin . . . unravelled the mystery of More . . . commented [upon] the atrocity and most accurately predicted the New York tragedy. My point is attained, I presume, inch by inch, the particulars and sequences of the narrative upon the subject [of Rogers] and those that the subject [of Dupin] *unapproached*.

Poe intended that he would not only re-create the crime in print but also take up the loose ends and solve the real case by having Dupin "attune tranquilly, in his accustomed armchair." Dupin would gather the known facts as they had appeared in newspapers and police and coroner reports and then, by dint of concentration, demonstrate that Mary Rogers had been killed by a lone assailant. Then, the case still in the public mind, the first two editors whom Poe approached didn't bite. The former may have seemed a bit crass. Poe did succeed, however, in attracting the interest of William Snowden, the editor of the recently defunct *Ladies' Companion*. As it happened, Snowden had been among a group of prominent New Yorkers who had convened after Mary's murder to offer a reward for any information leading to her attacker. He agreed to publish "The Mystery of Marie Roget" in three installments, the first two prior to publication in the October and November issues, and the denouement identifying the killer to appear around the Christmas holidays.

A small confusion now occurs in Poe's narrative. At one point Poe writes that "the first two installments had already appeared when new and disturbing evidence surfaced in the case." Elsewhere, however, he notes that "suddenly, on November 18, just as the second installment . . . was due to appear, the name of Mary Rogers burst its way back into the front pages." In a minor discrepancy, though, and one that doesn't detract us from the fact that Poe had finished the manuscript and that Dupin had figured out the identity of Mary's killer *before* information came to light that derailed the original investigation. The headline that must have given Poe a fit appeared in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*:

THE MARY ROGERS MYSTERY
EXPLAINED

Once again it was the shady Mr. Loss who stirred the pot. Having been accidentally shot by one of her sons in November, she confessed, on her deathbed, her true involvement in the case to Justice Merritt. According to the *Tribune*, Mary had come to Mr. Loss's tavern with a young doctor to have an abortion performed. But the procedure went terribly wrong. Her body was then disposed of by Mrs. Loss and her three sons. This report, however, was immediately challenged by Merritt, who insisted that no such confession had been made owing to Mrs. Loss's "demented state." On the other hand, Merritt himself filed an affidavit accusing Mrs. Loss and her sons of having been accessories to the murder. Although Merritt stopped short of stating what had happened, he referred to the tavern as "one of the most depraved and debauched houses in New Jersey."

If Mary had died during a botched abortion, the coroner who had examined her was clearly not as familiar with the "feminine region" as he might have been, and Poe, who had relied on the coroner's report, was in trouble. It was too late to change what had already been published, but he could at least rework the third section, which was now rescheduled for February. Because no extant copies of Poe's pre-

/eehawken-news manuscript exist, we
ın't be certain what his changes con-
sted of, but Stashower is an excellent
ıide and points to the spots where Poe
ıost likely deviated from the original.
/hile allowing for the possibility of an
ɔortion, Poe sticks to his original con-
ıusion that a naval officer, with whom
ſary had been having an affair, was
ıvolved in her death. Poe certainly
ad every right to his opinion: not
nly was there no hard evidence prov-
ıg that an abortion had taken place,
ut the abortion scenario didn't explain
ll facets of the crime. Why, for exam-
le, were there ligature marks around
ıe neck? Why the sailor's knot in the
rings of the bonnet? And why were
ıere signs of violence in the "murder
ıicket" if Mary had died indoors?

Poe would revisit the story in 1845
pon its inclusion in a book published
y Wiley & Putnam. He tinkered again
/ith the ending and also revised the
rst two parts, adding a preliminary
ɔotnote stating that the author had
nowledge of "*two* persons" who con-
rmed "absolutely *all* the chief hypo-
hetical details" by which the author
eached his conclusion. No corrobo-
ation for this rather audacious claim
/as ever produced, and so the matter
ests. However Mary may have met her
nd, the scrutiny her death received
purred changes in public policy. In
845, New York City instituted the
/olice Reform Act, which effectively
ıodernized the city's police force, and
hat same year a law criminalizing abor-
ion was passed by the state legislature.

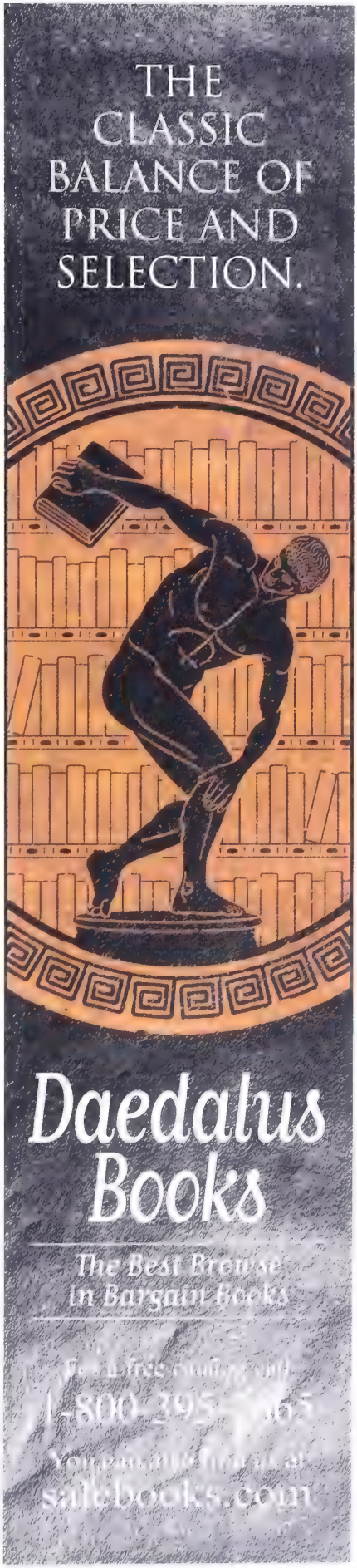
Stashower's delvings into the ar-
cane origins of Poe's story and
the attention he pays to Poe's
ıedgings will probably be of little in-
erest to the general reader, though
Stashower does his best at injecting
lrama into them. As for the drama of
he plot itself, Dorothy Sayers suggests
hat connoisseurs of detective fiction
vill find the story the most rewarding
ɔf Poe's writings, which is another way
ɔf saying that one had better be a con-
ıoisseur before approaching it. The
ruth is that "The Mystery of Marie
Rogêt" contains deep narrative ruts
tched out by Dupin's meticulous ren-
lering of the conflicting theories in
he case. The story is told mostly
hrough newspaper clippings from the
"French press," and the action, such as
it is, consists in Dupin's mulling over
the facts and mewling over the news-
papers' ineptness in interpreting them.
The reader is treated to discourses on
mildew, decay, drowning, the way fab-
ric tears on branches, and the speed at
which grass grows. Poe does make con-
nections that the newspapers miss, but
it's not enough to generate any real
suspense. The game's afoot, but the
detective's feet are tied to his chair.

The better story, in fact, may be the
implicit one: what might have been if
Mary Rogers hadn't died? A few months
before Mary's second disappearance,
Poe had published "The Murders in the
Rue Morgue." It had been well received,
but Poe had no plans for writing an-
other detective story. For one thing, he
didn't know that he *had* written one,
since the word "detective" wasn't even
in use in 1840.* Poe had simply, in his
own words, devised a tale of ratiocina-
tion, "something in a new key." He had
intended to carve out a place in litera-
ture for the analytical and imaginative
thinker, and that's what he did.

There's nothing, then, to indicate
that Poe was thinking of bringing
Dupin back. Given his fascination with
puzzles and problems of logic, he would
have gone on to write "The Gold-Bug"
and "Thou Art the Man," but it's not
at all certain that he would have writ-
ten another story featuring Dupin, in
which case "The Purloined Letter"
might never have been found and the
history of the genre might be noticeably
different. Without three Dupin stories,
who knows whether Arthur Conan
Doyle would have conceived of Sher-
lock Holmes or seen him as a recur-
ring figure? And without Holmes the
course of detective fiction is practical-
ly unimaginable.

In his essay "The Truth About Sher-
lock Holmes," Conan Doyle reveals
that when he was casting about for
something new to write, he thought of
"Poe's masterful detective, M. Dupin
. . . [and] of my old teacher Joe Bell, of
his eagle face, of his curious ways . . . of

*The OED identifies the first usage as "detec-
tive police-man" in an 1849 article from The
Chamber's Journal. But it was Charles Dick-
ens who popularized the word with a series
of articles he wrote for Household
Words about the recently formed Detective
Department of the Metropolitan Police.



his eerie trick of spotting details." Dr. Bell, as every Baker Street Irregular knows, was not only a Lecturer in Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, but he was also Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle's mentor. It was Bell along with Dupin who nudged Doyle to create Sherlock Holmes, and it is Holmes who really begat the rest of them—all the amateur detectives who found their way to our bedside tables: Jacques Futrelle's Professor Van Dusen, a.k.a. "The Thinking Machine"; G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown; Baroness Orczy's Old Man in the Corner; Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple; John Dickson Carr's Dr. Gideon Fell; Dorothy Sayer's Lord Peter Wimsey; Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee's Ellery Queen; and Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe, to name just a few of the better-known sleuths. Charming, insufferable, autocratic, or eccentric—all derive from Poe's denizen of the Parisian night. And just as Dupin acknowledges his own literary precursor ("Vidocq . . . was a good guesser, and a persevering man . . . who impaired his vision by holding the object too close"), Holmes refers to Dupin as "a very inferior fellow. . . . He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine." The Holmesian ego cannot properly abide a competitor, but Doyle had no problem acknowledging his own debt to Poe: "If every man who receives a cheque for a story which owes its springs to Poe were to pay a tithe to a monument for the master, he would have a pyramid as big as that of Cheops."

Poe seems to be one of those writers one is either passionately for or passionately against. The French symbolists thought Poe was just a letter away from being the perfect poet, but English-speaking critics have often been put off by his parade of adjectives and rococo phrasings, a style in which metaphorical road signs loom huge and starkly lit. Henry James, in fact, considered an enthusiasm for Poe "the mark of an extremely primitive stage of reflection," and Aldous Huxley remarked that coming across the poems was like encountering someone "wearing a diamond ring on every finger." The Dupin stories also ind[illegible] Poe's taste for heightened language and yet are usually overlooked in all the critical hullabaloo. There's a small irony here—because whatever one thinks of "The Black Cat" or "Annabel Lee," they did not have the literary implications of the five detective tales. (No major novelists or poets, after their juvenilia phase, took as a starting point the poems or horror stories.) But just as all modern Russian novels, in the words of Dostoevsky, emerged from under Gogol's "Overcoat," so all mysteries—the innumerable British cozies and their European, Australian, African, and American spin-offs—emigrated from the Rue Morgue. If Conan Doyle was capable one hundred years ago of referring to "the monstrous progeny of writers on the detection of crime," there must be enough around today to populate a small country.

This is, of course, the very reason that the Popular Culturists find Poe so rewarding. They've managed to disinter or deconstruct the Freudian Poe, the Jungian Poe, the Lacanian, the phenomenological, and whatever other "deep" Poe lies writhing inside the semiotic structures of his prose. Detective stories certainly contain their share of implicit social and psychological insight, but aside from the underlying Victorian optimism that characterized the genre's beginnings—the triumph of reason, the punishment of evil, the advancement of civilization—it's hard to say what a Dupin story really means. Poe simply, startlingly, ushered in a new kind of hero and a new way of telling a story, beginning with a crime, then demonstrating the order and causality of the events that led up to it. The first detective stories may have held a mirror up to society, but their primary order of business was to place a somewhat obtuse narrator in the company of a superior intellect and follow that intellect's progress toward truth. And there is something both logically and emotionally satisfying in experiencing this especially when the detective, like Oedipus, steps forward to "bring what is dark to light."

THE PRAGMATIC AMERICAN

William James and our homegrown way of thought

By Denis Donoghue

Discussed in this essay:

William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism, by Robert D. Richardson. Houghton Mifflin. 640 pages. $30.

In 1935, William James's pupil Ralph Barton Perry published *The Thought and Character of William James*, which established the main lines and pressure points of his master's life. Recent biographers have largely taken their bearings from Perry and have been content to add some corroborative or revisionist details and a larger intellectual setting. We may take it that most of the evidence is now in. Robert D. Richardson does not claim to have made any major discoveries with *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism*. He presents his book as an "intellectual biography": "That is to say, it seeks to understand [James's] life through his work, not the other way around. It is

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rimarily narrative, aiming more to resent his life rather than to analyze r explain it."

Not that these distinctions are ard-and-fast. Narrative is a form of nalysis; the story is itself a reading f James's thought and character. erhaps the hubbub of Richardson's ubtitle might have been stilled: he ays little about Modernism or its naelstrom. The distinction of this ook consists in Richardson's judiious "post of observation," the uranity of his tone, the grace with hich he negotiates any contentious



parts of James's life and work. When he disagrees with a biographical colleague on a point of judgment or emphasis, we have to look closely to gauge the degree of dissent. The surface of the narrative is not ruffled. If you wonder whether James was indebted to Charles Renouvier's *Essais de critique générale* for his recovery from one of several depressions, you will find Richardson cordially disposed to the question. You are allowed to decide, mainly on the evidence he provides. If you wonder what the issues were between James and Thomas Huxley or between James and Herbert Spencer, you find that Richardson has expounded them clearly without disturbing the temper of the book. Richardson has evidently made up his mind on every large issue, but he is never insistent or tendentious. His book is a free country, short of being lawless.

Born in New York City on January 11, 1842, William James was the first child of Henry and Mary James. (There would be five children in six years: William himself, then Henry, Garth, Robertson, and Alice.) Henry Sr. was sufficiently well off, with inherited money, to indulge his prejudices in favor of foreign travel, private education for his children, and residence for them in European places that often turned out to be dreary. He was by disposition a philosopher, or at least a sage, who gained few readers outside his family. William consumed much time and energy finding reasons to disagree with him, a duty he laid to rest on his father's death in 1882 by editing *The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James*. Meanwhile and in later years, William studied—with varying degrees of application—painting, chemistry, anatomy, medicine, physiology, physiological psychology, and philosophy. He took an interest in everything, as the variety of his studies showed.

James was often disabled by ill health, suffering from nervous collapses, depression, a heart condition, back problems and eye problems, smallpox at one point, and general debility. Still, between one episode of illness and the next he gathered to himself remarkable strength and purpose. He was a man of unfailing access to experience, and from day to day he was ready for adventure. At the age of twenty-three, for instance, he joined Louis Agassiz's expedition up the Amazon to examine the distribution of fish (Agassiz was going in the hope—which James did not share—of disproving Darwin's theory of the transmutation of species). On his return to Boston, James resumed his medical studies. From 1873 he taught various courses at Harvard, and in 1880 he joined the Philosophy Department there and set about furthering his career and influence. His marriage to Alice Gibbens proved to be happy, by and large. He published his major work, *The Principles of Psychology*, in 1890. Constantly in demand as a writer and lecturer, he turned the lectures and essays into books: *The Will to Believe* (1897), *Human Immortality* (1898), *Talks to Teachers* (1899), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), and *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907). *The Meaning of Truth* and *A Pluralistic Universe* were published in 1909, and *Essays in Radical Empiricism* was published posthumously, in 1912.

After James's death, on August 26, 1910, George Santayana described how James had "kept his mind and heart wide open to all that might seem, to polite minds, odd, personal, or visionary in religion and philosophy. He gave a sincerely respectful hearing to sentimentalists, mystics, spiritualists, wizards, cranks, quacks and impostors.... He thought, with his usual modesty, that any of these might have something to teach him." Twenty years later, a medium published a book that she claimed James had written through her. Richardson presents all of this with an appropriately Jamesian open mind. "There are at least eight books I am trying to have been written by Jame[illegible]ter he died, Richardson notes. "I am far from being a dogmatic skeptic, but it must be conceded that if [illegible] [illegible] James's [illegible] [illegible] after death."

During his life, James entertained many notions and remained susceptible to [illegible] but he allowed them to recede as non-

Illustration by Clifford Alejandro

posed to dogma, certitude, fixities, and definites, believing in nothing except Darwinian evolution and the merit of what would come to be known as pragmatism. Indeed, among his many enthusiasms, pragmatism was the one he cared about most consistently—though, as might be expected of any good pragmatist, his commitment to it seemed to relax whenever he saw fit.

The remote origin of pragmatism may be found in Kant and Emerson. The immediate source (if we don't count conversations at meetings of the Metaphysical Club) is an essay by Charles Sanders Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," published in *Popular Science Monthly* in January 1878: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we might conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." That notion, obscure as it is, went largely ignored till James took it up in a lecture at Berkeley in 1898. His version of pragmatism, as published in 1907, is clearer than Peirce's but not clear enough; like Peirce's version, it puts more stress on the word "conception" than it can comfortably bear:

> Mr. Peirce, after pointing out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is *for us* its sole significance. . . . To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then *for us* the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all. [The italics are mine.]

The repetition of "for us" and the appeal to "we" as the sole arbiter of "perfect clearness" show how local and opportunistic James was prepared to be—how resolute he was in fending off the large philosophic considerations. "Grant an idea or belief to be true," James says, "what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life?" And his answer, emphatically given, is: "TRUE IDEAS [illegible] ASSIMILATE, [illegible] CANNOT." That was the main consideration for pragmatism.

But pragmatism was not, to begin with, a philosophy. It was what James called it: a method. It was also what he didn't quite call it: a device for getting rid of philosophy and metaphysics by removing the fundamental questions—Being, Existence, why there is something rather than nothing—from the list of problems anyone should bother with. In the Preface to *The Meaning of Truth* James endorsed the postulate that "the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. (Things of an unexperienceable nature may exist *ad libitum*, but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate.)"

Pragmatism was taken to be a philosophy because it was the only homegrown intellectual structure in America at the time, transcendentalism having had its hour. Besides, it would prove to be a method adaptable to nearly any interest: semiotics in Peirce, the study of language and symbolism in Kenneth Burke, the practice of politics in Richard Rorty. T. S. Eliot made a telling point when he wrote that "the great weakness of Pragmatism is that it ends by being of no use to anybody," presumably because it only offers to give you reasons to do what you intended to do anyway. G. H. Mead put the matter clearly enough when he identified the force of pragmatism and noted its limitations:

> For James the act [of thinking] is a living physiological affair, and must be placed in the struggle for existence, which Darwinian evolution had set up. For him, knowledge is an expression of the intelligence by which we meet the problems with which life surrounds them.

If life, or animal, you can deal with the dangers that beset you, you don't need to look beyond your conduct or questions of ethics. James, following Peirce, maintained that restless thinking finds its repose in belief; belief, in turn, directs its energy as conduct and action—the resolution of a problem.

That sequence seems coherent. There was no need for anyone to worry his head about Platonic forms or the nature of soul or spirit. Reciting the stages by which some philosophers attenuated "the spiritual principle . . . to a thoroughly ghostly condition" called "consciousness," James said he was ready to go even further:

> I believe that "consciousness," when once it has evaporated to this estate of pure diaphaneity, is on the point of disappearing altogether. It is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing "soul" upon the air of philosophy.

In this essay, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" (1904), James answered his question—or seemed to—by suggesting that it doesn't. But he saves the ghost by summoning it up as a different one. He explains "that I mean to only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function": "'Consciousness' is supposed necessary to explain the fact that things not only are, but get reported, are known. Whoever blots out the notion of consciousness from his list of first principles must still provide in some way for that function's being carried on."

A function of what? James's way is to invoke Experience, a concept large enough to take care of apparently endangered functions. It houses, in whatever terms you prefer, the knower and the thing known, the subject and the object of attention, the thought-of-an object and the object-thought-of: "If you ask what any one bit of pure experience is made of, the answer is always the same: 'It is made of *that*, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not.'"

Despite James's assertiveness, his essay on consciousness ends, as Jill M. Kress has noted, "with ambivalence." It is a conclusion in which nothing is concluded:

> I am as confident as I am of anything that, in myself, the stream of thinking (which I recognize emphatically as a phenomenon) is only a careless name for what, when scrutinized, reveals itself to

consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing. The "I think" which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the "I breathe" which actually does accompany them. . . . [Breath] is, I am persuaded, the essence out of which philosophers have constructed the entity known to them as consciousness. *That entity is fictitious, while thoughts in the concrete are fully real.*

This is not as radical as it seems: a ightly less specific version of it ap- ears in *The Principles of Psychology*, Kress points out. James speaks of his palpitating inward life," but he ac- nowledges that he can find evidence it only in a physiological form— *ome bodily process, for the most part king place within the head.*" James calls is activity in the head "my breath- ıg," and later "breath." But if you re- uce the "*purely spiritual element*" to reathing, your opponent can easily ırn round and restore it to the point which such a word as "soul" or "con- ciousness" has to be reinstated, to ıark its most extreme reach. If you ıy that consciousness is nothing but reathing, anyone can retort that one an keep on breathing while hardly eing conscious. I breathe in my sleep.

Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" is a series of cryptic footnotes to *The Principles of Psychology*; it n't philosophy. When James resorts philosophy and wants to make it ac- ompany the method of pragmatism, e regularly raises the issue of the One nd the Many—that is to say, in one ght, the world seems to be all unity, /hereas in another, it seems to be a lethora of heterogeneities. But James oesn't always play fair; he has his an- wer ready before putting forth the ques- ion. In "Pragmatism and Religion"— he last of his lectures on pragmatism— ıe takes up the question that he de- cribed in *Some Problems of Philosophy* 1911) as "the most pregnant of all the lilemmas of philosophy." Unusually or him, he chooses a poem as a test ase, one of Whitman's three poems alled "To You," the one that begins, Whoever you are, I fear you are walk- ng the walks of dreams." James says hat there are two ways of taking the oem, "both useful":

> One is the monistic way, the mystical way of pure cosmic emotion. The glories and grandeurs, they are yours absolutely, even in the midst of your defacements. Whatever may happen to you, whatever you may appear to be, inwardly you are safe. Look back, *lie* back, on your true principle of being! This is the famous way of quietism, of indifferentism. Its enemies compare it to a spiritual opium. Yet pragmatism must respect this way, for it has massive historic vindication.

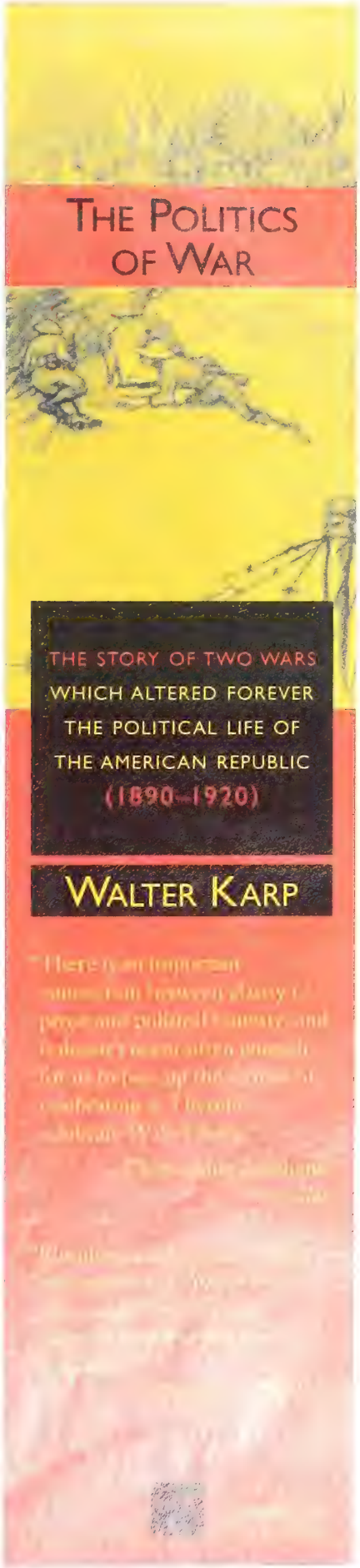
But James remarks, with more enthusiasm, that "pragmatism sees another way to be respected also, the pluralistic way of interpreting the poem":

> The you so glorified, to which the hymn is sung, may mean your better possibilities phenomenally taken, or the specific redemptive effects even of your failures, upon yourself or others. It may mean your loyalty to the possibilities of others whom you admire and love so that you are willing to accept your own poor life, for it is that glory's partner. You can at least appreciate, applaud, furnish the audience, of so brave a total world. Forget the low in yourself, then, think only of the high. Identify your life therewith; then, through angers, losses, ignorance, ennui, whatever you thus make yourself, whatever you thus most deeply are, picks its way.

The warmth and ebullience of this passage, in contrast to the frigidity of "the monistic way" as James gives it, makes his prejudice clear. He concedes that there is something to be said for the monist interpretation, but in the end—an end soon reached—he holds that "the pluralistic way agrees with the pragmatic temper best, for it immediately suggests an infinitely larger number of the details of future experience to our mind. It sets definite activities in us at work."

A reasonable comment on pragmatism would be: It can't be as simple as it looks; there must be more to it than the determination to engage the problems of philosophy by erasing the hardest of them and, having done so, taking one step at a time toward solving the next problem. G. K. Chesterton said that "pragmatism is a matter of human needs; and one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a pragmatist."

In fact, many of the most memorable passages in James are written [illegible]



the by, and have no strong dependence on pragmatism: his attitude toward language, for instance, and especially his conviction in *The Principles of Psychology* that "language works against our perception of the truth." He explains this in Chapter IX, "The Stream of Thought," starting with the minimal assumptions that "*thought goes on*" and that it goes on in a particular person's mind. Unfortunately, he says, human beings have an inveterate habit of "not attending to sensations as subjective facts, but of simply using them as stepping-stones to pass over to the recognition of the realities whose presence they reveal": "We take no heed, as a rule, of the different way in which the same things look and sound and smell at different distances and under different circumstances." Even pragmatism, I assume, falls into this lazy habit.

Consciousness, unlike language, "does not appear to itself chopped up in bits." Like Lily Briscoe in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, James knew that words "broke up the thought and dismembered it." But setting aside the doubt he allowed into "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", he was determined to save the fluidity of thought:

> Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed, it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. . . . *Let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.*

The transition "between the thought of one object and the thought of another is no more a break in the *thought* than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the *consciousness* as much as the joint is a part of the *bamboo*." James then considers another metaphor by which thought might be presented. It is a bird's life, "an alternation of flights and perchings":

> The rhythm of language expresses this, [illegible] thought is expressed in a succession of [illegible] interrupted by [illegible] pauses. The resting places are usually occupied by sensible images of [illegible] over which the mind has [illegible] while the [illegible] are filled with thoughts of relations between them, that we hardly notice, and that are designated in speech by transitive prepositions and conjunctions. Let us call the resting places the "substantive parts," and the places of flight the "transitive parts," of the stream of thought. It then appears that the main end of our thinking is at all times the attainment of some other substantive part than the one from which we have just been dislodged. And we may say that the main use of the transitive parts is to lead us from one substantive conclusion to another.

The linguistic correlative of this fact is that language, like a concept, encourages us to pay attention to the nouns, impatient for their arrival, but not to the little words of transition by which they reach us and we receive them. James is tender to the little words, because we owe to them whatever sense we have of process, of time passing, of rich experience prior to conclusions:

> We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*. Yet we do not: so inveterate has our habit become of recognizing the existence of the substantive parts alone, that language almost refuses to lend itself to any other use.

Decrying the empiricists for privileging nouns and thereby "supposing that where there is *no* name no entity can exist," James holds them responsible for a tyranny of language over experience:

> All *dumb* or anonymous psychic states have, owing to this error, been coolly suppressed; or, if recognized at all, have been named after the substantive perception they led to, as thoughts "about" this object or "about" that, the stolid word *about* engulfing all their delicate idiosyncrasies in its monotonous sound. Thus the greater and greater accentuation and isolation of the substantive parts have continually gone on.

Strictly considered, "about" should be praised as one of the little transitional words, but I suppose its normal relation to the noun to which it leads is too blunt for James: by the time we come to "about," we have nearly reached the noun and its closure. The process of thinking is virtually over.

Why did pragmatism gain [illegible] hearing in America such that James could bring his lectures on it to an end by claiming that "the type of pluralistic and moralistic religion that I have offered is as good a religious synthesis as you are likely to find"? James even raised his claim: "Between the two extremes of crude naturalism on the one hand and transcendental absolutism on the other, you may find that what I take the liberty of calling the pragmatistic or melioristic type of theism is exactly what you require." But what was offered, in fact, is only a domesticated version of Mill's utilitarianism. In *The Metaphysical Club*, Louis Menand says that pragmatism's appeal during the years of its efflorescence, which he gives as between 1898 and 1917, "is not hard to understand": "Everything James and Dewey wrote as pragmatists boils down to a single claim: people are the agents of their own destinies."

Tell that to the soldiers at the Marne and the Somme. (Or to the shareholders of Enron, for that matter.) I don't doubt that many Americans in the first years of the twentieth century found it gratifying to be told that they were the agents of their own destinies. Some found social Darwinism appealing for the same reason. But why? It should have been hard to hold on to these felicities when soldiers were being slaughtered.

Pragmatism is a strong method when you think things are going well, onward and upward, and the thrust of evolution is in your favor. On your bad days it seems uncaring. Menand ends by reflecting on the two main deficiencies he finds in pragmatism:

> One is that it takes interests for granted; it doesn't provide for a way of judging whether they are worth pursuing apart from the consequences of acting on them. . . . The second deficiency is related to the first. It is that wants and beliefs can lead people to act in ways that are distinctly unpragmatic. Sometimes the results are destructive, but sometimes they are not. There is a sense in which history is lit by the deeds of men and women for whom ideas were things other than instruments of adjustment. Pragmatism explains everything about ideas

Continued on page 9

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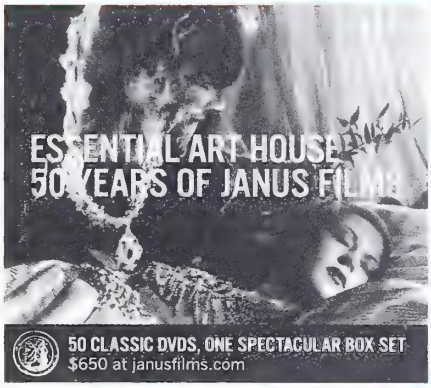
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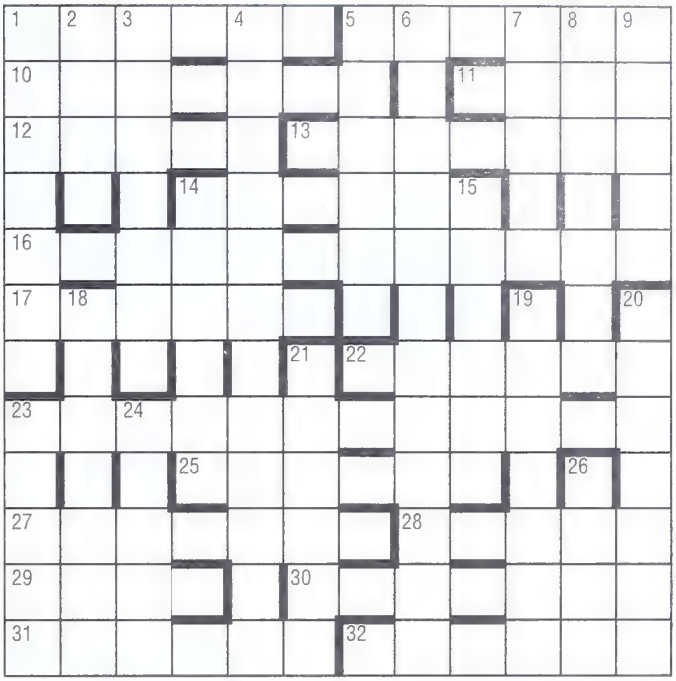
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SIXES AND SEVENS—AND TWELVES

By Richard Maltby Jr.

(with acknowledgments to Zander of The Listener*)*

The clues to words of six, seven, and twelve letters are grouped separately. Solvers must determine where each answer belongs in the diagram, using answers to the numbered clues as guides.

Clue answers include two proper names. One of the six-letter answers is a hyphenated English colloquialism not found in some dictionaries. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 85.

ACROSS

11. As required, get a new start in a month (4)
12. I'm upset, beside myself, with nothing to copy (5)
28. Alluring female decapitated by English woman (5)
29. Racket made returning rainwear (4)

DOWN

2. Enthusiastic opera singer on the rise (4)
7. Soundly bungle social event in street clothes (5)
9. Stocking ticket indication of JFK to Heathrow? (5)
23. Member of parliament holds title back—it causes a light breakup (5)
24. Rope-maker sails off (5)
26. Chanteuse covers up to feed the kitty (4)

SIX-LETTER WORDS

a. Marine trained other soldiers?
b. Needle America after messy situation gets left behind
c. Appear to include kind of training for comeback fights
d. Tab, Yoo-Hoo, emptied like this: vigorously
e. Legal wise guys' goodbyes (not a bit of good in it)
f. ABC's programming is ABC's
g. Provides a diversion, which could lead you to assume incorrectly
h. Aims at places in the ear
i. They might cover a yard in Queens, perhaps
j. No women allowed editor to be directed
k. Face on Aztec-Mexican chicken-god
l. They provide a stable home life, but they're off-putting!

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

a. Class reconstituted? Remains to be seen!
b. Chop suey or bit of leftover eaten—hard to hold down
c. Jew's starting without his usual sighs? That's dreary
d. Makes certain changes around sunrise
e. Beat soundly, making counter-move
f. Getting involved, Rove and pal go a little beyond touching
g. Arranges again for hotels
h. Wind crowd up by swinging bats
i. Heavy coating produces fluid results
j. Ormolu-designed covers, initially, for a lot of people

TWELVE-LETTER WORDS

a. After fiddling with soloist, I'm in a mood for being alone
b. Pole with wit loses gold after buying
c. Elegant dresser with finish containing the Bermudas but without the casual shirts
d. Writing "hello" in non-Italian construction—it slays me!

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Sixes and Sevens—and Twelves," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include your [illegible] by January 12. Senders of the first three correct solutes to be opened at random will receive [illegible]. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winner of the November puzzle, "Classics," are Grant Hu[illegible] Rhoads, Boulder, Colorado; and Anita Winn, Lebanon, Pennsylvania.



FINDINGS

The World Health Organization's coordinator of mental and brain disorders called for a ban on pesticides that people in developing countries commonly use to kill themselves. Scientists were worried that indigenous people around the world might become extinct as a result of their adoption of Western diets and lifestyles, which cause conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. The Japanese developed a robot wine steward capable of chemically analyzing and identifying foods; when presented with human flesh, however, the robot thought it was prosciutto. Mathematicians announced the discovery of the perfect method of cutting a cake, and shark-lovers warned that many species of the fish are in danger of becoming extinct because of the growing demand for shark's fin soup. It was reported that doctors have been using Google to diagnose illnesses. A team of Danish and American scientists identified more than 200 industrial chemicals that can damage the brain and cause neurodevelopmental disor-

[illegible] said that facial expressions might be hereditary, and a [illegible] quantum-computing [illegible] that political attitudes can be attributed to genetics. It was discovered [illegible] quite smart.

S[illegible] the ozone layer. It was suggested that the moon might [illegible] and that radio waves coming from galactic shock waves could be caused by primordial gas. Saturn was experiencing a hurricane-like storm two thirds as wide as the earth. The oceans are becoming more acidic, scientists said, and a study concluded that commercial fish stocks may be gone by 2050 as a result of overfishing, pollution, and global climate change. A study suggested that mobile phones are causing widespread sperm damage.

Scientists announced that the testosterone levels of American men have been dropping since the 1980s and that smoking appears to render the uterus unreceptive. Many women who suffer from vaginal itching and burning after intercourse are allergic to their partner's semen; doctors recommended that patients have sex more frequently. A study confirmed that college freshmen really do gain weight. Researchers were beginning to study sexsomnia, a rare condition in which people have sex while sleeping, and German scientists found that stimulating people's brains with an electric current while they sleep can improve their powers of memory. Ornithologists concluded that migratory birds take hundreds of naps as they fly; they also practice unilateral eye closure, in which one eye closes, thereby permitting half the brain to sleep. Asiatic-African hybrid lions were dying of a mysterious disease. Scientists reported that the Ebola virus was spreading across Africa and threatening lowland gorillas. It was discovered that marsupial mothers who sleep around give birth to bigger babies. Lizards have personalities. Europe's red knot seabirds were dying out. A Brazilian [illegible] birth to a dog. ■

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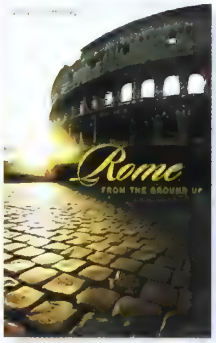
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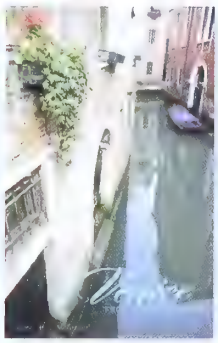
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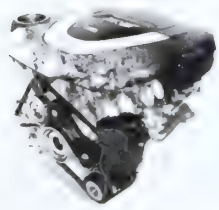


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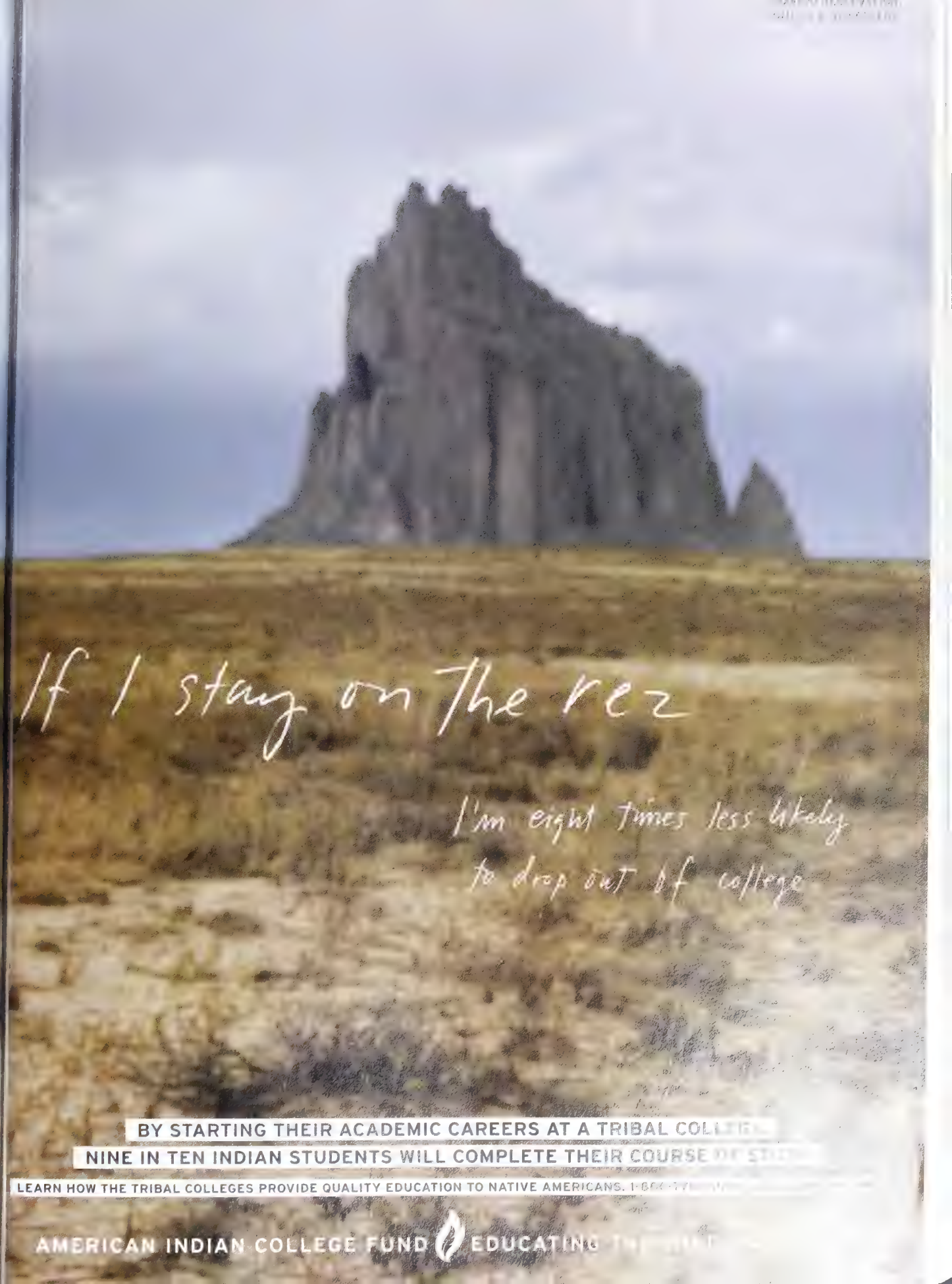
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LETTERS

Half-Cocked?

Garret Keizer's December notebook, "Loaded," contains a number of legal and historical errors. With one notable exception, the federal courts have consistently held that the Second Amendment concerns the militia, not an individual's right to keep or bear a gun. The phrase "to keep and bear arms" was well understood at the time the Second Amendment was drafted to describe arms used for a particular public military purpose. Given that the Second Amendment does not delineate an individual right, and that there are an estimated 200 million guns in America, it is difficult to understand the insistence by gun-rights advocates that the Second Amendment is essential for the protection of private firearm ownership. Even if the Supreme Court ruled tomorrow that the Second Amendment did afford every individual the right to possess a gun, almost every existing gun law would still be valid.

Although he invokes James Madison, Keizer does not seem to have grasped that Madison sought to steer a course between anarchy and tyranny and to create a system of well regulated liberty. Indeed, there is a long history of gun regulation in America, dating back to the colonial era, that has nothing to do with the racially discriminatory legislation designed to disarm blacks, as Keizer seems to think. If the United States is to make any progress on this contentious issue, we need to get the history right. Keizer's shotgun is perfectly safe—it always has been.

Saul Cornell
Associate Professor of History
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

I don't like guns, and I would like to live without fear of gun violence, but I also want Caesar to fear me, which is why I believe Keizer is right to suggest that we are in need of a little "civil unrest." But we must ask ourselves what good guns are to a citizenry so complacent that it fails to be outraged by the manipulations of its government. Before we defend or decry our so-called gun culture, we ought first to awaken our sense of justice, our collective capacity for moral

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nger, and remind ourselves that our overnment is supposed to be anverable to us, not vice versa.

hawn Cote
ort Fairfield, Maine

Garret Keizer promotes the same ired rhetoric of the right: Guns are or self-defense one moment and for evolution the next. What this sugests is a disbelief in democracy as a neans to create and sustain human seurity. The regulation of private guns ecomes a fear of confiscation by an ut-of-control government. Ameri:ans are left to arm themselves and to vait for the inevitable end. I refuse to embrace this nihilistic stance.

oan Burbick
Pullman, Wash.

Garret Keizer responds:

That the Second Amendment is as easily interpreted—or abbreviated—as Professor Cornell suggests will come as news to the scores of legal scholars who have addressed it, including those who despair of constructing a reasonable policy of gun control in its shadow. (See, for example, Daniel Lazare's essay "Your Constitution Is Killing You" in the October 1999 issue of this magazine.) My alleged failure to grasp James Madison would appear to be a misreading of Number 46 of *The Federalist Papers*, in which he goes so far as to calculate the superior firepower of an armed citizenry over that of a typically sized standing army. For a history of arms and race in America, I would refer Professor Cornell and anyone interested to "The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration" by Robert J. Cottrol and Raymond T. Diamond, originally published in the *Georgetown Law Journal* and available online. My shotgun is indeed safe, as I affirmed at some length in my essay, though if Professor Cornell owns a shotgun and perceives threats with the same alacrity as he perceives "legal and historical errors," his meter reader is not.

Far safer than my shotgun, however, is the lemming-like logic that invariably scurries from the militia clause of the Second Amendment to the conclusion that there is no constitutional guarantee for the private ownership of guns. Small wonder that it does. The alternative course of moving in the opposite direction, from the plethora of privately owned guns to the maintenance of a "well regulated militia," would entail some notion of civic responsibility beyond that of vilifying "gun nuts" in an ecstasy of rectitude while a volunteer army, so called, secures our petroleum and a well-policed underclass scours our pots.

Weird Science

In her November review, "Hysterical Scientism," Marilynne Robinson argues that "eugenics is science as surely as totemism is religion"; therefore Richard Dawkins should own up to the treachery of science. But Robinson is dismissive of the fact that scientists assume error as a function of their progress. Moreover, scientists can correct their major texts, whereas those who profess that the

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BARBARA EHRENREICH

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Bible is "holy writ," as Robinson has, cannot. After all, can the Bible ever be said to be in error, even if translated or understood anew?

Additionally, Robinson claims that in order to be fair in his analysis, Dawkins must distinguish between "authentic religion" and religion, just as he does with science. But we cannot define religions as authentic any more than we can define myths as such: Jesus or Dionysus, which is more authentic? Whereas Dawkins can be accused of using selective historical examples in *The God Delusion*, he can't be accused of making up the facts.

Rossana Lhota
Phoenix, Ariz.

"Bad science is still science," Marilynne Robinson writes, "in more or less the same sense that bad religion is still religion." Although rhetorically interesting, her comparison misses the point. Robinson acknowledges that "both of them can do damage." Dawkins, however, argues that religion differs from science as a methodology of thought. Because religion has no built-in mechanism to guard against error, bad religion will forever stay that way. Science, on the other hand, is self-correcting. The scientific method is designed to rectify its own errors so that bad science does not continue.

Matthew J. Medina
Winfield, Ill.

Marilynne Robinson seems to dismiss Dawkins's main argument against the existence of God. He notes that any God capable of designing and creating the complex universe we inhabit would have to be himself complex and therefore in need of further explanation. Robinson's rebuttal is to postulate a God who is not time-bound. She claims, "That God exists outside time as its creator is an ancient given of theology." But Dawkins has addressed this response. A creator who exists and scrupulously maintains himself outside of time is, indeed, immune to Dawkins's argument. This is not the God that Dawkins is opposing. The God of religious believers is one who notoriously meddles within the sphere governed by time—by writing books, performing miracles, and answering prayers. Any such interventions by God into the mundane world deserve the scrutiny of the scientific method.

Bo Curry
Redwood City, Calif.

Of Time and Taxes

After reading Michelle Stacey's December report, "Clash of the Time Lords," I remembered an interesting effect of Lord Chesterfield's Calendar Bill that she failed to mention. Today, the United Kingdom's tax year begins on April 6—a date that may seem arbitrary but is not. According to the Christian calendar, March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation, which in England marked both tax day and the start of the new year. In 1752, however, England switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian one; eleven days were lost, and January 1 became the new start of the year. Fearing that Britons would balk at having to pay taxes as if an entire year had passed, the Exchequer moved tax day forward to April 6, keeping its reckoning to 365 days.

L.E. Bagshawe
Warrenton, N.C.

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NOTEBOOK

Pathologies of Hope

By Barbara Ehrenreich

I hate hope. It was hammered into me constantly a few years ago when I was being treated for breast cancer: Think positively! Don't lose hope! Wear your pink ribbon with pride! A couple of years later, I was alarmed to discover that the facility where I received my follow-up care was called the Hope Center. Hope? What about a *cure*? At antiwar and labor rallies over the years, I have dutifully joined Jesse Jackson in chanting "Keep hope alive!"—all the while crossing my fingers and thinking, "Fuck hope. Keep us alive."

There. It's out. Let pestilence rain down on me, for a whole chorus of voices rise up to insist that hope, optimism, and a "positive attitude" are the keys to health and longevity. The more academically respectable among them—the new Ph.D.-level "positive psychologists"—like to cite a study of nuns in which the ones professing a generally positive outlook in their twenties went rather tardily to their maker while the glummer ones dropped off like flies a decade earlier. The average author of motivational materials—books, CDs, and audiotapes—needs no studies to buttress the warning that negative thoughts "*can be harmful to your health and might even shorten your life span.*"

Not only is health at stake; so is your credibility as a citizen, employee, or social entity of any kind. "Ninety-nine out of every 100 people report that they want to be around more positive people," claims the self-help book *How Full Is Your Bucket?* Many champions of positivity urge one to ostracize negative people—complainers and "victims"—because they are "*committed to lose.*"

It's everywhere, this Cult of Positivity, at least in America, the birthplace of Mary Baker Eddy, Norman Vincent Peale, and est, where 30,000 beaming "life coaches" ply their trade and a pessimist is no more likely to be elected president than an atheist. George W. Bush provides a sterling role model. Asked on his most recent birthday about the potential nuclear threats of Iran and North Korea, as well as the U.S.-instigated civil war in Iraq, he replied, "I'm optimistic that all problems will be resolved."

Google offers more than a million entries on "positive thinking" covering almost any kind of challenge you might encounter. Dieting? Robert Ferguson, the "Master Weight-Loss Coach," tells us, "With a positive attitude you can *do*, *have* and *be* everything you want in life!" Bereaved? You can put the fun back in funeral by replacing it with a "celebration" of the deceased's life. Need money? Attract it to your wallet with positive mental affirmations, such as:

> *I love having money. . . . I am open to receive money. I give generously to myself and others. I am generous. I feel great about all the money I spend.* Note: Be SPECIFIC about amounts of money [you require].

Cancer? See it positively, as a "growth opportunity," and hopefully not just for the tumor. A representative of the American Cancer Society rebuffed a researcher in the mid-Nineties by saying that the organization didn't "want to be associated with a book on death. We want to emphasize the positive aspects of cancer only." Laid off? Forget the economy and concentrate on reconfiguring your attitude, as explained in the 2004 bestseller *We Got Fired! . . . And It's the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Us.*

One measure of the cult's success is the growth of the "self-improvement" industry, most of which promotes techniques for upgrading your attitude and visualizing success through affirmations that open you to the abundance of the world—like this one, for example, from a current financial self-help book:

> Place your hand on your heart and say . . . *"I admire rich people!" "I bless rich people!" "I love rich people!" "And I'm going to be one of those rich people too!"*

In 2000, the self-improvement industry—including books, CDs, seminars, and coaches—took in $3.35 billion. In 2005, it grossed $5.62 billion, with the coaching market alone growing by almost 500 percent.

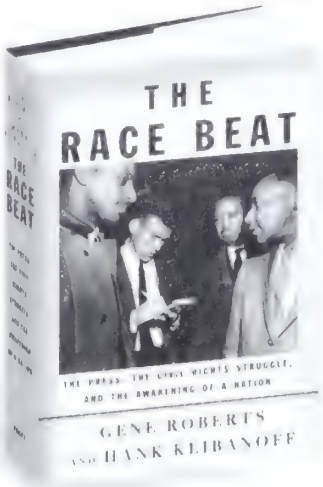
Until recently, the marketing of optimism was left largely to familiar snake-oil purveyors like motivational speakers, prosperity-oriented preachers, and self-anointed coaches. Then, in 2000, the new [illegible] of positive psychology emerged, complete with annual conferences, a *Journal* [illegible] Database of Happi[illegible] more than [illegible] itive psych[illegible] [illegible] one of th[illegible]

Barbara Ehrenreich is a Contributing Editor of Harper's Magazine. *Her new book,* Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy, *is due out in July.*

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THE RACE BEAT

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course at Harvard. Its professor, Dr. Tal D. Ben-Shahar, takes an indulgent stance toward his disreputable confederates. "For many years," he says, "the people who were writing about happiness were the self-help gurus. It had a bad rap. ...What I'm trying to do in my class is to regain respectability for the concept of self-help."

Much of the behavioral advice offered by the gurus, both credentialed and otherwise, is innocuous. "Smile," advises one success-oriented, positive-thinking website, "greet coworkers." Surely the world would be a better, happier place if we all held doors for one another and stopped to coax smiles from babies—if only through the well-known social psychological mechanism of "mood contagion." Nor can I quibble with the common assignment in positive-psych courses to write "gratitude letters" or keep a "gratitude journal." As the mother of two Ivy League graduates, I'm for having all students write weekly odes to their tuition-payers.

The problem, for anyone with a lingering loyalty to secular rationalism, is that the prescriptions don't stop at behavior. Like our culture's ambient Protestantism, the Cult of Positivity demands not only acts but faith. It's not enough to manifest positivity through a visibly positive attitude; you must establish it as one of the very structures of your mind, whether or not it is justified by the actual circumstances. Some gurus attempt to dodge the potential conflict with reality by attributing to positive thoughts the power to control the outer world through a "Law of Attraction," as yet unknown to physicists, whereby thoughts somehow produce their material counterparts in the outer world. The 2005 book *Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*, for example, explains that the universe "is akin to a big mail-order department....You 'order' what you get by sending energetic messages out to the universe based on your predominant beliefs."

The academic side of the cult, which tests its claims to respectability on science, is of course barred from endorsing wacko mind-over-matter notions. Instead, we learn there that irrationality, at least in the form of "positive illusions," works like a vitamin, even at the admitted "cost perhaps of less realism." Scientists should presumably avoid such magical thinking, but it is recommended to everyone else: Go ahead, pump yourself up, imagine that all the obstacles you face are projections of some lingering negativity, whatever gets you through the day.

Why should an intelligent species need to rely on illusions? According to positive psychology's founder, University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin Seligman, it is our negative, pessimistic, thoughts that are maladaptive and happily, as it turns out, vestigial:

> Because our brain evolved during a time of ice, flood and famine, we have a catastrophic brain. The way the brain works is looking for what's wrong. The problem is, that worked in the Pleistocene era. It favoured you, but it doesn't work in the modern world.

In this view, which was restated uncritically in a February 2006 *New Yorker* review of two books on happiness, our Paleolithic ancestors were well served by the suspicion that a saber-toothed cat crouched behind every bush. Today we would do better to visualize pots of gold.

There are exceptions, the positive psychologists concede, even in the modern world, and at first glance they seem a little exotic: airplane pilots, for example, need to anticipate worst outcomes rather than happy landings. Recently, Seligman further limited the purview of positive psychology to nations that "are wealthy and not in civil turmoil and not at war," perhaps not realizing that he had thus excluded the majority of the world's people. But even leaving the poor and war-ravaged aside: if a pilot needs a healthy dose of negative thinking, what about the driver of a car? Should I assume, positively, that no one is going to cut in front of me or, more negatively, be prepared to brake?

Child-raising is another quotidian activity that eludes the positive psychologists. Religion and marriage are both recommended as positivity-boosters, and they do seem to increase self-reported happiness, but children, according to Harvard psychologist

Daniel Gilbert, can be "an extreme source of negative affect." Kids are, in other words, bummers, and it's easy to see why. You might want to be "positive" by advertising a trip to the pediatrician as an opportunity to play with the cool toys in the waiting room rather than an occasion for a painful shot, but no parent dare risk assuming that the sudden quiet from the toddlers' room means they are studying with Baby Einstein. Visualize fratricidal stranglings and electric outlets stabbed with forks: that's how we reproduce our genomes.

If health and well-being in general are at stake, the positive psychologists would argue, why not indulge in some positive illusions even at the cost of "realism"? There's no question but that extreme, locked-in negativity in the form of depression is a risk factor for physical illness, but the evidence for the health-enhancing effects of positivity is surprisingly muddled. A frequently cited 1988 article arguing that positive illusions, such as unwarrantedly high self-estimations, promote mental health has been disputed. Nor are positive-thinking people necessarily happier than pessimists or realists, since anyone who self-reports positivity is equally likely to self-report happiness. As for "success": in workplaces that enjoin a positive attitude, one would do well to conform, but the halls of fame are lined with the busts of major depressives, including Max Weber, William James, John Donne, and Samuel Johnson.

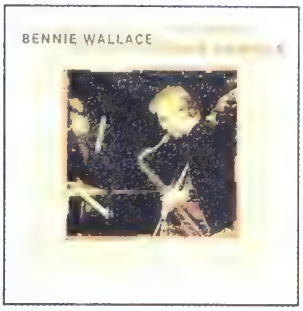
It takes a positive spin to see a consistently positive effect of positivity on physical health. A 2002 *New York Times* article headlined "Power of Positive Thinking Extends, It Seems, to Aging" cited two studies linking optimism to longevity—and four studies tracing longevity to such other traits as "conscientiousness," calmness, pessimism, and even cantankerousness. A 2002 study not cited in the *Times* article found mildly depressed women living longer than nondepressed or more severely depressed women, and even two positive psychologists reported that people displaying negative affect "complain about their health but show no hard evidence of poorer health or increased mortality." As for those oft-cited nuns: Nuns are popular with researchers because of their controlled, homogeneous lifestyle. But that lifestyle is not for everyone, and Freud might think of reasons why those who were not initially enthusiastic about their vocation would go on to live lives of quiet and self-destructive desperation.

In fact, there is some evidence that the ubiquitous moral injunction to think positively may place an additional burden on the already sick or otherwise aggrieved. Not only are you failing to get better but you're failing to feel *good* about not getting better. Similarly for the long-term unemployed, who, as I found while researching my book *Bait and Switch*, are informed by career coaches and self-help books that their principal battle is against their own negative, resentful, loser-like feelings. This is victim-blaming at its cruelest, and may help account for the passivity of Americans in the face of repeated economic insult.

But what is truly sinister about the positivity cult is that it seems to reduce our tolerance of other people's suffering. Far from being a "culture of complaint" that upholds "victims," ours has become "less and less tolerant of people having a bad day or a bad year," according to Barbara Held, professor of psychology at Bowdoin College and a leading critic of positive psychology. If no one will listen to my problems, I won't listen to theirs: "no whining," as the popular bumper stickers and wall plaques warn. Thus the cult acquires a viral-like reproductive energy, creating an empathy deficit that pushes ever more people into a harsh insistence on positivity in others.

I got through my bout of cancer in a state of constant rage, directed chiefly against the kitschy positivity of American breast-cancer culture. I remain, although not absolutely, certifiably, cancer-free down to the last cell, at least hope-free. Do not mistake this condition for hopelessness, in the beaten or passive sense, or confuse it with unhappiness. The trick, as my teen hero Camus wrote, is to draw strength from the "refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation." To be hope-free is to acknowledge the lion in the tall grass, the tumor in the CAT scan, and to plan one's moves accordingly. ■

Music of Distinction



Bennie Wallace Disorder At The Border

Disorder At The Border, the result of Bennie Wallace's enduring love of Coleman Hawkins, features one of the finest ensembles Wallace has ever assembled: alto saxophonists Brad Leali and Jesse Davis; baritone saxophonist Adam Schroeder; trombonist Ray Anderson; trumpeter Terrell Stafford; pianist Donald Vega; bassist Danton Boller; and drummer Alvin Queen. The album's repertoire consists entirely of compositions by or associated with Coleman Hawkins (1904-1969). Wallace adds, "His music is so important to all saxophonists, yet I feel he's been unbelievably overlooked in recent years."



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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage of Baghdad's Shiites who say that all U.S. forces should leave Iraq within six months : 32
Percentage who want a withdrawal on a one-year timeline : 48
Percentage who say forces should be reduced even more gradually, as the "security situation improves" : 0
Average duration, in years, of the 130 civil wars fought worldwide since 1945, according to a Stanford professor : 11
Rank of Iraq's current civil war among these in terms of fatalities per year : 9
Factor by which the number of U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan since June has exceeded the number in Iraq : 19
Minimum number of women in Kabul who committed suicide by self-immolation last year : 36
Number of Silver Stars the Army has awarded so far for heroism in the Iraq and Afghan wars combined : 249
Number it awarded for the Vietnam War : 21,630
Average annual percentage change, since 1965, in U.S. spending when one party controls the presidency and Congress : +3.4
Average when control is divided : +1.5
Total value of fraud cases to which whistle-blowers tipped off the Justice Department last year : $3,100,000,000
Amount the whistle-blowers were allowed to keep as reward : $190,000,000
Amount spent in 2006 to take U.S. public companies private : $248,460,000,000
Factor by which this exceeds the amount in the previous five years combined : 2
Percentage of worldwide IPO proceeds in 1999 that were realized on U.S. exchanges : 56
Percentage last year : 18
Chance that a U.S. worker in 1970 experienced a drop in income that year of one-half or greater : 1 in 14
Chance in 2002 : 1 in 6
Percentage of Nigerians living on less than $1 per day in 1985 and today, respectively : 32, 71
Total oil revenues that have flowed into Nigeria since 1974 : $728,500,000,000
Amount that Britons paid to "Nigerian-style" email and letter scams last year : $661,500,000
Percentage of solved cases of identity theft in which the victim turns out to know the thief personally : 52
Minimum number of Texas death-row inmates who have MySpace pages : 36
Number of U.S. states that passed legislation last year expanding the right to shoot someone in self-defense : 14
Chance that a U.S. hybrid-car owner also owns a non-hybrid SUV : 1 in 4
Amount the Defense Department is paying North Dakota researchers to develop a biofuel for military jets : $4,800,000
Tons of live World War I ordnance dug up in Belgium each year, on average : 300
Percentage of Germans today who say they are unsatisfied "with the way [their] democracy functions" : 51
Consecutive years that the U.N. has ranked Norway as the best country to live in : 6
Minutes after the ranking last fall that Norway's aid minister said Norwegians needed to fight their "culture of whining" : 38
Percentage of city-dwelling Indian men aged 16 to 25 who say they expect the woman they marry to be a virgin : 63
Percentage of these who have had sex with a prostitute or another man, respectively : 22, 17
Chances that a hip-hop fan has had five or more sexual partners in the last five years, according to a U.K. study : 2 in 5
Chance that a country-music fan has : 1 in 67
Average number of times an adult worldwide has sex each year, according to self-reporting in polls : 103
Average in Japan, the lowest of forty-one countries surveyed : 45
Percentage of 16- to 34-year-olds in Japan who say they are happy : 8
Rank of this, among the fourteen countries surveyed : 14

Figures cited are the latest available as of December 2006. Sources are listed on page [illegible]
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Dear Genentech,

I am writing to thank you for two things. First, thank you for the work you do in developing new cancer medicines. Second, thank you so much for providing support so that my mother can receive your medicine at no charge. You have given us hope, even reasons to smile. My mom is clearly not just a medical case number to you. The people at the Genentech Access to Care Foundation were so courteous and kind in getting my mother the medicine she needs. Thank you from my heart.

Jody Clemente
Pelham, New York

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IN BUSINESS FOR LIFE

READINGS

[Oration]

YOU, SCREWS

By Breyten Breytenbach, from a speech delivered in June 2000 to an international convention of prison wardens in Leeuwarden, Netherlands. It is part of On the Noble Art of Walking in No Man's Land, *a work in progress. In 1975, after illegally entering South Africa from exile, Breytenbach was incarcerated for seven and a half years on charges of terrorism. His most recent book is* Lady One.

In a long life of strange encounters—discussing land rights with Aborigines in Sydney, their eyes so dark they must glow in the night; talking revolution with Tuaregs perched on camels on a sand dune outside Timbuktu, their heads swathed in indigo cloth; exchanging philosophical thoughts with an aged courtesan in a Saigon bar, her thighs flabby but still softly white; or visiting the shivering silence-layers of millions of monarch butterflies clustering to tall pines on the high mountain peaks of Michoacán, a smokeless pyre of prayers—this, for me, must rate as one of the most unexpected. I never thought the day would come when I, an ex-convict (a *bandiet*, as we say in South Africa), would be asked to address a gathering of screws.

It is a tall order, and I'm not sure I can rise to the occasion. After all, you collectively must know far more about the subject—I'd even say the *condition*—than I or any other prisoner ever could. This is why you are here in congress, coming as you do from your institutions in Cambodia and Tajikistan and Peru and Italy and all the other barely visible outcrops of what I call the Middle World—to exchange experiences and refine methods. I've heard you speak of inmates as *economic units* and your honorable compounds as *enterprises*. I've observed how at night you get drunk on cigars and gin and thigh-slapping prison stories, and I've tried to escape notice in your comradely company. What could I, the only reprobate Christian among a pride of lions, tell you? Wouldn't it be utterly preposterous for me to want to teach grandmothers how to suck eggs, or old dogs new tricks? But then perhaps we know the same dog-faced coin from opposite sides. It needs to be remembered that the two sides of a coin, albeit one, are never in contact with each other except by the "underground" of being back to back, as it were.

Do I even *want* to talk about prison? Can I still do so? Years ago, I went to listen to Jorge Luis Borges, the ancient mariner as blind Argentine author, giving a talk in Paris. Afterward, he was asked by somebody in the audience whether he had committed suicide recently. No, he answered, he had given it up for quite some time already. "I've lost my hand." Similarly, I could claim I haven't been "inside" for a while now, and I normally resist all attempts at dragging me back, particularly when they come from the sentimentally deprived or the vicarious heart-eaters and soul-shitters who wallow in victimization and victimism by proxy. I could affirm that it is a life ago since I last died.

[Plea]

PERSONAL ACCOUNT

From the October sentencing of Timothy Bowers in the case of Ohio *v.* Bowers. *In May Bowers robbed a bank in Franklin County, Ohio. Dan Cable is the assistant prosecuting attorney. Jeremy Dodgin is Bowers's attorney.*

DAN CABLE: Mr. Bowers told the teller at the Fifth Third Bank that she should put loose bills in an envelope because he was robbing the bank. She put four twenty-dollar bills in an envelope, gave it to him, and hit the panic button. Mr. Bowers, however, approached the bank security guard and said, "Here, be a hero today," and handed him the envelope. Then he sat down and waited for the police to arrive. They did, and arrested him for robbery. When they talked to him afterward, they learned that Mr. Bowers was running into financial trouble. His plan was to get arrested and go to prison until his Social Security kicked in.

THE COURT: Okay. Counsel, before I sentence Mr. Bowers, do you wish to say anything on behalf of your client?

JEREMY DODGIN: Your Honor, Mr. Bowers is due to receive Social Security when he turns sixty-six years old. That will be in three years. He would like to be incarcerated for that entire time to alleviate the day-to-day travails of living life and being responsible for paying bills and housing and whatnot. This is an unusual and unfortunate situation in that an individual feels so helpless that he thinks being in prison is better than living with freedom.

THE COURT: Mr. Bowers, talk to me. What I'm hearing is that this was something that you decided to do because you felt it was in your best interest.

TIMOTHY BOWERS: Yes, ma'am. At my age, the jobs available to me are minimum-wage jobs, and the jobs I would prefer to have I can't get because of my age. There is age discrimination in this country, contrary to what a lot of people believe. So this will suit me fine because when I reach sixty-six I'll be eligible for Social Security benefits and all the other little goodies that go with them.

THE COURT: Well, when I heard your story, I said to myself that I didn't think you needed to be incarcerated because unfortunately it made too [illegible] birthday is October 29. I'm [illegible] present. You're [illegible] prison.

But, of course, I need only close my eyes to be back inside with the same overpowering sense of apathy and resignation, of having no power or say over my own destiny or even destination, and the same urgent and concrete need to start making the right connections for survival: how to get hold of some extra sugar, forbidden reading matter, a decent pair of pants that will actually fit, string for sending messages down the corridor.

Borges was a great visitor of labyrinths. In my own prison writings I, too, have repeatedly used the metaphor of the Minotaur, the strange dark beast living in the empty heart of the maze, whose head you must cut off and bring out if you want to continue living and, perhaps, save the city. Or even just save face, because to the prisoner pushing or doing his time, the Minotaur is ultimately himself, the Mirror. And the prisoner searches for his face the way a monster dreads the looking glass. After Theseus, who went into the Place (the Sanctuary) to kill the Minotaur, emerges with the severed head dripping blood, he forgets to give the correct signal of victory, and his father the king jumps into the sea in despair. Does this imply that one's "inside" knowledge is of no consequence to the "outside" world? That one cannot convey experience? That there is no longer a way to be intimate with strangers?

Already I'm slipping back into that parallel world. It was to be living in the mirror as in a sea, secret and senseless and selfish like the shellfish. Everything that exists outside you can find inside as well, though perhaps distorted, bloated, or flattened. My nostrils pick up the smell of the many nuances of grayness, of living rot. My ears become more alert because my view is restricted. The murmur of a carpeted world is replaced by the clanging reverberations of steel doors and bare corridors. I am stripped of the comfort of a known aesthetic hierarchy: the shadows on the wall have the same value and beauty as a painting by Rembrandt. I slip back into our own vernacular: if you ask somebody how he's doing, he will say, "I survive"; the word for friend is "connection"; thinking is described as "eating head"; the outside world is referred to as "the States," an unattainable mirage.

At night there will be the murmur and the sighs of shellfish devouring one another, the slow crackle of skin being torn; with daylight maybe the severed head of an unlucky sacrifice will be found perched on the windowsill of a crowded cell, its disembodied smile obsequious to the masters, and nobody will know who the killers were, but people will have crusts of dried blood around their lips. I am told the "punish-



MMK *by Tim Eitel, whose work was on display last month at PaceWildenstein, in New York City.*

ment" of a recalcitrant gang member or fresh arrival is now to be gang-raped and thus infected with AIDS. Why should the innocent be allowed to live? What else can we pass on to one another except the knowledge of death?

All contact with my fellow humans will be reduced to the basic expressions and tricks of desire and fear. I once more start inventing a past and imagining a future so as to circumvent the present or imbue it with some sense of purpose. Purpose is always invented. The human animal is alive again—sentimental, superstitious, sly.

This, the above, I thought I'd left behind; that the slate had been wiped clean and the state evacuated; no more lingering decayed shellfish smells. But the memories keep on returning. On streets or in trains I instinctively recognize my compatriots of misfortune, all those skulking survivors—by a crude tattoo, a slope of the shoulders, the hands clasped in front of the body as those of a shivering addict, a weary or furtive glance, a misfit appearance, a dead-fish quality. The ghosts, the shuffling people from some submerged Atlantis, are alive and roaming the world as if exiled from the "normal" world of prison.

I am not telling you anything new, am I? How could I possibly? You would have identified the description I just gave as that of the "institutionalized" condition, where "normal" life and relations exist behind the walls and not outside among the "civilians." This conditioning, by the way, I believe happens to just about everyone kept in some form of confinement or detention for more than two years. Pri[illegible] *ates* prisoners. In fact, it may fabricate [illegible] or *model prisoners*. Inmates have fertile [illegible] unoriginal imaginations, and lots of [illegible] quickly learn to wag tail even as [illegible] a specific experience. You may s[illegible]

experts on the laws and customs of incarceration. Just ask us and we'll bark forever.

So, when I started "eating my head" to decide what I could possibly contribute to your deliberations, a first assessment was: it would be presumptuous of me to want to speak on behalf of prisoners as a generic category. There have been, are, and always will be too many different kinds of prisons and prisoners to justify that generalization. "Stand on your dig (dignity)," would be the injunction among the incarcerated ones. Or, "Hold on to your name." Similarly, it would be abusive for me to address you as if prison laws, prison traditions, and prison conditions were the same the world over. Since arriving here yesterday, I have been listening to some of you, and I was struck by the complexity, sophistication, and modern manifestations of your work. For some of you, it would seem to be more of a passionate vocation than a career. Boy, I never knew it was this difficult and absorbing! And I was likewise impressed to see the extent to which your work is defined by local conditions and diverse histories. Which is why a conference of this nature is an admirable illustration of your shared desire to heighten awareness of the implications of the work you're embarked upon, and to harmonize experiences for a better development of prison systems that, blah-blah, I hope, will be more humane. Know thyself, but we all learn from one another.

No later than last night I was asked whether prisoners hold grudges against their guards. I think not. True, in some ways our reciprocal "strangeness" may be permanently pickled in the sourness of power relations—when I arrived at the airport two days ago, I was brought here in a taxi that I had to share with the head warder of an institution from some remote Caucasian republic; he spoke not a word intelligible to me, but regularly burped or farted noisily, whereupon he would turn his head on his thick neck and look at me with a ferocious glare of disapproval and accusation. But we are after all of one family, are we not? We live on the same premises (in most countries we will be stealing one another's food). If we get the chance, we kill one another. We are cut off from the outside world by the same walls. We have to make do with one another. We are the Siamese, stuck like the prick in the arid asshole. Besides, with few exceptions, neither you nor we prisoners are involved in creating the conditions or drafting the laws governing our lives, although, as "professionals" on both sides of the coin, I do believe we should be far more involved in public thinking on the questions of a penal system.

Imprisonment has been with us ever since man started organizing communal life according to the rules of the strongest, from the time the top dog first howled. If I may digress—it is interesting how many of the basic and immemorial human activities or institutions all start with a *p* in English: power, politics, pussy, poetry, prostitution, prison, prick. And since the beginning of time there must have been warders occupying this strange and difficult and exposed and perhaps unenviable position as the interface between society and those of its members considered to be beyond the law, however temporarily so and without regard to how such law

[Postmortem]

DR. MAYBE

From a 2006 court order issued in a case brought by Michael Taylor, an inmate sentenced to death in 1991 for the rape and murder of a teenage girl, against the Missouri Department of Corrections. The state was ordered to have an anesthesiologist present at future executions. The American Society of Anesthesiologists last year stated that doctors should not participate in executions.

There are numerous problems with executions carried out in Missouri. There is no written protocol describing which drugs will be administered, in what amounts. John Doe testified that he came up with the protocol and that he felt he had the authority to change the formula as he saw fit. No one monitors the changes. The Court has concerns about John Doe's qualifications. John Doe readily admitted that he is dyslexic and often transposes numbers. The Court is concerned that a physician who is solely responsible for correctly mixing the drugs responsible for humanely ending the life of condemned inmates has a condition that causes him confusion with numbers. Although John Doe is not an anesthesiologist, he monitors the anesthetic depth of an inmate by observing the inmate's facial expression. But when the inmate is lying on the gurney in the execution room, the inmate is facing away from the room where John Doe is located. It is dark in the room, and the blinds are partially closed and obstruct the view. This would make it almost impossible for John Doe to observe the inmate's pupils. These concerns lead the Court to conclude that Missouri's lethal-injection procedure subjects inmates to an unnecessary risk of unconstitutional suffering.



Eccentric

The first ever scientific study of "eccentric people" has concluded – with an important finding: **Eccentric people consult doctors sixteen times less frequently than "normal people."** Because they are less prone to the stresses of conformity, the study suggests, they suffer fewer ailments.

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is written and then read. Yes, it is expected of you to be both the custodians of agreed-upon norms of repression and punishment and the agents of rehabilitation, re-insertion, and social healing. You poor, poor people!

I don't think it should be my task here to engage you on the merits and the demerits of protecting society (we will keep that secret among us prisoners, if you don't mind), and the equal if contradictory need to uplift the fallen individual, to get him to look at the Mountain; nor to talk about right and wrong, or the social and economic causes of crime, or cultural untranslatability, or racism, or the fundamentalist urges for revenge, or the fact that if penal conditions reflected popular wishes we'd still have capital punishment all over the world today and not just in backward and crude democracies such as the United States and China and Iran, or about the muffled sounds made by the forgotten god in his burrow.

Perhaps I'd just briefly like to insist that you who are gathered in this august hall have, by dint of your own experiences and your intimate knowledge (maybe even your incestuous knowledge), the possibility to make the larger world more aware of the texture of implications proper to penal life. Maybe you, having wiped your penises on our underpants, can tell what the naked backside of the prisoner looks and feels like from your vantage point. This is more than we can say about ourselves. In many a way, dismal or otherwise, you who neither groan nor sob are the representatives, the acceptable face of us prisoners to the States, and you ought to flash your mirrors to signal that there's more to life than can be seen on the surface. Why, you may show the world that the moon is a dog!

Meanwhile, here is what I want to tell you finally, if I may say so from my own limited experience: that there can be no chance to escape the "living death" of existence in the labyrinth except by respecting and maintaining and developing the dignity and the sense of responsibility of the individual inmate; that the senses ought to be kept alive at all costs, for without antennae the shellfish are little more than bait; that family links ought thus to be encouraged; and that the prisoner must be given the chance to be gainfully employed. The most depressing aspect of being "inside" is not to be able to help your loved ones "outside."

This is the only way to break the wheel of cause and grinding (if the intention or the better option is indeed to break it). Or bring out the bleeding decapitated head of the defaced or defecated one for the benefit of society. If that what you want.

[Prescriptions]

STET OFFENSIVE

From questions posted on the website of The Chicago Manual of Style, *answered by the University of Chicago Press manuscript-editing department.*

Q: When I began learning English grammar from the nuns in 1951, I was taught never to use a comma either before or after independent clauses or compound sentences. Did the rules of English grammar and punctuation change while I was in that three-week coma in 1965, or in the years that it took to regain my basic and intellectual functioning before I returned to teaching?

A: I'm sorry, I can't account for your state of mind, but standard punctuation calls for a comma before a conjunction that joins two independent clauses unless the clauses are very short. I would go further and suggest that it's a good idea to reexamine any rule you were taught that includes the word "never" or "always."

Q: The menu in our cafeteria shows that enchiladas are available "Tues.–Fri." When I ordered one on a Wednesday, I was told that enchiladas are available on Tuesday *and* Friday, not Tuesday *through* Friday. When I informed the cafeteria manager that this was incorrect, she seemed shocked and refused to change the sign. Please help determine who is correct.

A: Although the sign was incorrect, I'm not sure you should annoy the person who provides the enchiladas.

Q: Is there any standard for the usage of emoticons? In particular, is there an accepted practice for the use of emoticons that includes an opening or closing parenthesis as the final token within a set of parentheses? Should I incorporate the emoticon into the closing of the parentheses (giving a dual purpose to the closing parenthesis, such as in this case :-); simply leave the emoticon up against the closing parenthesis, ignoring the bizarre visual effect of the doubled closing parenthesis (as I am doing here, producing a double-chin effect :-)); or avoid the situation by using a different emoticon (some emoticons are similar :-D), placing the emoticon elsewhere, or doing without it (i.e., reword to avoid awkwardness)?

A: Until academic standards decline enough to accommodate the use of emoticons, I'm afraid *CMOS* is unlikely to treat their styling, since the manual is aimed primarily at scholarly publications. And the problems you've posed

in this note give us added incentive to keep our distance.

Q: Is there an acceptable way to form the possessive of words such as Macy's and Sotheby's? Sometimes rewording to avoid the possessive results in less felicitous writing.
A: Less felicitous than "Sotheby's's"? I don't think so.

Q: A friend and I were looking at a poster that read "guys apartment." I believe it should read "guys' apartment." She claims that it should read "guys's apartment" and that the *CMOS* specifically gives the example of "guys's" to make "guys" possessive. I looked through every section on possessives and did not find the word "guys's" or any rule that would make this correct.
A: "Guys's" is acceptable in the way that "youse guys" is acceptable; that is, neither is yet recognized as standard prose, and if your friend can find it in *CMOS*, I'll eat my hat. And shame on your friend. It must make you wonder what else she's capable of.

Q: O English-language gurus, is it ever proper to put a question mark and an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence in formal writing? An author is giving me a fit with some of her overkill emphases, and now there is a sentence that has both marks at the end. My gratitude for letting me know what I should tell this person.
A: In formal writing, we allow both marks only in the event that the author was being physically assaulted while writing. Otherwise, no.

[Gripe]

THANK LESS

By Ian Jack, from his introduction to Granta 95. *Next summer, Jack will be stepping down as editor of the journal, a post he assumed in 1995.*

A striking difference between British and American literary fiction, at least among its younger writers, is the number of people who need to be thanked. Victorian writers rarely thanked anyone at all in the pages of their books. Who does George Eliot thank for *Middlemarch*? Nobody. An older generation still with us—Roth, for example—will make do with a brief and mysterious dedication: "To H.J." For some time now, others have more explicitly mentioned their husbands, or more usually wives, sometimes referring to their "patience" and "understanding" and implying how essential both were when the suicidal writer came down from his study and said it was all over and all rubbish, he would never write another word. In the new century among new writers, such brevity would be considered miserly ingratitude.

As a contest judge, I've been reading a lot of short-story collections as well as novels by American writers under thirty-five years old. Never before have I read such long acknowledgments in works of fiction. In the book in front of me now, they run to four pages. To get to the end of them is like standing impatiently through the final credits in a cinema until the words "second grip" and "Westrex" appear on the screen. On the first page, the writer thanks and lists "the good folks" and "esteemed fellow workshoppers and friends" of his second creative writing school. On the second page, he does the same for his first writing school, plus a few other teachers he's met along the way (one of whom he stuck to "barnacle-like"). By the third page we've got on to his previous employer and fellow former employees, his agent, his editor, someone called Stacy at Caribou Coffee, and, well, just a bunch of wonderful friends. The fourth page is given over to his mother, his sister, his late wife, his present partner: "four extraordinary women, all of whom I love without measure." The only item missing is a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation.

These pages appear at the end of seven short stories, some of which I liked very much. The question is: Did all this thanksgiving make me think less of the writer (and therefore, unfairly, less of the stories), and if so, why? Certainly it shouldn't. To acknowledge the idea that writers and writing need all kinds of sustenance and encouragement, from loving sisters to Stacy with her large lattes down at the Caribou, is gracious behavior. To thank one's fellow workshoppers and tutors shows that writing can be a very cooperative process, which may be a truer way of looking at it than the caricature of the lonely, struggling genius, as well as a rare and welcome thing in a society obsessed with individual competition. But these generous instincts can also be read less generously. Stories aren't obviously cooperative ventures like plays or films, but perhaps this book really has been produced in a kind of factory, a "workshop" filled with the sound of relentless verbal carpentry, of sentence-honing and character-shaping, until the hooter sounds and everyone finds an agent or g[illegible] home. Perhaps it was one of the doz[illegible] thanked, "Donna" or "Kelly," who produced phrase "complicated terrain of the yard" 32. Maybe "Joshua" added the word "and" wonky dialogue on 46. There's no r[illegible]

[Innovation]

PAPER JAM

From lines overheard at the Intelligent Printing & Packaging Conference, held last October in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, pasted to the bag of scraps from author Bruce Sterling at Wired.com

I can't take on the Silicon Gorilla face to face.

Silicon chips with a cardboard substrate? That's not a good marriage.

We need to be moving to printing that is no longer printing.

We're in the business of putting goo on a substrate.

It's the business of killing trees and putting chemicals on them.

The supply chain is a network of enemies.

Electronic cardboard blurs the line between printed objects and the virtual world.

Nano-sized particles bring mega-sized costs.

It's our metallic-ingenue approach versus the incumbent technologies.

Shrinkage brings the flakes into contact and creates the circuit.

Thermochromic ink is the Pet Rock ink of the New Millennium.

Clamshell is the Hummer of cardboard packaging.

It takes forty-eight hours to unclog a toilet in Vietnam.

It's bubble, bubble, toil, and trouble in conductive polymers.

We're blowing a bubble in a vacuum of air.

If not for the consistent opposition, that would have put us out of business long ago.

[Manifesto]

WRITERS' BLOC

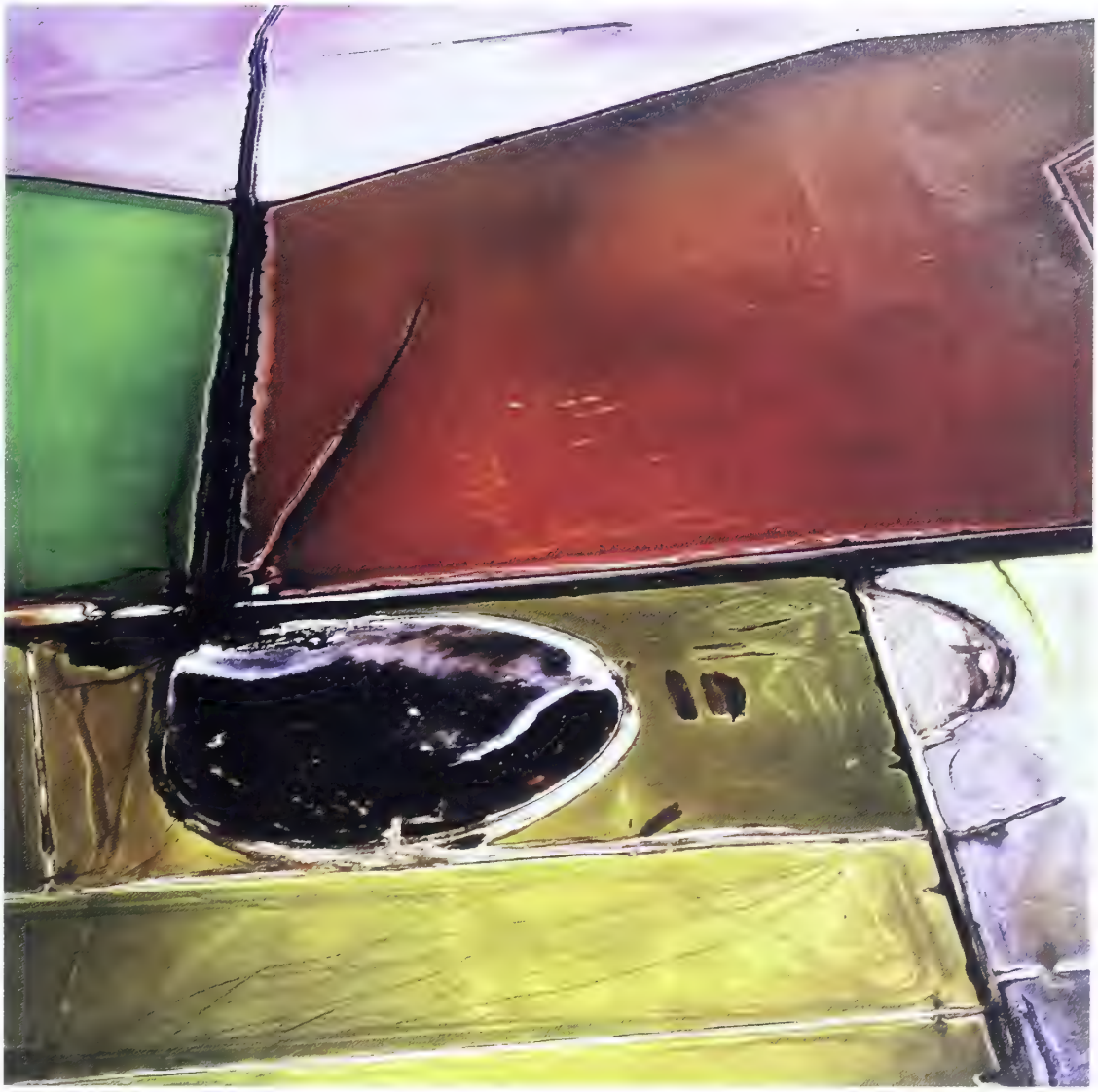
By Sergei Tret'iakov, from "To Be Continued," published last fall in LEF *[Left Front of Art] magazine. It originally appeared in the Soviet magazine Novyi Lef in 1928, the year of the Great Big Great Plan. Lef was an avant-garde Left Front of Art. Tret'iakov, a playwright who collaborated with Sergei Eisenstein, briefly edited the avant-garde publication after the former editors, among them Vladimir Mayakovsky, quit to form a new organization called Ref (Revolutionary Front of Art). "To Be Continued" was Tret'iakov's last contribution, and the magazine folded later that year. Translated from the Russian by Devin Fore.*

Professional writing (and this pertains to every kind of text) constitutes a corporation of craftsmen who work on fetishized material with hardened devices and who faithfully safeguard those devices from all rationalizing influences. In our time, the medieval foot messenger has been replaced by the telephone collective, the copyist by typography, the troubadour by the newspaper. But the individual writer survives along with his "style," "inspiration," and "autonomy," i.e., with an arbitrariness in matters of form and production.

The deindividualization and deprofessionalization of the writer: these are the two paths through which we can crush the malignant resistance of the aesthetic caste.

The solitary writer works incorrectly, trying to make the subjectivity of his writings a virtue. The solitary writer works for an infinitely long time, and all his work arrives too late to carry relevance for present-day life. The solitary writer does not work economically: he does not make even the slightest distinction between the different functions of production. He is the composer as well as the collector of material, both the inspector and the processor of this material.

The literary form that does strive to keep up with the tempo of the present has already outgrown the power of the individual. One example is the newspaper, a most astonishing literary fact, characteristic of our own time. The newspaper can exist because of its collectivist nature. Collective authorship is also not infrequent in the scientific treatise and the textbook. If the "art" book usually bears a surname—the brand name of its "creator"—this phenomenon is only an illusion. This book, too, is already the product of many hands. It is only because of an old custom that the hand of the sovereign composer overshadows the others. As if we didn't know that our feudal lords of aesthetics, our most prominent writers, have long worked



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND VON LINTEL GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

"Terminal Mirage #261-12" by David Maisel, whose work was on display last year at Von Lintel Gallery, in New York City.

in production collectives; they do this whenever they put their secretaries and students to use!

We believe that collectivizing the labor of the book is a progressive process. As we conceive it, the labor of the literary collective is broken down into several functions: collection of the material, its literary processing, and testing the work of the resulting object. This means that specialists from nonliterary fields who have valuable material at their disposal (travel, research, biography, adventure, organizational and scientific experience) enter into the collective; recorders work alongside them to obtain the necessary material, cases, notes, and documents, analogously to newspaper reportage. The task of the literary composers is to assemble the resulting material in a given sequence and to process language in accordance with the audience for whom the book is written. Experts test the scientific and technical concepts. These are the people whom the author typically thanks in the preface for "valuable and authoritative references." Testing the sociopolitical effect: our Regional and Central Bureaus for Literary and Publishing Activities are carrying out this work in an embryonic form.

We can't go on endlessly waiting until the professional writer gets inspired and produces something pleasing to him alone. There are too many books that we lack. We [illegible] that the ability to write should be [illegible] in a small group of literary [illegible] contrary, the ability to [illegible]

a cultural quality that is as basic as the ability to read. Moreover, those of us who suffer from irresponsible tropomania and the excesses of metaphor can already learn quite a bit from professional prose taken from extraliterary formations. The report, the message, the memorandum are not bad teachers of precision, purposiveness, and economy.

For us factists, there is no such thing as a fact "as such." There is the fact-as-effect and the fact-as-defect. The fact that strengthens our socialist positions and the fact that weakens them. The fact-as-friend and the fact-as-enemy. Our closest neighbors, the graphic-factists (photographers) and the cinema factists, have to keep this in mind. For all their drabness and lack of qualifications, the masses of amateur photographers, and the thousands of reporters and worker-correspondents, are potential factists. Every boy photographer is a soldier in the fight against the easelists, and every little objective reporter brings death to belles-lettres with the tip of his pen. Let our triumphalist enemies proclaim that "Lef is dead!" But you celebrate too early. To be continued—through Lef to the factist. The river will not retreat from the ocean.

[Departure]

ADDIS ABABA, 1977

By Dinaw Mengestu, from his novel The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears, *to be published next month by Riverhead.*

The bedroom is a wreck now. I've forgotten the importance of maintaining order. Letters are scattered around me in a semicircle that begins chronologically and dissolves into carelessness. Hasn't this always been my problem? My uncle would say yes. He would say that I lack the ability to maintain structure and order. Begin from the beginning, he would say. Begin there, and then you can move on with your life point by point. That's why he has boxes full of letters, neatly arranged and tucked away, while I don't have so much as a picture of my own that dates back more than ten years. I never could find the guiding principle that relegated the past to its proper place.

I can step in at any moment and see the house ictly as it looked that day, with the midafter- sun spilling in through the front windows. My father has already seen and heard the soldiers coming and is waiting for them in the doorway. "Stay right here in the living room, together," he says. "Don't make them go looking for you. I'm sure everything will be fine." The guard who used to sit at the front gate of the house has already quit (as have all the other servants, and so maybe I should start there, with the day they emptied out their quarters and begged my mother and father to forgive them for having to leave). The truck carrying the soldiers rolls past the open gate and pulls up in front of the house. My father tries to greet them courteously. Unfortunately for him, on that morning he put on a suit. He hasn't gone near his office in two weeks, but today he's decided to go and see what's become of it. Of course, he knows already that all the windows have been smashed, and that his files, or what remains of them, are littering the floor. (Or is this where the story begins, with my father's work as a lawyer?) Only three soldiers get out of the truck. There are at least four more waiting in the back. The lead soldier has a mustache, just like my father's. Neat, well trimmed, it arcs around his fat upper lip and stops just an inch above his pointy, hairless chin. He pushes my father into the living room with one hand. (In its own way the gesture could signal the start of an entirely different approach to this story.) He already considers my father weak, vulnerable. The two soldiers behind him are carrying their rifles over their chests. They both have faint traces of facial hair, but they're still too young to grow a complete mustache. They can't be more than a year or two older than I was. My father tries to mention the names of high-ranking army officials he's known his entire life: Colonel Getachew Woldermarian, Captain Sisay. (That would be the wrong story, my father's early disillusioned days in the military. He was too slight and soft-spoken a man ever to have made a proper soldier.) The lead soldier sneers at the names. (My father doesn't know yet that these men are all already dead or in jail.) Then he spits on my mother's carpet. Everything unfolds straight from that point, with no room for deviation or digression.

As soon as he spits, one of the soldiers steps to the front and, with the butt of his rifle, knocks my father across the head. Is it possible that they practiced this routine before coming over? Or is it something that's grown out of their previous experiences? Spit, then hit. The two soldiers take turns kicking my father in the head and ribs. When my mother begins to cry out, the lead soldier draws his pistol and orders her to stop. She does so immediately. He returns his gun to his holster and goes searching through the bedrooms. He's learned this from experience. Bedrooms are where people hide the things they want no one else to know of.



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND APERTURE, NEW YORK CITY

"Limbo 5, 2004" from the series Limbo, by Bianca Brunner, whose work is exhibited this month at Art Center College of Design, in Pasadena, California.

We can hear him opening drawers. Glass shatters somewhere in the house, uselessly. It doesn't take him long to find what he's looking for, if in fact he's come looking for anything. (I know now that they would have taken him regardless, but things weren't so clear then.)

When he returns with my flyers, my mother, who is standing next to me in the corner, whispers one word: "*Zimbe*." Shut up. Close your mouth. Don't speak. The lead soldier taunts my father, who is now sitting up against the wall, with the flyers. He knows they cannot have anything to do with a man my father's age, but he berates and hits him nonetheless. Where is this meeting? and Who gave you this? and Who are these people? and What is your role with this organization? and Who do you think you are? and Who else is helping you? and What are their names? and What do you hope to accomplish with your meetings? and Don't you know that this is a time of revolution and that there can be no room for dissension?

My father's left eye has already swollen shut. He is struggling to keep his head from falling. He barely responds to the smacks that follow each ridiculous question. The first tears are beginning to fall down his face. He declares over and over that my flyers are his. I found them and brought them home to throw away, he says, his voice cracking as he struggles for breath. His pleas lead to more kicking. He doesn't sp[illegible] again until one of the sold[illegible] low: [illegible] reaches for his legs. It's only then that h[illegible] mands they take their hand[illegible] had sanctioned everything they had [illegible] him thus far. He lifts himself off the [illegible] bracing his back against the wall [illegible] up with his entire body, inch by inch. H[illegible]

[illegible] of the [illegible] the muscles of the [illegible] soldiers. They applaud sarcastically. Humiliation comes to pass. I pray to God with as much fervor as I have ever had. I pray for their death. I beg Him to kill them right then and there. I implore Him. I demand it of Him. If He cannot give me their death alone, then I ask Him to take all of us together. I pray for the roof of the house to cave in, for the ground to open up and swallow us whole, anything to end this moment. I've never again felt a disappointment so close to hatred.

It takes my father at least ten minutes to stand. In what could pass for an act of mercy, the lead soldier tells his men to leave my father alone as he lurches off the ground. My father looks back one last time at my mother, brother, and me before he's escorted out the door at gunpoint. I'm not sure how much he was able to see at that point—whether our faces were distinguishable from one another, or if through the haze of tears and blood the three of us merged into one figure. I like to think that's the way he saw us, his family, not as individual people but as a world, one he could claim to have created. He couldn't have seen my brother's face. It was buried in my chest. Or my own—most of it was hidden behind my mother's back. All of that is irrelevant, though. He didn't turn around so he could see us, but so that we could see him. He always believed in making a lasting impression.

[Directive]

JAMAIS ENCORE

From the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, prepared by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps and released in December. Twenty years have passed since the Army last updated its counterinsurgency manual.

[WHY DO WE DO IT THIS WAY?]

During the Algerian War of Independence, French leaders decided to permit torture against suspected insurgents. Though they were aware that it was against the law and morality of war, they deemed that this was a new form of war and these rules did not apply. Illegal and immoral activities made the counterinsurgents extremely vulnerable to enemy propaganda inside Algeria, among the Muslim population, as well as in the United Nations and the French media. Torture is never a morally permissible option, even in situations where lives depend on gaining information. No exceptional circumstances permit its use. In the end, failure to comply with moral and legal restrictions against torture severely undermined French efforts and, despite a number of significant military victories, contributed to France's defeat.

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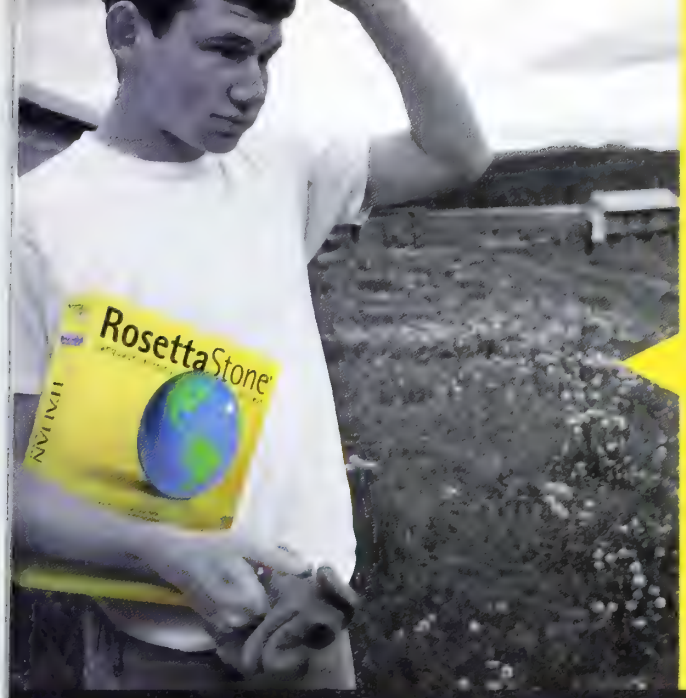
A DUNK IN THE WATER

From The Question, *a 1958 memoir of the Algerian war by Henri Alleg, a French journalist who supported Algerian independence. The passage, which describes his waterboarding at the hands of French authorities, is included in a complaint filed in Germany by the Center for Constitutional Rights against former U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. A new edition of the book was released last year by the University of Nebraska Press. Translated from the French by John Calder.*

"Do you know how to swim?" said Lo—, bending over me. "We're going to teach you. Take him to the tap!"

Together they picked up the plank to which I was attached and carried me into the kitchen. They rested the top of the plank, where my head was, against the sink. Lo— fixed a rubber tube to the metal tap, which shone just above my face. He wrapped my head in a rag and held my nose. He tried to jam a piece of wood between my lips in such a way that I could not close my mouth or spit out the tube. When everything was ready, he said to me, "When you want to talk, all you have to do is move your fingers." And he turned on the tap.

The rag was soaked rapidly. Water flowed everywhere: in my mouth, in my nose, all over my face. But for a while I could still breathe in some small gulps of air. I tried, by contracting my throat, to take in as little water as possible and to resist suffocation by keeping air in my lungs for as long as I could. But I couldn't hold on for more than a few moments. I had the impression of drowning, and a terrible agony, that of death itself, took possession of me. In



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spite of myself, all the muscles of my body struggled uselessly to save myself from suffocation. In spite of myself, the fingers of my two hands shook uncontrollably. "That's it! He's going to talk," said a voice.

The water stopped running and they took away the rag. I was able to breathe. In the gloom, I saw the lieutenants and the captain, who, with a cigarette between his lips, was hitting my stomach with his fist to make me throw up the water I had swallowed. Befuddled by the air I was breathing, I hardly felt the blows. "Well then?" I remained silent. "He's playing games with us! Put his head under again!"

This time I clenched my fists, forcing the nails into my palm. I had decided I was not going to move my fingers again. It was better to die of asphyxiation right away. I feared to undergo again that terrible moment when I felt myself losing consciousness, while at the same time fighting with all my might not to die. I did not move my hands, but three times I again knew this insupportable agony.

In extremis, they let me get my breath back while I threw up the water. The last time, I lost consciousness.

[Witness]

THE FIRM

From testimony taken in June in Oklahoma *v.* Thompson. *Lisa Foster was the court reporter for Judge Donald Thompson, the defendant, from 1988 until 2003, when she was served with a subpoena to testify against him. In 2005, Thompson was charged with four counts of indecent exposure, and last summer he was found guilty of all charges and sentenced to four years in prison. Patricia High is the assistant prosecuting attorney.*

PATRICIA HIGH: When you were working as the court reporter for Donald Thompson, did you ever notice something unusual in the courtroom?

LISA FOSTER: We were having a jury trial, a condemnation trial, and I heard a noise—it sounded like *shh-shh*—but I thought it was air coming out of the vent that I sat under. I meant to ask about the noise, but I got busy and forgot about it. A few months later, I heard the noise again, and I realized it was coming from the bench. I looked up at the bench and saw that Judge Thompson had a plastic tube on his penis. I was really shocked and kind of scared because it was so bizarre, and I didn't know what to do.

HIGH: What did you do?

FOSTER: I could feel myself turning red and I was getting upset, but I kept writing.

HIGH: During the many times you heard the noise, what would be going on?

FOSTER: When I first started to hear the noise, there was always something going on in the courtroom—people were talking—so I couldn't hear the noise real well, but then later, toward the end, it would be completely quiet in the courtroom and you could hear Judge Thompson pumping. I remember once he was using the pump during a rape trial. Another time it was during a murder trial. A baby that had been beaten to death. The baby's grandfather was teary-eyed describing the last time he had seen the baby, and the judge was up there pumping. It was sickening.

HIGH: Let me ask you this: How many times would you say you saw the defendant's penis?

FOSTER: At least fifteen times.

HIGH: Are you able to describe the defendant's penis for the jury?

FOSTER: When I first saw his penis, it was just normal flesh color, but toward the end, the skin looked raw. It was really red with a purplish tint to it.

HIGH: Did you ever see his penis erect?

FOSTER: A couple of times.

HIGH: Besides using the penis pump, did you ever see him do anything else unusual while he was on the bench?

FOSTER: Twice I saw him undo his pants, pull out his penis, and urinate into a trash can. Then once, during the closing of a murder case, I glanced up at the bench and he was sitting there, holding his penis with his left hand, with his scrotum pulled flat, and he was shaving it with a razor. Not with long strokes. He was just picking at it.

HIGH: During any of the jury trials, were you ever approached by anyone about what you saw and heard?

FOSTER: Once we were on a break and a juror was getting into the jury box, and she said, "Ma'am, do you know what that noise is we're hearing?" I asked her what she was talking about, and she said, "It's kind of like a popping sound." I told her it was the microphone because when you turned it on it would pop. She said, "No, it doesn't sound like that." She asked the guy in front of her how it sounded, and he said, "Like *shh-shh*." I told her I hadn't really noticed, but she said, "Well, would you ask the judge to quit it?"

[Tour de force]

IF I DID IT

From letters written by Robert Charles Browne to law-enforcement agents in Colorado between 2000 and 2003. Volunteer cold case investigator Charles Hess began a correspondence with Browne, who was serving a sentence of life without parole in Colorado state prison after pleading guilty in 1995 to the 1991 murder of thirteen-year-old Heather Dawn Church. Browne is currently under investigation for forty-eight murders committed since 1970.

Seven sacred virgins, entombed side by side, those less worthy are scattered wide. The score is you 1, the other team 48. If you were to drive to the end zone in a white Trans Am, the score could be 9 to 48. That would complete your home-court sphere.

Hypothetically, if individuals were held in a concealed chamber and their caretaker was incarcerated, thereby causing these individuals to succumb over time, would the caretaker be considered guilty of murder, even though their deaths were a direct result of actions taken by law-enforcement officials? I suppose 3 should be added to the 9.

If a person were to identify a murder that occurred in El Paso County, Colorado, and then plead guilty to this murder in exchange for a sentence of death and ask that the sentence be carried out as quickly as possible, how long would it take for the execution to take place?

In a previous letter, you said, "You give us too much credit." I beg to differ. There was at least one case handled by "us" in which evidence was found where none existed. With police work like that, one cannot give "us" too much credit. It seems that where legitimate information has been provided, "us" should have no problem completing the puzzle if "us" has any real desire to do so. I will not hand it to "us" on a golden platter with nothing to gain for my efforts. What I could possibly gain eludes me for now. Colorado has only nine points of interest. There are eight other states that may be interested, states with mutual interest in many of the Colorado twelve. Dispatch and disposal may have taken place in Colorado, but procurement may have taken place elsewhere. With procurement in play, the number of states that may be interested more than doubles. Louisiana has seventeen. The food in Louisiana prisons is far superior.

You want something tangible that will convince someone that there really are cases out there. I tried before with the white Trans Am. I guess some cases don't rate. Also, the sanitation companies do a great job of disposal.

I thought I would throw a couple things your way in the hope of adding credence to the whole shebang. The first is just in addition to what has already been said about the white Trans Am. I find it difficult to believe that a connection has not been made in this matter. I tend to believe you are just fishing for more in hopes of my hanging myself. Here goes. Try the missing-persons files on a young army wife. I know the report was filed. The husband was very unhappy with the police response. He was even more unhappy with the police response when he himself recovered the "missing" white Trans Am. If that doesn't ring any bells, then nothing will.

The second matter is from elsewhere. In addition to bolstering credence, I am mainly curious of the outcome. I thought long and hard about picking an incident that would not be lost among the many others. A "very" small town seemed to be my best bet. Small towns don't forget such rare happenings. The town I chose is Flatonia, Texas. They don't get much smaller. The year was 1984 or 1985. A young woman was killed and her body was found near this town. The last I heard was that her husband was being charged with her murder. I am curious as to the eventual outcome. Please let me know. Afterward we may talk some more on this. Texas does like to kill people! That should give you something to think about.

I'm not well so I will cut this short and throw one thing by you. Around 1984, maybe shortly before, a body (in parts) was discovered off U.S. Highway 59 in the southwest Houston area. I would think someone would remember that. I will write again when I am feeling better.

New Orleans was very fertile grounds. Let's go back to 1975 or '79 (approximately). Left inside a room, inside a Holiday Inn; about five minutes from the French Quarter. This lady claimed to be from South Philly.

How about Arkansas? This is just across the Mississippi River from Memphis. I believe it is called West Memphis. There is a marshy area a little southwest of there. That is where a lady was laid to rest. This was in 1980.

Let's continue east along Interstate 10. We are now in Mississippi, but just barely. We are very near the Alabama border. There is a swampy area just north of the interstate. There, two bodies were dumped. In parts (for ease of transport). Both of these were male. I made a point of stating that they were male so you wouldn't di[illegible] the incident.

Now let's go west to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Just southeast of there, along the sou[illegible] Arkansas River, is a flood plain. I[illegible] grasses. There is also a male in th[illegible] was 1985.



Hang Over, *leaves, pills, acrylic, and resin on wood panel, by Fred Tomaselli, was shown last fall at James Cohan Gallery, in New York City.*

We are on the Pacific Coast Highway about 200 miles north of San Francisco. There is an exit to a sandy beach where there are areas with lots of driftwood among boulders to the north side. Among the boulders and driftwood are two bodies. One male and one female. This was 1986.

Washington State is our next stop. On the north side of Interstate 90 is a scenic overlook. There is an extreme drop-off over huge boulders. There is a mountain range to the north. The lady that was dropped over the precipice would probably never be found due to the terrain, unless there was an intentional search of the area. Also 1986.

We are in northwest New Mexico. I am on an east-west highway. The number I don't remember. However, to the north of another scenic overlook is a tremendous rock face, gray in color. It can't be missed. Once again there is a body over the precipice. This one is male. This was 1993.

You were wondering why I wrote in the first place. I don't know that I could answer that to your satisfaction. I'm not sure that even I know. There was probably a conglomeration of reasons and I was simply exploring possibilities. What my thoughts were at the time, I do not recall. I am trying to get my affairs in order.

[Elegy]

IN MEMORIAM: GILLIAN ROSE

By Geoffrey Hill, published in the December issue of Poetry. *Gillian Rose, a British philosopher, died in 1995. Hill's* Without Title *appears next month from Yale University Press.*

1

I have a question to ask for the form's sake:
how that small happy boy in the seaside
photographs became the unstable man,
hobbyist of his own rage, engrafting it
on a stock of compliance, of hurt women.
You do not need to answer the question
or challenge imposture.
Whatever the protocol I should still construe.

2

There is a kind of sanity that hates weddings
but bears an intelligence of grief
in its own kind. There are achievements
that carry failure on their back, blindness
not as in Brueghel, but unfathomably
far-seeing.

3

Recap on words like compassion that I
never chanced in your living presence;
as empathy and empowerment.
I did not blunder into your room with flowers.
Despite the correct moves, you would have
wiped me
in the championship finals of dislike.

4

You might have responded to my question,
one will never know. You asked not to be
cheated of old age. No kidding, it is an
unlovely parley, although you
could have subdued it and set it to work,
met it without embracing. Edna
with her prosthetic jaw and nose
prevails over these exchanges.

5

Your anger against me might have been wrath
concerning the just city. Or poetry's
assumption of rule. Or its rôle
as wicked governor. This abdication
of self-censure indeed hauls it
within your long range of contempt,

6

unlike metaphysics which you had time for,
re-wedded to the city, a salutation
to Pallas, goddess of all polemics,
to Phocion's wife—who shall be nameless—
in Poussin's painting, gathering the disgraced
ashes of her husband. As you rightly said,
not some mere infinite love, a *finite act*
of political justice. Not many would see that.

7

If there is a healing of broken love it is not
as dyslexia's broken, learning to read signs.
In broken love you read the signs too late
although they are met with everywhere
like postcards of Manet and Monet, Van
Gogh's shoes.
There are many rites exordinate to the occasion

8

though you have to choose one and get down
to it—
it may involve grovelling or tearing of
garments.
The just city is finally of some interest,
chiefly in the base senses of curiosity
and self-serving, if you understand me. You
do, of course, since I am using your three
primers,

9

Mourning Becomes the Law, Love's Work,
Paradiso:
a good legacy, you should be proud of it
except that pride is forever irrelevant
where you are now. So it continues,
the work, lurching on broken springs
or having to be dug out or jump-started
or welded together out of two wrecks
or donated to a good cause, like to the
homeless

10

in the city that is not just, has never
known justice, except sporadically:
Solon, Phocion—and they gave him hemlock
and burned his body in an unhallowed place.
And his ashes were taken up and smuggled
into his own home, and buried beneath the
hearth.

11

A familiar rare type of resistance
heroine, like that woman, is required by justice.
Whether the omens are propitious or
unpropitious
the Lysander takes off, heads south, the Maquis
line out the chosen ground, the landing strip,
with their brave vulnerable fires.

12

Sometimes the Gestapo are waiting, sometimes
not,
and she gets clear. But the odds are heavy.
The odds are heavy-set against us all
though medics call the chances symbiosis
in their brusque insolent manner that denies
self-knowledge as the sufferer, her formal agon:
that word you chose to use, a standard term
but not despicable in context of *Love's Work*.

13

Poetry's its own agon that *allows us*
to recognize devastation as the rift
between power and powerlessness. But when I
say poetry I mean something impossible
to be described, except by adding lines
to lines that are sufficient as themselves.

14

Di-dum endures formally; and the pre-Socratics.
Phocion rests in his lost burial place.
Devastated is Estuary; *devastation* remains
waste and shock. This ending is not th
more like the cleared spaces
and the gutted City after the fir
I find *love's work* a bleak ontol
to have to contemplate; it ma



Clockwise from top left: "Transvaal Scottish (8th Infantry), Sergeant (1945–1951)," "Cape Mounted Rifles (Dukes), Bandsman (1913–1926)," "State President's Guard (Formed 1967-Deactivated 1990), Riflemen," and "Parade Uniform (1967–1990)," by Hentie van der Merwe, included in Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporaneous African Photography, *published last year by ICP/Steidl*

Antwerp; © Hentie van der Merwe, Courtesy Tim Van Laere Gallery, Antwerp; Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg; International Center of Photography, New York City

DEAD END

Counterinsurgency warfare as military malpractice

By Edward N. Luttwak

PROLOGUE

Modern armed forces continue to be structured for large-scale war, but advanced societies whose small families lack expendable children have a very low tolerance for casualties. Even supposedly warlike Americans gravely count casualties in Iraq that in three years have yet to reach 3,000—fewer than were lost in many a single day of battle in past wars. Fortunately, this refusal to spill the blood needed to fuel battles diminishes the likelihood that advanced societies will deliberately set out to fight one another (*pas des enfants, pas des Suisses, pas de guerre*) unless they are somehow able to convince themselves that a war could be entirely or very largely aerial and naval. Such wars, however, are difficult to imagine, except when islands are involved, as in a China-Taiwan war, which is very improbable for its own reasons. Air and naval forces can certainly be employed advantageously against any less advanced enemy incautious enough to rely on a conventional defense, conducted by regular forces, but in that context as well there must be severe doubts about the continued usefulness of the ground forces of advanced countries that are intolerant of casualties. It is easy enough to blockade the enemy, to successfully bomb all the right nodal points and shut down electrical, transportation, and communications networks. Air strikes can disable runways and destroy both sheltered and unsheltered aircraft, ballistic missiles, and nuclear installations. Air power can also sink warships, or rout any mechanized forces deployed in the open, as the United States did with Iraq in 1991 and partly in 2003, and as it could do with Iran. No real role would remain for ground forces except to dislodge the enemy from any territory he had occupied, or to occupy his own territory. That, however, is bound to cost casualties that might not be tolerated; it is also bound to provoke an insurgency.

In that event, naval forces cannot do much, because insurgencies rarely have an important maritime dimension (the Sri Lanka case is an exception) and riverine operations are usually minor. Air forces can have su[illegible] and transport roles, but insurgents rarely present targets of sufficie[illegible] ity and sufficient contrast to be identified, designated, and eff[illegible] from the air. That leaves almost everything to the ground forc[illegible] the advanced attack the less advanced, the more advanced [illegible] large advantages in firepower, mobility, and operational [illegible]

Edward N. Luttwak is a senior fellow at the [illegible] International Studies in W[illegible]

THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTION OF COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE IS THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE KIND OF POLITICS IN THIS WORLD

they will also have no visible enemy to fight, so that the normal operational methods and tactics of conventional warfare cannot be applied. True, there are the alternative methods and tactics of counterinsurgency warfare, but do they actually work? Insurgents do not always win, but their defeats can rarely be attributed to counterinsurgency warfare, as we shall see.

THE THEORY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE

Two distinguished American generals of exceptional intelligence, James N. Mattis of the Marine Corps and David H. Petraeus of the Army, each now responsible for the training and doctrine policy of his own service, have recently circulated the text of a new "counterinsurgency" field manual, FM 3-24 DRAFT, which they propose for official use. Its doctrines emerge from the chapter titles. After a first chapter of definitions (which any military manual must have, because the battlefield is no place for semantic debate) we come to the first substantive chapter, "Unity of Effort: Integrating Civil and Military Activities," in which the authors duly recognize and strongly emphasize the essentially political nature of the struggle against insurgents. That is hardly an original discovery, as the two generals and their staffs would be the first to recognize, yet it is still necessary to affirm what should be obvious, because amid the frustrations of fighting a mostly invisible enemy, it is hard to resist the tempting delusion that some clever new tactics, or even some clever new technology, can defeat the insurgents.

Much more questionable is the proposition that follows, which is presented as self-evident, that a necessary if not sufficient condition of victory is to provide what the insurgents cannot: basic public services, physical reconstruction, the hope of economic development and social amelioration. The hidden assumption here is that there is only one kind of politics in this world, a politics in which popular support is important or even decisive, and that such support can be won by providing better government. Yet the extraordinary persistence of dictatorships as diverse in style as the regimes of Cuba, Libya, North Korea, and Syria shows that in fact government needs no popular support as long as it can secure obedience. As for better government, that is certainly wanted in France, Norway, or the United States, but obviously not in Afghanistan or Iraq, where many people prefer indigenous and religious oppression to the freedoms offered by foreign invaders.

The very word "guerrilla," which now refers only to a tactic, was first used to describe the ferocious insurgency of the illiterate Spanish poor against their would-be liberators, under the leadership of their traditional oppressors. On July 6, 1808, King Joseph of Spain presented a draft constitution that for the first time in Spain's history offered an independent judiciary, freedom of the press, and the abolition of the remaining feudal privileges of the aristocracy and of the Church. At that time, abbeys, monasteries, and bishops still owned every building and every piece of land in 3,148 towns and villages, which were inhabited by some of Europe's most wretched tenants. Despite the fact that the new constitution would have liberated them and let them keep their harvests for themselves, the Spanish peasantry failed to rise up in its support. Instead, they obeyed the priests, who summoned them to fight against the ungodly innovations of the foreign invader. For Joseph was the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte, placed on the Spanish throne by French troops. That was all that mattered to most Spaniards—not what was proposed but by whom it was proposed.

By then the French should have known better. In 1799 the same thing had happened in Naples, whose liberals, supported by the French, were slaughtered by the very peasants and plebeians they wished to emancipate. They were mustered into a militia of the "Holy Faith" by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo, coincidentally a member of Calabria's largest land-owning family, who led his men forward on horseback. Ruffo easily persuaded his followers that all promises of material betterment were irrelevant, because the real aim of the French and the liberals was to destroy the Catholic religion in the ser-

vice of Satan. Spain's clergy did the same, and their illiterate followers could not know that the very first clause of Joseph's draft constitution had not only recognized the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church but stated that it was the only one allowed in Spain.

The same kind of politics are now in evidence in Afghanistan and Iraq, including the ineffectual enshrinement of Islam in the new Iraqi constitution, and the emergence of clerical warlords who are as ready to use violence as Cardinal Ruffo was. Since the 2003 invasion, both Shiite and Sunni clerics have been repeating over and over again that the Americans and their "Christian" allies have come to Iraq to destroy Islam in its cultural heartland and to steal the country's oil. The clerics dismiss all talk of democracy and human rights by the invaders as mere hypocrisy—with the exception of women's rights, which the clerics say are only propagandized to persuade Iraqi daughters and wives to dishonor their families by imitating the shameless nakedness and impertinence of Western women.

The vast majority of Afghans and Iraqis naturally believe their religious leaders. The alternative would be to believe what for them is entirely unbelievable: that foreigners are unselfishly expending blood and treasure in order to help them. They themselves would never invade a foreign country except to plunder it, the way Iraq invaded Kuwait, thus having made Saddam Hussein genuinely popular for a time when troops brought back their loot. As many opinion polls and countless incidents demonstrate, the Americans and their allies are widely considered to be the worst of invaders, who came to rob Muslim Iraqis not only of their territory and oil but also of their religion and even their family honor. Many Muslims around the world believe as much, even in Turkey, whose most successful recent film depicted an American Jewish military doctor who was operating on Iraqis not to save their lives but to remove their kidneys, which of course he was sending back to the U.S. for transplantation and his personal profit (he was Jewish after all). It is the same in Afghanistan, where the American-imposed quota of women parliamentarians has caused widespread resentment, not least because most Afghans are scandalized by the spectacle of a woman contradicting a man in public—as in, for example, televised parliamentary debates.

INSURGENCIES DO NOT ALWAYS WIN, BUT THEIR DEFEATS CAN RARELY BE ATTRIBUTED TO COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE



In other words, "Integrating Civil and Military Activities" to improve local conditions need not gain public support. And even if it did, it does not automatically follow that such support would be decisive, or even important.

Next comes a very long section on "Intelligence in Counterinsurgency," which reflects the crucial predicament of counterinsurgency warfare: the unseen enemy, who can choose when to emerge from civilian cover to launch his attacks, and increasingly can attack by remote control, reducing his exposure or avoiding exposure altogether. Everywhere outgunned, and in Iraq if not Afghanistan outnumbered as well, the insurgents would be easily defeated if their invisibility could be stripped away. That much is obvious. But the authors then automatically assume that it is simply an intelligence problem to identify the insurgents among the population. This is another very questionable proposition, as we shall see, because in fact it is a political problem, which always has a political solution, however unpalatable that may be.

In any case, proceeding on their general premise, the detailed headings that follow point to different ways of overcoming the invisibility of insurgents by using all possible intelligence sources, methods, and assets. The chapter

Photograph © Reuters/Fateh Kheiber

IRAQIS WILL NEVER BELIEVE THAT FOREIGNERS ARE UNSELFISHLY EXPENDING BLOOD AND TREASURE IN ORDER TO HELP THEM

entitled "Intelligence Characteristics in Counterinsurgency" points to the need to have rather different skills and talents when the targets are extremely "low-contrast" insurgents, as opposed to high-contrast targets such as airfields or warships. Next comes "Predeployment Planning and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield," a section that emphasizes the specificity of counterinsurgency as to time, place, population, culture, and more, as opposed to the general-purpose intelligence preparations for regular war. For example, it is useful to have trained Arabic-speaking interrogators if one plans to invade an Arab-speaking country, and, at a less elementary level, it is useful to have some cultural instruction before trying to analyze the behavior of the locals.

After that comes "Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Operations," discussing, among other things, the different ways of using regular forces, with their regular platforms and sensors, to find the elusive insurgents. These methods may or may not work but certainly entail the use of ultrasophisticated and very expensive F-15s and F-18s, with the most advanced sensors to detect and track the man, the boy, and the donkey who may or may not be transporting an "improvised explosive device" to its intended emplacement. Then comes the delicate subject of "Counterintelligence and Counterreconnaissance." The second of these is straightforward enough: before attacking a target, it is usually essential for insurgents to observe it in order to plan the action, and with a bit of luck such observers can be spotted by alert defenders. Often the best way of protecting potential targets is to anticipate attacks against them by countersurveillance (or "counterreconnaissance"), then to pre-empt or ambush the attackers. What is delicate is the "Counterintelligence" part, which points to the likelihood of insurgent penetrations of the local forces that are supposedly fighting the insurgency—the friends and allies in need that are being provided with training, weapons, and money. Penetrations always occur, even in the best of military forces and intelligence services, but there is a difference in scale between the consequences of a traitor or two and wholesale enlistments to serve the enemy cause (or the inadvertent recruitment of enemies into the ranks). For example, it must be universally recognized by now that in Iraq many if not most of the Shiites in the army and police force are actually under the orders of one or another of the Shiite militias, including the "Mahdi army," that occasionally launch surprise attacks on American or British forces. Equally, many of the Kurds who are paid by the government or by the Americans directly are in the service of either Massoud Barazani or Jalal Talebani, the two chieftains who trade under the labels of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. (Talebani, moreover, is now Iraq's president.) Far more dangerously, the Sunnis in the army and police force who have been recruited, trained, equipped, and salaried to fight the Sunni insurgents are just as likely to help the insurgency, or even to be insurgents themselves, on temporary detachment to the government forces, so to speak. That is the only way that Sunnis, whose families live among the Sunni population, can both receive a salary and also keep their families alive. But again, this is really a political problem, which has an unpalatable solution that is certainly more reliable than "Counterintelligence" could ever be.



Photograph © Ali Hessem/epa/CORBIS

Later comes "Intelligence Collaboration and Fusion," which refers to the sharing and integration of intelligence coming in separate channels from different services, branches, and individual sources. Such cooperation is characteristic of regular war operations as well, but it is more criti-

al when the targets are almost always unstable, elusive, and low-ontrast—if even identifiable at all, as they rarely are. What follows are nore predictable chapters on "Designing Counterintelligence Operations" nd executing them, and developing "Host Nation" security forces, the elative brevity of these chapters underlining the emphasis the authors lace on intelligence operations. Recent scandals readily explain the need or an entire chapter on "Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency," nd the chapter on "Building and Sustaining Capability and Capacity," vith a subsection on counterinsurgency logistics, also reflects the unhappy xperience of Iraq.

Ammunition supply—along with fuel, usually the biggest item in regular perations budgets—is relatively unimportant, since very little ammunition s expended fighting an insurgency, yet logistics still present difficulties in Iraq ecause supplies cannot simply be trucked from A to B without a high risk f destructive attacks by insurgents, hijacking by militias in need of supplies, simple highway robbery, or opportunistic looting by ordinary civilians. (There are many natural predators in the Iraqi population, probably because of the high proportion of ex-nomads and their direct descendants, for whom the razzia is still an honorable and manly tradition.) Truck convoys can be more secure if rather less efficient, but their safety depends on the quality of their escorts, which are necessarily very scarce and expensive if they are U.S. troops (the British, near the seaport, as is their wont, are more easily supplied), less scarce but even more expensive if they are security contractors, and very cheap but extremely unreliable if they are Iraqi soldiers or police. The end result is that hyper-expensive helicopter hours are very often used to carry even low-value, non-urgent supplies, which is one reason why the occupation costs so much even though very little ordnance is being expended.*

Two more things can be noted about the new field manual before turning to the peculiar politics of insurgency and counterinsurgency. There is an Appendix to the chapter on "Predeployment Planning and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield" that further emphasizes the subject's importance and includes a section on "Linguistic Support." It is a sad story indeed when the astonishing linguistic incapacity of U.S. military forces and intelligence organizations is contrasted with the abundance of American civilians who speak all known foreign languages, and the brilliant record of foreign-language education in the U.S. Army and Navy, which used to produce as many good Chinese and Japanese speakers as they wanted by selecting for natural aptitude in the recruit pool, giving them a year of intensive courses (eight hours a day, six days a week), and quickly sending away those who failed to keep up with their classes. Nothing prevents the military from doing the same for Arabic, Persian and, say, Azeri now, except for an unwillingness to invest in the future, and probably a lack of disciplined volunteers willing to learn a language eight hours a day, six days a week, for a whole year or more.

FM 3-24 DRAFT ends with a list of suggested readings, and one of the first books on the list is *Small Wars: A Tactical Handbook for Imperial Soldiers* (1890), by Charles E. Calwell. The previous counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-07.22, also had such a list, and its first suggested reading was *The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Algeria, 1955–57*, by Paul Aussaresses. Is it therefore the case that counterinsurgency doctrine has been evolving backward, from the doubts of the 1950s to the certitudes of 1890? That is no accusation, alas, because one needs to go back even further to find convincing models of success in defeating insurgents by military means.

THERE IS A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TRAITOR OR TWO AND THE WHOLESALE RECRUITMENT OF ENEMIES

* *Incidentally, in spite of all the advances in "jointness," when the U.S. Air Force tried to help out the Army (and dissuade it from acquiring its own intra-theater fixed-wing aircraft) by providing a regular shuttle service of C-130 turboprop transports between Kuwait and different bases in Iraq, the aircraft ended up carrying mostly "sailboat fuel"—that is, they flew empty because it was easier for Army formations to use their own helicopters and smaller fixed-wing aircraft than to "interface" with the Air Force.*

FACED WITH SUPERIOR FIREPOWER, INSURGENTS STRIVE TO BE ELUSIVE AND TO DISAPPEAR INTO THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

We begin with some elementary observations. The armed forces of the most advanced countries, and certainly of the United States, all formidable against enemies assembled in conveniently targetable massed formations, are least effective in fighting insurgents. That was demonstrated in Vietnam in many different ways over many years, even as the occasional North Vietnamese regular unit that ventured to fight conventionally was efficiently destroyed. The same two-part proposition is unnecessarily being proven all over again in Iraq, damaging the reputation of the United States for wisdom and strength, misusing fine soldiers, wasting vast amounts of money on skillful but ineffectual air and ground operations, inflicting added suffering on Iraqis at large, and taking the lives of young Americans whose sacrifice, one fears, will be deemed futile.

There is no mystery about the first part of the proposition. Because of their abundant resources and all-round competence, morale, discipline, and skills, the armed forces of the United States on the largest scale, and of other advanced countries on their scale, can usually generate much more firepower than their antagonists. These days, moreover, they can do so with routine precision because of sensors that reveal targets even in poor visibility; platforms and weapons that can reach targets at any planetary range; accurate guidance and homing devices; and command and communication networks that combine all those abilities. Up to a point, the second part of the proposition is merely the logical consequence of the first: faced with especially superior firepower, insurgents strive to be especially elusive—more so than if they were facing less formidable regular forces—and as targets diminish, so does the value of firepower.

But there is much more to it than that. Specifically, there is the matter of politics, on both sides. Unless insurgents confine their operations to thoroughly deserted areas where there is no one to observe them, they must have at least the passive cooperation of local inhabitants. Whether they fail to report the insurgents to the authorities out of sympathy for their cause or in terror of their vengeance is entirely irrelevant. In either case, the insurgents are in control of the population around them, and not the authorities. That essentially *political* advantage is enough to allow motivated insurgents to overcome all manner of tactical weaknesses in combat skills and weapons.

As in so many previous cases, in a manner abundantly familiar from previous insurgencies, that political situation is now playing out in Iraq, where insurgents live very safely in Sunni neighborhoods, towns, and villages, emerging to place bombs or launch attacks when and where it suits them before resuming innocuous civilian identities once again. Local insurgents may indeed pass unobserved by their neighbors when inactive, but not when they take up weapons and gather for operations, while the foreign volunteers among them necessarily attract attention even when they carry no weapons because of their distinct speech and manner. Many of the local inhabitants certainly know who the insurgents are and where they keep their stores of explosives and weapons, but they are not telling. That is why U.S. Army and Marine patrols cannot find insurgents unless they choose to reveal themselves by engaging in direct combat, which of course they rarely do, and only when they think that they have a great advantage. The mostly futile American patrols therefore expose soldiers to the mines, remote-controlled explosives, snipers, and mortar bombs that inflict daily casualties.

Naturally, every form of technical intelligence and every possible sensor is being employed to supplant the lack of very elementary but indispensable human intelligence, including synthetic-aperture radars aboard big four-engine aircraft and the infrared and video sensors of the latest targeting pods on two-seat heavyweight jet fighters. The expense of these flights alone is huge, amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars a month, but the results are very meager. The aim, of course, is to gather immediately actionable imagery, especially at night, showing such things as insurgents placing

ide bombs alongside U.S. patrol routes or approaching oil pipelines bearng explosives. Failing that, it is at least hoped that possible insurgent activities could be detected for further investigation; for example, people furtively bringing things to isolated buildings at night. But in practice, unless insurgents carry recognizable weapons, it is simply impossible to differentiate between them and innocent people going about their peaceful business. In the meantime, very elaborate equipment that is very costly to operate, and very effective in identifying armored vehicles, bunkers, missile launchers, and any other readily recognizable target of classic form, is still being employed every day in futile attempts to detect deliveries of a few dollars of food, or the emplacement of readily improvised explosive devices. This too is an aspect of the structural unsuitability of modern armed forces to fight elusive enemies that present no stable targets.

The essentially *political* advantage of the insurgents in commanding at least the silence of the local population cannot be overcome by technical means no matter how advanced. Nor can the better operational methods and tactics advocated in FM 3-24 DRAFT be of much help. So few of the insurgents ever engage in direct combat, so much of the insurgency takes covert forms, ranging from the infiltration of the government to bombings, sabotage, and assassinations, that the tactical defeats inflicted on the insurgents—including the killing of their top leaders and heroes—have no perceptible impact on the volume of the violence, and of its political consequences.

ALL INSURGENCIES FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN: THOSE WHO REFUSE TO JOIN THE CAUSE ARE FORCED TO COLLABORATE



In Iraq, as noted, there is supposed to be a far better way of finding insurgents than patrols driving about or sensors, howsoever sophisticated: the Iraqi police and army. Their recruitment, training, equipment, and upkeep, a very costly enterprise in both money and blood, has also yielded meager results because the politics of the situation are again central, and again unfavorable. It is easy to recruit local auxiliaries in any poor country, and any number of Shiites, Kurds, and Sunni Arabs can readily be recruited—in recent decades that is how many of them made a living, by exploiting their privileged access as Sunnis and Arabs to prized military and police salaries. Other jobs were much less desirable, because they required work, and now, in any case, they are very scarce. But while they are willing to wear the uniforms and accept training up to a point, Sunni Arabs are naturally disinclined to help capture or kill insurgents who are fighting to restore the Sunni Arab ascendancy over Iraq. Besides, their families would be in deadly peril if they were suspected of loyalty to their government, and by extension to the Americans. Some of those policemen and soldiers know much about the insurgents and where exactly they might be found, but are still of no help in finding them, precisely because they are insurgents themselves. Even if specifically ordered into action on those rare occasions in which there is overt combat, most Sunni Arab policemen and soldiers will not fight the insurgents; if they cannot simply stand back quietly, they are apt to desert, usually with their weapons. As for army and police units manned mostly by Shiite Arabs or Kurds, they are not actively disloyal, but they cannot gather information on the insurgents either. Sunni Arab civilians will not confide in them any more than in Americans, and perhaps less, because sooner or later the Americans will leave Iraq, but the Kurds and Shiites will not, and they are therefore the greater enemy.

The adverse political terrain of counterinsurgency is simply a given in Iraq, as it is everywhere else, for if insurgents do not receive, or cannot forcibly exact, at least the passive collaboration of the population at large, they normally cannot survive at all.

Photograph © Russell Cooley IV/U.S. Army/Handout/Reuters/CORBIS

THE ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL ADVANTAGES OF THE INSURGENTS CANNOT BE OVERCOME BY MERELY TECHNICAL MEANS

Perfectly ordinary regular armed forces, with no counterinsurgency doctrine or training whatever, have in the past regularly defeated insurgents, by using a number of well-proven methods. It is enough to consider these methods to see why the armed forces of the United States or of any other democratic country cannot possibly use them.

The simple starting point is that insurgents are not the only ones who can intimidate or terrorize civilians. For instance, whenever insurgents are believed to be present in a village, small town, or distinct city district—a very common occurrence in Iraq at present, as in other insurgency situations—the local notables can be compelled to surrender them to the authorities, under the threat of escalating punishments, all the way to mass executions. That is how the Ottoman Empire could control entire provinces with a few feared janissaries and a squadron or two of cavalry. The Turks were simply too few to hunt down hidden rebels, but they did not have to: they went to the village chiefs and town notables instead, to demand their surrender, or else. A massacre once in a while remained an effective warning for decades. So it was mostly by social pressure rather than brute force that the Ottomans preserved their rule: it was the leaders of each ethnic or religious group inclined to rebellion that did their best to keep things quiet, and if they failed, they were quite likely to tell the Turks where to find the rebels before more harm was done.

Long before the Ottoman Empire, the Romans knew how to combine sticks and carrots to obtain obedience and suppress insurgencies. Conquered peoples too proud to accept the benefits of their rule, from public baths and free circus shows to reliable law courts, were "de-bellicized" (a very Roman idea). It was done by killing all who dared to resist in arms—it made good combat practice for the legions—by selling into slavery any who were captured in battle, by leveling towns that held out under siege instead of promptly surrendering, and by readily accepting as peaceful subjects and future citizens all who submitted to Roman rule. In the first two and most successful centuries of imperial Rome, some 300,000 soldiers in all, only half of them highly trained legionary troops, were enough to secure a vast empire that stretched well beyond the Mediterranean basin that formed its core, today the territory of some thirty European, Middle Eastern, and North African states. The Romans could not disperse their soldiers in hundreds of cities, thousands of towns, and countless hamlets to repress riot or rebellion; the troops were needed to guard the frontiers. Instead, they relied on deterrence, which was periodically reinforced by exemplary punishments. Most inhabitants of the empire never rebelled after their initial conquest. A few tribes and nations had to be reconquered after trying and failing to overthrow Roman rule. A few simply refused to become obedient, and so they were killed off: "They make a wasteland and call it peace" was the bitter complaint of a Scottish chieftain (as reported by Tacitus).

Terrible reprisals to deter any form of resistance were standard operating procedure for the German armed forces in the Second World War, and very effective they were in containing resistance with very few troops. As against all the dramatic films and books that describe the heroic achievements of the resistance all over occupied Europe, military historians have documented the tranquillity that the German occupiers mostly enjoyed, and the normality of collaboration, not merely by notorious traitors such as the incautious French poet or the failed Norwegian politician but by vast numbers of ordinary people. Polish railwaymen, for example, secured the entire sustenance of the German eastern front. As for the daring resistance attacks that feature in films, they did happen occasionally, but not often, and not because of any lack of bravery in fighting the routinely formidable Germans but because of the terrible punishments they inflicted on the population.

Occupiers can thus be successful without need of any specialized counterinsurgency methods or tactics if they are willing to out-terrorize the

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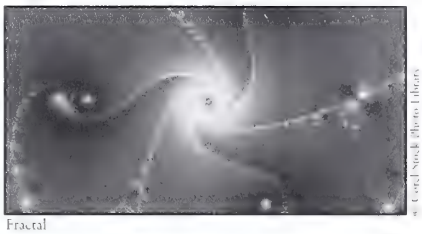
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FOR THE GERMANS AND THE SOVIETS DURING WORLD WAR II, A MASSACRE EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE REMAINED EFFECTIVE FOR DECADES

insurgents, so that the fear of reprisals outweighs the desire to help the insurgents or their threats. The Germans also established secure and economical forms of occupation by exploiting isolated resistance attacks to achieve much broader demonstration effects. Lone German dispatch riders were easily toppled by tensed wires or otherwise intercepted and killed, but then troops would arrive on the scene to burn or demolish the surrounding buildings or farms or the nearest village, seizing and killing anyone who aroused suspicion or just happened to be there. After word of the terrible deeds spread and was duly exaggerated, German dispatch riders could safely continue on their way, until reaching some other uninstructed part of the world, where the sequence would have to be repeated.

Likewise in the Vietnam War, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were skilled in using terror to secure their pervasive territorial control and very ready to use any amount of violence against civilians, from countless individual assassinations to mass executions, as in Hue in 1968. The Communist cause had its enthusiasts, "fellow travelers," and opportunistic followers, but Vietnamese who were none of the above, and not outright enemies, were compelled to collaborate actively or passively by the threat of the violence so liberally used. That is exactly what the insurgents in Iraq are now doing, and this is no coincidence. All insurgencies follow the same pattern. Locals who are not sympathetic to begin with, who cannot be recruited to the cause, are compelled to collaborate by the fear of violence, readily reinforced by the demonstrative killing of those who insist on refusing to help the resistance. Neutrality is not an option.

By contrast, the capacity of American armed forces to inflict collective punishments does not extend much beyond curfews and other such restrictions, inconvenient to be sure and perhaps sufficient to impose real hardship, but obviously insufficient to out-terrorize insurgents. Needless to say, this is not a political limitation that Americans would ever want their armed forces to overcome, but it does leave the insurgents in control of the population, the real "terrain" of any insurgency. Of course, the ordinary administrative functions of government can also be employed against the insurgents, less compellingly perhaps but without need of violence. Insurgents everywhere seek to prohibit any form of collaboration or contact with the authorities, but they cannot normally prevent civilians from entering government offices to apply for obligatory licenses, permits, travel documents, and such. That provides venues for intelligence officers on site to ask applicants to provide information on the insurgents, in exchange for the approval of their requests and perhaps other rewards. This effective and straightforward method has been widely used, and there is no ethical or legal reason why it should not be used by the armed forces of the United States as well. But it does require the apparatus of military government, complete with administrative services for civilians. During and after the Second World War, after very detailed preparations, the U.S. Army and Navy governed the American zone of Germany, all of Japan, and parts of Italy. Initially, U.S. officers were themselves the administrators, with such assistance from local officials they chose to re-employ. Since then, however, the United States has preferred both in Vietnam long ago and now in Iraq to leave government to the locals.

That decision reflects another kind of politics, manifest in the ambivalence of a United States government that is willing to fight wars, that is willing to start wars because of future threats, that is willing to conquer territory or even entire countries, and yet is unwilling to govern what it conquers, even for a few years. Consequently, for all the real talent manifest in the writing of FM 3-24 DRAFT, its prescriptions are in the end of little or no use and amount to a kind of malpractice. All its best methods, all its clever tactics, all the treasure and blood that the United States has been willing to expend, cannot overcome the crippling ambivalence of occupiers who refuse to govern, and their principled and inevitable refusal to out-terrorize the insurgents, the necessary and sufficient condition of a tranquil occupation. ■

THE COMING ROBOT ARMY

Introducing America's future fighting machines

By Steve Featherstone

A small gray helicopter was perched on the runway, its rotors beating slowly against the shroud of fog and rain blowing in from the Chesapeake Bay. Visibility was poor, but visibility did not matter. The helicopter had no windows, no doors, and, for that matter, no pilot. Its elliptical fuselage looked as if it had been carved out of wood and sanded smooth of detail. It hovered above the runway for a moment, swung its blind face toward the bay, and then dissolved into the mist.



The helicopter was the first among a dozen unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) scheduled to fly during the annual Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International conference in Baltimore. The live demonstration area at Webster Field, a naval air facility located seventy miles south of Washington, D.C., was laid out along the lines of a carnival midway. Big defense contractors and small engineering firms exhibited the latest military robots under white tents staked out alongside an auxiliary runway. Armed soldiers kept watch from towers and strolled through the throng of military officers and industry reps. I took a seat among rows of metal chairs arrayed in front of a giant video screen, which displayed a live feed from the helicopter's surveillance camera. There was little to see except clouds, so the announcer attempted to liven things up.

"Yesterday we saw some boats out there," he said, with an aggressive enthusiasm better suited to a monster-truck rally. "They didn't know they were being targeted by one of the newest UAVs!"

Next, two technicians from AeroVironment, Inc., jogged onto the airfield and knelt in the wet grass to assemble what appeared to be a remote-controlled airplane. One of them raised it over his shoulder, leaned back, and threw it into the air like a javelin. The airplane—called the Raven—climbed straight up, stalled, dipped alarmingly toward the ground, and then leveled off at two hundred feet, its tiny electric motor buzzing like a mosquito. The screen switched to show the Raven's video feed: a bird's-eye view of the airstrip, at one end of which a large American flag flapped limply on a rope strung between two portable cranes next to an inflatable Scud missile launcher.

"A lot of the principles we use here are taken from the model industry," an AeroVironment spokesman told the announcer as the Raven looped around the field. The U.S. military has purchased more than 3,000 Ravens, many of which have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, but apparently none of the military officers present had ever seen one in the land. At the end of the Raven's scouting [illegible] the crowd went silent as the [illegible]

Steve Featherstone is a writer and photographer in Syracuse, New York. His last article for Harper's [illegible] *Line Is Hot," appeared in the December 2005 issue.*

Illustrations by Travis Coburn

ejected from the sky and careered into the ground, tearing off its wings. The technicians scrambled to the crash site, stuck the wings back on, and held the Raven triumphantly above their heads.

"It's designed that way," the spokesman explained.

"Hey, if you can't fix it with duct tape," the announcer said, "it's not worth fixing, am I right?"

Other teams took the field to demonstrate their company's UAVs. The sheer variety of aircraft and their launching methods—planes were slung from catapults and bungee cords, shot from pneumatic guns and the backs of pickup trucks, or simply tossed by hand into the air—testified to the prodigious growth in demand for military robots since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent "global war on terrorism." In his opening conference remarks, Rear Admiral Timothy Heely compared the embryonic UAV market with aviation in the first decades of the twentieth century, when the Wright brothers built planes in their workshop and dirigibles carried passengers. "It's all out there," he said. "You don't want to throw anything away."

WEAPONIZED ROBOTS ARE THE ULTIMATE "FORCE MULTIPLIER"—THEY CAN DO THE MOST DAMAGE WITH THE LEAST PEOPLE

It started to drizzle again. The military officers sought refuge under a catered VIP tent decorated with red, white, and blue bunting while the rest of us scattered in all directions. I headed to the unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) tent located at the far end of the runway. The tent's interior was dim; the air, sticky and hot. Tables stocked with brochures and laptops lined the vinyl walls. Robots rested unevenly on the grass. This was the first year UGVs were allowed demonstration time at the conference, and company reps were eager to show what their robots could do. A rep from iRobot, maker of the popular Roomba robotic vacuum cleaner, flipped open a shiny metal briefcase that contained an LCD monitor and a control panel studded with switches and buttons for operating the PackBot, a "man-packable" tracked robot not much bigger than a telephone book. Hundreds of PackBots have already been deployed in Iraq.

"If you can operate a Game Boy, you're good," the rep said.

A Raytheon engineer fired up an orange robot that looked like a track loader used in excavation. The only difference was a solid black box containing a radio receiver on top of the cage where the human driver normally sat. It rumbled out of the tent onto the airfield, followed by a camera crew.

"It's a Bobcat," the announcer shouted. "It's a *biiig* Bobcat!"

The Bobcat rolled up to a steel garbage bin containing a "simulated Improvised Explosive Device," hoisted it into the air with a set of pincers, and crumpled it like a soda can. A Raytheon spokesman listed all the things the tricked-out Bobcat could do, such as breach walls.

"You could also crush things like a car if you wanted to," he added.

"I never thought of crushing something," the announcer said. "But yeah, this would do very nicely."

After the Bobcat had dispatched the mangled garbage bin and returned to the tent, I asked a Raytheon engineer if the company had thought about arming it with machine guns. "Forget the machine guns," he said dismissively. "We're going lasers."

Military robots are nothing new. During World War II, Germans sent small, remote-controlled bombs on tank treads across front lines; and the United States experimented with unmanned aircraft, packing tons of high explosives into conventional bombers piloted from the air by radio (one bomber exploded soon after takeoff, killing Joseph Kennedy's eldest son, and the experiment was eventually shelved). But in a war decided by the maneuver of vast armies across whole continents, robots were a peculiar sideshow.

The practice of warfare has changed dramatically in the past sixty years. Since Vietnam, the American military machine has been governed by two parallel and complementary trends: an aversion to casualties and a heavy reliance on technology. The Gulf War reinforced the belief that technology can replace human soldiers on the battlefield, and the "Black Hawk down" incident in Somalia made this belief an article of faith. Today, any new weapon worth its procurement contract is customarily referred to as a "force multiplier," which can be translated as doing more damage with less people. Weaponized robots are the ultimate force multiplier, and every branch of the military has increased spending on new unmanned systems.

At $145 billion, the Army's Future Combat Systems (FCS) is the costliest weapons program in history, and in some ways the most visionary as well. The individual soldier is still central to the FCS concept, but he has been reconfigured as a sort of plug-and-play warrior, a node in what is envisioned as a sprawling network of robots, manned vehicles, ground sensors, satellites, and command centers. In theory, each node will exchange real-time information with the network, allowing the entire system to

ccommodate sudden changes in the "battle pace." The fog of war would become a relic of he past, like the musket, swept away by crys- alline streams of encrypted data. The enemy vould not be killed so much as deleted.

FCS calls for seven new unmanned systems. t's not clear how much autonomy each sys- em will be allowed. According to *Unmanned Effects (UFX): Taking the Human Out of the Loop*, a 2003 study commissioned by the U.S. oint Forces Command, advances in artificial ntelligence and automatic target recognition will give robots the ability to hunt down and kill the enemy with limited human supervi- sion by 2015. As the study's title suggests, hu- mans are the weakest link in the robot's "kill chain"—the sequence of events that oc- curs from the moment an enemy target is detected to its destruction.

At Webster Field, the latest link in the military's increasingly automated kill chain was on display: the Special Weapons Ob- servation Reconnaissance Detection Sys- tem, or SWORDS. I squatted down to take a closer look at it. Despite its the- atrical name, SWORDS was remarkably plain, consisting of two thick rubber treads, stubby antennae, and a platform mounted with a camera and an M240 machine gun—all painted black. The robot is man- ufactured by a company named Foster- Miller, whose chief representative at the show was Bob Quinn, a slope-shouldered, balding man with bright blue eyes. Bob helped his engineer to get SWORDS ready for a quick demo. Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, the VIP of VIPs, was com- ing through the UGV tent for a tour.

"The real demonstration is when you're actually firing these things," Bob lament- ed. Unfortunately, live fire was forbidden at Webster Field, and Bob had arrived too late to schedule a formal demonstration. At another conference two months be- fore, he had been free to drive SWORDS around all day long. "I was going into the different booths and displays, pointing my gun, moving it up and down like the sign of the cross. People were going like this"—he jumped back and held up his hands in surren- der—"then they would follow the robot back to me because they had no idea where I was. And that's the exact purpose of an urban combat ca- pability like this."

Sunlight flooded into the tent as Secretary Harvey parted the canopy, flanked by two lanky Rangers in fatigues and berets. Bob ran his hand over his scalp and smoothed his shirt. It was sweltering inside the tent now. Beneath the brim of his tan baseball cap, Secretary Har- vey's face was bright red and beaded with sweat. He nodded politely, leaning into the verbal barrage of specifications and payloads and mission packages the reps threw at him. When he got to SWORDS, he clasped his hands behind his back and stared down at the robot as if it were a small child. Someone from his entourage excitedly explained the various weapons it could carry.

Bob had orchestrated enough dog-and-pony shows to know that technology doesn't always impress men of Secretary Harvey's age and po- sition. "We don't have it in the field yet," Bob interrupted, going on to say that SWORDS wasn't part of any official procurement plan. It was a direct result of a "bootstrap effort" by



real soldiers at Picatinny Arsenal in New Jer- sey who were trying to solve real problems for their comrades in the field. "And soldiers love it," he added.

On the long bus ride back to Baltimore, I sat behind Master Sergeant Mike Gomez, a Marine UAV pilot. "All we are are battery-powered forward observers," he joked. Mike was biased against autonomous robots that could fire weapons or drop bombs with minimal, if [illegible] human intervention. There were too [illegible] things that could go wrong, and inn[illegible]

people could be killed as a result. At the same time, he wasn't opposed to machines that were able to save Marines, save time, save man power, save lives."

It wasn't the first time that day I'd heard this odd contradiction, and over the next three days I'd hear it again and again. It was as if everyone had rehearsed the same set of talking points. Robots will take soldiers out of harm's way. Robots will save lives. Allow robots to pull the trigger? No way, it'll never happen. But wasn't the logical outcome of all this fancy technology an autonomous robot force, no humans required save for those few sitting in darkened control rooms half a world away? Wasn't the best way to save lives—American lives, at least—to take humans off the battlefield altogether? Mike stared out the bus window at the passing traffic.

"I don't think that you can ever take him out," he said, his breath fogging the tinted glass. "What happens to every major civilization? At some point they civilize themselves right out of warriors. You've got sheep and you've got wolves. You've got to have enough wolves around to protect your sheep, or else somebody else's wolves are going to take them out."

Coming from a career soldier, Mike's views of war and humanity were understandably romantic. To him, bad wolves weren't the real threat. It was the idea that civilization might be able to get along without wolves, good or bad, or that wolves could be made of titanium and silicon. What would happen to the warrior spirit then?

Scores of scale-model UAVs dangled on wires from the ceiling of the exhibit hall at the Baltimore Convention Center, rotating lazily in currents of air-conditioning. Models jutted into the aisles, their wings canted in attitudes of flight. Company reps blew packing dust off cluster bombs and electronic equipment. They put out bowls of candy and trinkets. Everywhere I looked I saw ghostly black-and-white images of myself, captured by dozens of infrared surveillance cameras mounted inside domed gimbals, staring back at me from closed-circuit televisions.

In addition to cameras, almost every booth featured a large plasma monitor showing a continuous video loop of robots blowing up vehicles on target ranges, or robots pepper-spraying intruders, robots climbing stairs, scurrying down sewer pipes, circling above battlefields and mountain ranges. These videos were often accompanied by a narrator's bland voice-over, muttered from a sound system that rivaled the most expensive home theater.

I sat down in the concession area to study the floor map. An engineer next to me picked at a plate of underripe melon and shook his head in awe at the long lines of people waiting for coffee. "Four or five years ago it was just booths with concept posters pinned up," he said. "Now the actual stuff is here. It's amazing."

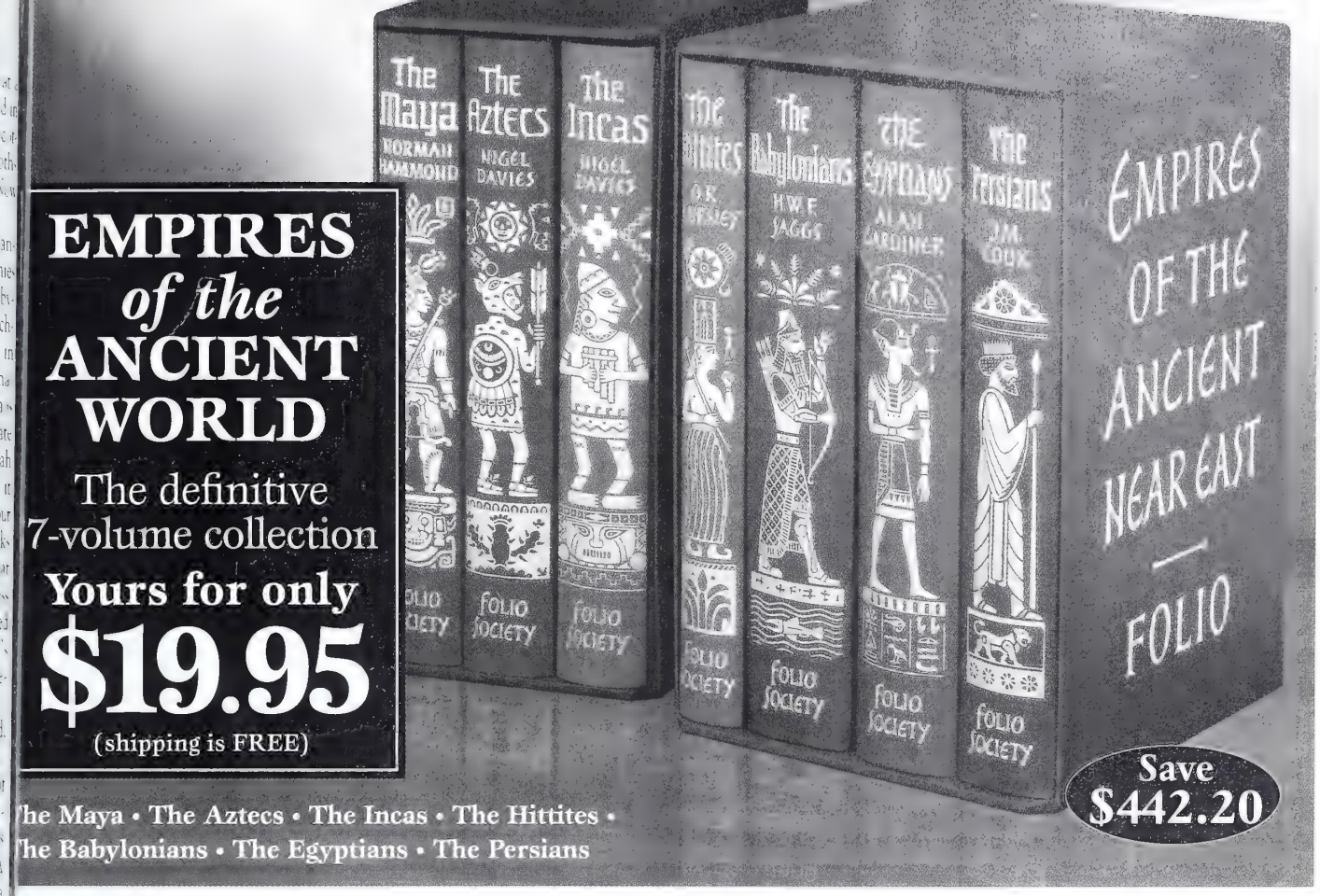
At the fringes of the exhibit hall, I wandered through the warrens of small companies and remote military arsenals squeezed side-by-side into 10x10 booths. I followed the screeching chords of thrash metal until I stood in front of a television playing a promotional video featuring a robot called Chaos. Chaos was built by Autonomous Solutions, a private company that had been spun out of Utah State University's robotics lab. In the video, it clambered over various types of terrain, its four flipper-like tracks chewing up dirt and rocks and tree bark. The real thing was somewhat less kinetic. A Chaos prototype lay motionless on the floor in front of the television. I nudged it with my foot and asked the company's young operations manager what it was designed to do.

"Kick the pants off the PackBot," he said, glancing around nervously. "No, I'm kidding."

A few booths down I encountered a group of men gathered around a robot the size of a paperback book. Apparently, it could climb walls by virtue of a powerful centrifuge in its belly. A picture showed it stuck to a building outside a second-story window, peering over the sill. But the rep holding the remote-control box kept ramming the robot into a cloth-draped wall at the back of his booth. The robot lost traction on the loose fabric and flipped over on its back, wheels spinning. A rep from the neighboring booth volunteered use of his filing cabinet. The little robot zipped across the floor, bumped the cabinet, and, with a soft whir, climbed straight up the side. When it got to the top it extended a metal stalk bearing a tiny camera and scanned the applauding crowd.

I continued along the perimeter, trying to avoid eye contact with the reps. Since it was the first day of the show, they were fresh and alert, rocking on their heels at the edges of their booths, their eyes darting from name badge to name badge in search of potential customers. I picked up an M4 carbine resting on a table in the Chatten Associates booth. The gun's grip had been modified to simulate a computer mouse. It had two rubber keys and a thumb stick for operating a miniature radio-controlled tank sporting an assault rifle in its turret.

"You'll need this," said Kent Massey, Chatten's chief operating officer. He removed a helmet from a mannequin's head and placed it on mine. Then he adjusted the heads-up display, a postage stamp–sized LCD screen that floated in



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front of my right eye. The idea behind the setup was that a soldier could simultaneously keep one eye on the battlefield while piloting the robot via a video feed beamed back to his heads-up display. He never had to take his finger off the trigger.

I blinked and saw a robot's-eye view of traffic cones arranged on a fluorescent green square of artificial turf. I turned my head first to the left, then to the right. The gimbal-mounted camera in the tank mimicked the motion, swiveling left, then right. I pushed the thumb stick on the carbine's pistol grip. The tank lurched forward, knocking down a cone.

"Try not to look at the robot," Kent advised.

I turned my back to him and faced the aisle. It was difficult for me to imagine how the soldier of the future would manage both the stress of combat and the information overload that plagues the average office worker. Simply driving the tank made me dizzy, despite Kent's claims that Chatten's head-aiming system increased "situational awareness" and "operational efficiency" by 400 percent. Then again, I wasn't Army material. I was too old, too analog. As a Boeing rep would later explain to me, they were "building systems for kids that are in the seventh and eighth grades right now. They get the PDAs, the digital things, cell phones, IM."



As I crashed the tank around the obstacle course, conventioneers stopped in the aisle to determine why I was pointing a machine gun at them. I aimed the muzzle at the floor.

"The one mission that you simply cannot do without us is armed reconnaissance," Kent said over my shoulder. "Poke around a corner, clear a house . . . We lost thirty-eight guys in Fallujah in exactly those kinds of circumstances, plus a couple hundred wounded. If [the robot] gets killed, there's no letter to write home."

Robots have always been associated with dehumanization and, more explicitly, humanity's extinction. The word "robot" is derived from the Czech word for forced labor, "*robota*," and first appeared in Karel Capek's 1920 play, *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, which ends with the destruction of mankind.

This view of robots, popularized in such movies as the *Terminator* series, troubles Cliff Hudson, who at the time coordinated robotics efforts for the Department of Defense. I ran into Cliff on the second day of the show, outside Carnegie Mellon's National Robotics Engineering Center's booth. Like the scientists in *R.U.R.*, Cliff saw robots as a benign class of mechanized serfs. Military robots will handle most of "the three Ds: dull, dangerous, dirty-type tasks," he said. such as transporting supplies, guarding checkpoints, and sniffing for bombs. The more delicate task of killing would remain in human hands.

"I liken it to the military dog," Cliff said, and brought up a briefing given the previous day by an explosive-ordnance disposal (EOD) officer who had just returned from Iraq. The highlight of the briefing was an MTV-style video montage of robots disarming IEDs. It ended with a soldier walking away from the camera, silhouetted against golden evening sunlight, his loyal robot bumping along the road at his heels. Cliff pressed his hands together. "It's that partnership, it's that team approach," he said. "It's not going to replace the soldier. It's going to be an added capability and enhancer."

Adjacent to where we stood talking in the aisle was a prototype of the Gladiator, a six-wheeled armored car about the size of a golf cart, built by Carnegie Mellon engineers for the Marines. It was one mean enhancer. The prototype was equipped with a machine gun, but missiles could be attached to it as well.

"If you see concertina wire, you send this down range," Cliff said, maintaining his theme of man/robot cooperation. "And then the Marines can come up behind it. It's a great weapon." Despite its capabilities, the Gladiator hadn't won the complete trust of the Marines. "It's a little unstable," Cliff admitted. "Most people are uncomfortable around it when the safety is removed."

Reps proffering business cards began circling around Cliff and his entourage, sweeping me aside. Jörgen Pedersen, a young engineer with thin blond hair and a goatee, watched the scene with bemused detachment, his elbows propped on the Gladiator's turret. Jörgen had written the Gladiator's fire-control software.

"How safe is this thing?" I asked him.

"We wanted it to err on the side of safety first," Jörgen said. "You can always make something more *un*safe." In the early stages of the Gladiator's development, Jörgen had discovered that its communications link wasn't reliable enough to allow machine-gun bursts longer than six seconds. After six seconds, the robot would stop firing. So he reprogrammed the fire-control system with a fail-safe.

"You may have great communications here," Jörgen said, touching the Gladiator with his fingertips. "But you take one step back and you're just on the hairy edge of where this thing can communicate well."

The integrity of data links between unmanned systems and their operators is a major concern. Satellite bandwidth, already in short supply, will be stretched even further as more robots and other sophisticated electronics, such as remote sensors, are committed to the battlefield. There's also the possibility that radio signals could be jammed or hijacked by the enemy. But these problems are inherent to the current generation of teleoperated machines: robots that are controlled by humans from afar. As robots become more autonomous, fulfilling missions according to pre-programmed instructions, maintaining constant contact with human operators will be unnecessary. I asked Jörgen if robots would someday replace soldiers on the battlefield. He reiterated the need for a man in the loop.

"Maybe that's because I'm short-sighted based on my current experiences," he said. "Maybe the only way that it could happen is if there's no other people out on that field doing battle. It's just robots battling robots. At that point, it doesn't matter. We all just turn on the TV to see who's winning."

It is almost certain that robot deployment will save lives, both military and civilian. And yet the prospect of robot-on-human warfare does present serious moral and ethical, if not strictly legal, issues. Robots invite no special consideration under the laws of armed conflict, which place the burden of responsibility on humans, not weapons systems. When a laser-guided bomb kills civilians, responsibility falls on everyone involved in the kill chain, from the pilot who dropped the bomb to the commander who ordered the strike. Robots will be treated no differently. It will become vastly more difficult, however, to assign responsibility for noncombatant deaths caused by mechanical or programming failures as robots are granted greater degrees of autonomy. In this sense, robots may prove similar to low-tech cluster bombs or land mines, munitions that "do something that they're not supposed to out of the control of those who deploy them, and in doing so cause unintended death and suffering," according to Michael Byers, professor of global politics and international law at the University of British Columbia.

AS ROBOTS BECOME MORE AUTONOMOUS, CONSTANT CONTACT WITH HUMAN OPERATORS WILL BE UNNECESSARY

The moral issues are perhaps similar to those arising from the use of precision-guided munitions (PGMs). There's no doubt that PGMs greatly limit civilian casualties and collateral damage to civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, electrical grids, and water systems. But because PGM strikes are more precise compared with dropping sticks of iron bombs from B-52s, the civilian casualties that often result from PGM strikes are considered necessary, if horribly unfortunate, mistakes. One need look no further than the PGM barrage that accompanied the ground invasion of Iraq in 2003. "Decapitation strikes" aimed at senior Iraqi leaders pounded neighborhoods from Baghdad to Basra. Due to poor intelligence, none of the fifty known strikes succeeded in finding their targets. In four of the strikes forty-two civilians were killed, including six members of a family who had the misfortune of living next door to Saddam Hussein's half brother.

It's not difficult to imagine a similar scenario involving robots instead of PGMs. A robot armed only with a machine gun enters a house known to harbor an insurgent leader. The robot opens fire and kills a woman and her two children instead. It's later discovered that the insurgent leader moved to a different location at the last minute. Put aside any mitigating factors that might prevent a situation like this from occurring and assume that the robot did exactly what it was programmed to do. Assume the commander behind the operation acted on

[illegible] and that he followed [illegible] to the letter. Although the deaths of the woman and children [illegible] are the fault of armed conflict, they fall into a moral black hole where no one, no human anyway, is directly responsible. Had the innocents of My Lai and Haditha been [illegible] by errant men but by errant machines, would we know the names of these places today?

More troubling than the compromised moral calculus with which we program our killing machines is how robots reduce even further the costs, both fiscal and human, of the choice to wage war. Robots do not have to be recruited, trained, fed, or paid extra for combat duty. When they are destroyed, there are no death benefits to disburse. Shipping them off to hostile lands doesn't require the expenditure of political capital either. There will be no grieving robot mothers pitching camp outside the president's ranch gates. Robots are, quite literally, an off-the-shelf war-fighting capability—war in a can.

This bloodless vision of future combat was best captured by a billboard I saw at the exhibition, in the General Dynamics booth. The billboard was titled "Robots as Co-Combatants," and two scenes illustrated the concept in the garish style of toy-model-box art. One featured UGVs positioned on a slope near a grove of glossy palm trees. In the distance, a group of mud-brick buildings resembling a walled compound was set against a barren mountain range. Bright red parabolas traced the trajectories of mortar shells fired into the compound from UGVs, but there were no explosions, no smoke.

The other scene was composed in the gritty vernacular of television news footage from Iraq. A squad of soldiers trotted down the cracked sidewalk of a city street, past stained concrete facades and terraces awash in glaring sunlight. A small, wingless micro-UAV hovered above the soldiers amid a tangled nest of drooping telephone lines, projecting a cone of white light that suggested an invisible sensor beam. And smack in the foreground, a UGV had maneuvered into the street, guns blazing. In both scenes, the soldiers are incidental to the action. Some don't even carry rifles. They sit in front of computer screens, fingers tapping on keyboards.

On the first day of the show, I sat in the concession area, chewing on stale pastry and scanning the list of the day's technical sessions. Most were dry, tedious affairs with such titles as "The Emerging Challenge of Loitering Attack Missiles." One session hosted by Foster Miller, the company that manufactures the SWORDS robot, got my attention: "Weaponization of Small Unmanned Ground Vehicles." I filled my coffee cup and hustled upstairs.

I took a seat near the front of the conference room just as the lights dimmed. Hunched behind a podium, a Foster-Miller engineer began reading verbatim from a PowerPoint presentation about the history of SWORDS, ending with a dreary bullet-point list cataloguing the past achievements of the TALON robot, SWORDS's immediate predecessor.

"TALON has been used in most major, major . . ." The engineer faltered.

"Conflicts," someone in the audience stage-whispered. I turned to see that it was Bob Quinn. He winked at me in acknowledgment.

"Conflicts," the engineer said. He ended his portion of the talk with the same video montage that had inspired Cliff Hudson to compare robots to dogs. TALON robots were shown pulling apart tangles of wire connected to IEDs, plucking at garbage bags that had been tossed on the sides of darkened roads, extracting mortar shells hidden inside Styrofoam cups. Bob Quinn took the podium just as the final shot in the montage, that of the soldier walking down the road with his faithful TALON robot at his heels, faded on the screen behind him. The lights came up.

"The 800-pound gorilla, or the bully in the playpen, for weaponized robotics—for all ground-based robots—is Hollywood," Bob said. The audience stirred. Bob strolled off the dais and stood in the aisle, hands in his pockets. "It's interesting that UAVs like the Predator can fire Hellfire missiles at will without a huge interest worldwide. But when you get into weaponization of ground vehicles, our soldiers, our safety community, our nation, our world, are not ready for autonomy. In fact, it's quite the opposite."

Bob remained in the aisle, narrating a series of PowerPoint slides and video clips that showed SWORDS firing rockets and machine guns, SWORDS riding atop a Stryker vehicle, SWORDS creeping up on a target and lobbing grenades at it. His point was simple: SWORDS was no killer robot, no Terminator. It was a capable weapons platform firmly in the control of the soldiers who operated it, nothing more. When the last video clip didn't load, Bob stalled for time.

"We've found that using Hollywood on Hollywood is a good strategy to overcome some of the concerns that aren't apparent with UAVs but are very apparent with UGVs," he said. Last February a crew from the History Channel had filmed SWORDS for an episode of *Mail Call*, a

half-hour program hosted by the inimitable R. Lee Ermey, best known for his role as the profane drill sergeant in the movie *Full Metal Jacket*. Ermey's scowling face suddenly appeared onscreen, accompanied by jarring rock music.

"It's a lot smarter to send this robo-soldier down a blind alley than one of our flesh-and-blood warriors," Ermey shouted. "It was developed by our troops in the field, not some suit in an office back home!"

Ermey's antic mugging was interspersed with quick cutaways of SWORDS on a firing range and interviews with EOD soldiers.

"The next time you start thinking about telling the kids to put away that video game, think again!" Ermey screamed. He jabbed his finger into the camera. "Some day they could be using those same kinds of skills to run a robot that will save their bacon!"

"That's a good way to get off the stage," Bob said. He was smiling now, soaking in the applause. "I think armed robots will save soldiers' lives. It creates an unfair fight, and that's what we want. But they will be teleoperated. The more as a community we focus on that, given the Hollywood perceptions, the better off our soldiers will be."

Downstairs in the exhibit hall, I saw that Boeing had also learned the value of Hollywood-style marketing. I had stopped by the company's booth out of a sense of obligation more than curiosity: Boeing is the lead contractor for FCS. While I was talking to Stephen Bishop, the FCS business-development manager, I noticed a familiar face appear on the laptop screen behind him.

"Is that—MacGyver?"

Stephen nodded and stepped aside so that I could get a better view of the laptop. The face did indeed belong to Richard Dean Anderson, former star of the television series *MacGyver* and now the star of a five-minute promotional film produced by Boeing. Judging by the digital special effects, the film probably cost more to make than what most companies had spent on their entire exhibits. Not coincidentally, the film is set in 2014, when the first generation of FCS vehicles are scheduled for full deployment. An American convoy approaches a bridge near a snowy mountain pass somewhere in Asia, perhaps North Korea. The enemy mobilizes to cut the Americans off, but they are detected and annihilated by armed ground vehicles and UAVs.

At the center of this networked firestorm is Richard Dean Anderson, who sits inside a command vehicle, furrowing his brow and tapping a computer touchscreen. As the American forces cross the bridge, a lone enemy soldier hiding behind a boulder fires a rocket at the lead vehicle and disables it. The attack falters.

"I do *not* have an ID on the shooter!" a technician yells. Anderson squints grimly at his computer screen. It's the moment of truth. Does he pull back and allow the enemy time to regroup, or does he advance across the bridge, exposing his forces to enemy fire? The rousing martial soundtrack goes quiet.

"Put a 'bot on the bridge," Anderson says.

A dune-buggy-like robot darts from the column of vehicles and stops in the middle of the bridge in a heroic act of self-sacrifice. The lone enemy soldier takes the bait and fires another missile, destroying the robot and unwittingly revealing his position to a micro-UAV loitering nearby. Billions of dollars and decades of scientific research come to bear on this moment, on one man hiding behind a snow-covered boulder. He is obliterated.

"Good job," Anderson sneers. "Now let's finish this."

The film ends as American tanks pour across the bridge into enemy territory. The digitally enhanced point of view pulls back to reveal the FCS network, layer by layer, vehicle by vehicle, eighteen systems in all, until it reaches space, the network's outer shell, where a spy satellite glides by.

"Saving soldiers' lives," Stephen said, glancing at his press manager to make sure he was on message. I commended the film's production values. Stephen seemed pleased that I'd noticed. "Three-stars and four-stars gave it a standing ovation at the Pentagon last November," he told me.

"You can't argue with MacGyver," I said.

"Because it's all about saving soldiers' lives," Stephen said. "Works for congressmen, works for senators, works for the grandmother in Nebraska."

Later that summer I visited Picatinny Arsenal, "Home of American Firepower," in New Jersey, to see a live-fire demonstration of the SWORDS robot. SWORDS was conceived at Picatinny by a small group of EOD soldiers who wanted to find a less dangerous way to "put heat on a target" inside caves in Afghanistan. Three years later, SWORDS was undergoing some final tweaks at Picatinny before being sent to Aberdeen Proving Ground for its last round of safety tests. After that, it would be ready for deployment.

"As long as you don't break my rules you'll be fine," said Sergeant Jason Mero, motioning for us to gather around him. Sgt. Mero had participated in the initial invasion of Iraq, including the assault on Saddam International Airport. He had buzzed sandy brown hair, a compact

l, and the brusque authority common to [illegible] officers. He told us exactly where we could stand, where we could set up our [illegible]s, and assured us that he was there to help us get what we needed. Other than the "very, very loud" report of the M240 machine gun, there was little to worry about.

"The robot's not going to suddenly pivot and start shooting everybody," he said, without a hint of irony.

A crew from the Discovery Networks' Military Channel dragged their gear onto the range. They were filming a special on "Warbots," and the producer was disappointed to learn that the SWORDS robot mounted with a formidable-looking M202 grenade launcher wasn't operable. He would have to make do with the less telegenic machine-gun variant. The producer, Jonathan Gruber, wore a canvas fishing hat with the brim pulled down to the black frames of his stylish eyeglasses. Jonathan gave stage directions to Sgt. Mero, who knelt in the gravel next to SWORDS and began describing how the loading process works.

"Sergeant, if you could just look to me," Jonathan prompted. "Good. So, is a misfeed common?"

"No, not with this weapon system," Sgt. Mero said. "It's very uncommon." "My questions are cut out," Jonathan said. "So if you could repeat my question in the answer? So, you know, 'Misfeeds are not common . . .'"

"Mis—" Sgt. Mero cleared his throat. His face turned red. "However, misfeeds are not common with the M240 bravo."

"Okay, great. I'm all set for now, thanks."

The firing range was scraped out of the bottom of a shallow gorge, surrounded on all sides by trees and exposed limestone. Turkey vultures circled above the ridge. The weedy ground was littered with spent shell casings and scraps of scorched metal. Fifty yards from where I sat, two human silhouettes were visible through shoulder-high weeds in front of a concrete trap filled with sand. Sgt. Mero hooked a cable to SWORDS's camera, then flipped a red switch on the control box. I felt the M240's muzzle blast on my face as SWORDS lurched backward on its tracks, spilling smoking shells on the ground.

A cloud of dust billowed behind the silhouettes. Sgt. Mero fired again, then again. With each burst, recoil pushed SWORDS backward, and Sgt. Mero, staring at the video image on the control box's LCD screen, readjusted his aim. I could hear servos whining. When Sgt. Mero finished the ammunition belt, he switched off SWORDS and led us downrange to the targets.

"So, um, Sergeant?" Jonathan said. "As soon as you see our camera you can just start talking."

"As you see, the M240—"

"And Sergeant?" Jonathan interrupted. "I don't think you have to scream. You can just speak in a normal voice. We're all close to you."

"The problem with a heavy machine gun is, obviously, there's going to be a lot of spray," Sgt. Mero said, bending down to pick up one of the silhouettes that had fallen in the weeds. "Our second guy over here that we actually knocked down—he didn't get very many bullets, but he actually got hit pretty hard."

Through the weeds I spotted the SWORDS robot squatting in the dust. My heart skipped a beat. The machine gun was pointed straight at me. I'd watched Sgt. Mero deactivate SWORDS. I saw him disconnect the cables. And the machine gun's feed tray was empty. There wasn't the slightest chance of a misfire. My fear was irrational, but I still made a wide circle around the robot when it was time to leave.

Within our lifetime, robots will give us the ability to wage war without committing ourselves to the human cost of actually fighting a war. War will become a routine, a program. The great nineteenth-century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz understood that although war may have rational goals, the conduct of war is fundamentally irrational and unpredictable. Absent fear, war cannot be called war. A better name for it would be target practice.

Back on the firing line, Sgt. Mero booted up SWORDS and began running it around the range for the benefit of the cameras. It made a tinny, rattling noise as it rumbled over the rocks. A Discovery crewman waddled close behind it, holding his camera low to the ground. He stumbled over a clump of weeds, and for a second I thought he was going to fall on his face. But he regained his balance, took a breath, and ran to catch up with the robot.

"I think I'm good," Jonathan said after the driving demonstration. "Anything else you want to add about this?"

"Yeah," Sgt. Mero said, smiling wryly. "It kicks *ass*. It's *awesome*." In repentance for this brief moment of sarcasm, Sgt. Mero squared his shoulders, looked straight into the camera, and began speaking as if he were reading from cue cards. "These things are amazing," he said breathlessly. "They don't complain, like our regular soldiers do. They don't cry. They're not scared. This robot here has no fear, which is a good supplement to the United States Army."

"That's great," Jonathan said. ■

ON THE RIGHTS OF MOLOTOV MAN

Appropriation and the art of context

By Joy Garnett and Susan Meiselas



JOY GARNETT: In the spring of 2003, soon after the United States invaded Iraq, I embarked on a new project having to do with the human figure *in extremis*. It was a project born of frustration and anger. All of my paintings are based on photographs, and so for this project—which I came to think of as the Riot series—I searched the Web for images of figures in extreme emotional or physical states. I saved the most promising images in folders on my computer desktop, and I let them sit for a while so I could forget where I found them. I wanted my choices to be based more on aesthetic criteria than on my emotional attachment to their narratives. Eventually I would look through the folders again to see what struck me.

After a few months of this, I decided to go ahead and make the paintings. A photo of a man throwing a Molotov cocktail grabbed my attention, and he became my first subject. I rendered him larger than life—the painting is nearly six feet tall—and I was sufficiently pleased with the results. I went to work on other paintings: shouting demonstrators, angry skinheads, an Air Force pilot and his girl in an emotional embrace, frat boys jumping over bonfires, screaming punk rockers.

When a gallery in New York City offered to exhibit the Riot paintings in January 2004, the directors and I agreed that the "Molotov" painting was emblematic of the series, and so we chose it for the image on the announcement card.

Joy Garnett is a painter and the arts editor of the journal Cultural Politics.
Susan Meiselas is a photographer best known for her documentation of human-rights issues in Latin Amer
Both artists live in New York City, and their work has appeared previously in Harper's Maga
This portfolio is drawn from their conversation at the New York Institute for the Humanities' "Con
of Fair U$e" symposium, which took place last year at New York University

Molotov, by Joy Garnett. Courtesy the artist and Nick Debs





Partway through the exhibition, I received an email from an acquaintance who had received the card. He said, "That image is from a photograph by Susan Meiselas. Is she aware of your use? And if not, are you going to ask her permission?" He also sent me the link to the website of the Magnum Photo Agency, which represents Susan. The original photograph was [illegible]rent from the fragment I had found. The [illegible]ith the Molotov cocktail was the central [illegible] larger scene, for one thing, and he [illegible]ndishing a rifle. The man, it turned [illegible]araguan rebel. The photograph was [illegible]*nua*, Susan's celebrated photo essay on [illegible]ion, published by Pantheon in 1981. I was [illegible]ed by the original image [illegible] the richness of [illegible] narrative behind it, but it didn't make any dif[illegible]nce to me in terms of permission or credit.

[illegible] shortly after the exh[illegible] closed, though, I received a letter sent by a [illegible]yer on Susan's behalf. The letter inform[illegible]e that I had m[illegible] from Susan's [illegible] and that I was "[illegible] the flag of p[illegible]." It asked that I [illegible] credit to the source [illegible] exhibition of the painting and that I agree to seek written permission from her before I made any further reproductions of the painting.

I immediately made an appointment with a lawyer, and I also went online to an artists' discussion group I had long been frequenting, a virtual place hosted by a not-for-profit arts organization called Rhizome.org. Subscribers to this group were given to discussing their philosophies of appropriation, sampling, remixing, and current copyright controversies. To open my situation to public discussion was, for me, a natural thing to do. I thought that if there was an argument to be made this would be the place to make it. I was feeling paranoid, though, so I did not name names or post a link to Susan's photograph. Instead, we limited ourselves to looking at the image of my painting and discussing the reasons why this might be happening to me.

Within a few days I was ready to respond. I wrote a letter to Susan's lawyer. As requested, I would include a credit line in all current and future displays of the painting itself, as well as on any reproductions, citing Susan's photograph as its source. But I would not, I said, agree to seek written approval from Susan anytime my painting might be reproduced somewhere. I thought this was too difficult a burden to accept under the circumstances. Susan's lawyer responded with a much longer letter that cited cases to support Susan's position and requested a $2,000 licensing fee for the additional uses.

I was frightened, and so I decided to remove the image of *Molotov* from my website. When I announced this decision to my online discussion group at Rhizome, though, something unexpected—something interesting—happened.

First, I learned that an artist named Tim Whidden had copied the *Molotov* webpage and uploaded it to his own website, creating a "mirror" page. After he posted the link to Rhizome, several other artists followed suit. Mirrors of *Molotov* started popping up all over the place.

Then things took an even odder turn. An artist named Mark River appropriated a portion of *Molotov* and made a collage depicting this act of mirroring:

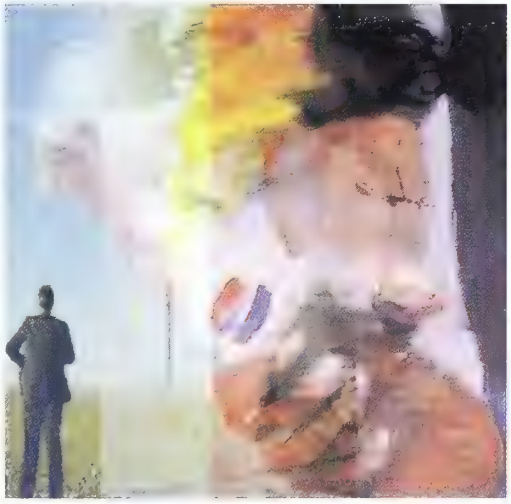


Molotov and *Lime* (left), by Joy Garnett. Courtesy the artist. Artwork (right) courtesy M. River of MTAA

This was the green light: soon, dozens of artists were making "copyfight" agitprop based on *Molotov* in a kind of solidarity campaign. Before long, the campaign came to be known as "Joywar," a play on words referring to an infamous, earlier legal battle—between etoy, the arts collective, and eToys, the online toy retailer—known as "Toywar."



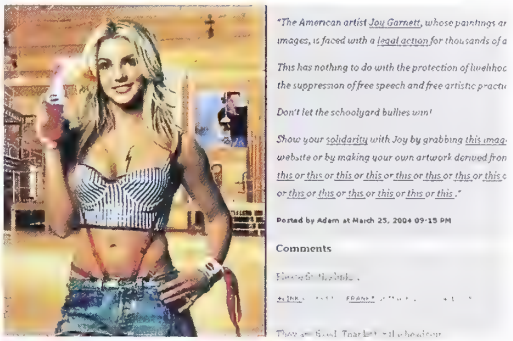
Over the course of the next few days, many *Molotov* appropriations were posted on Rhizome.

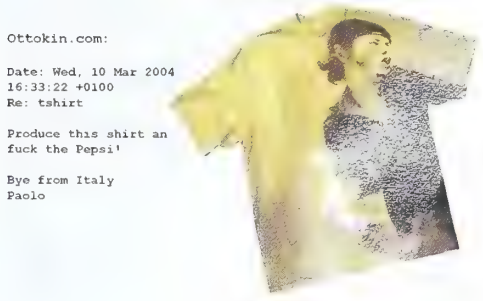




Then my story hit the blogs and Joywar went global. The story was translated—and mistranslated—onto various blogs and e-zines in French, Italian, Chinese, and Czech. The Italians were especially horrified, absolutely certain as they were that Pepsi was suing me.







In this swirl of creative agitprop and commentary, several questions came to the fore: Does the author of a documentary photograph—a document whose mission is, in part, to provide the public with a record of events of social and historical value—have the right to control the content of this document for all time? Should artists be allowed to [illegible] an comment on their work and how? Can copyright law, as it stands, [illegible] pt as a gag order? These remain open que[illegible]ions for many people. It was a blogger named "nmazca," however, who posed what has, for me, become the central question in all of the activity surrounding *Molotov*. Referring to the lone figure of that Sandinista rebel, nmazca asked, "Who owns the rights to this man's struggle?"

Artwork courtesy Ryan Griffis (top left), Patrick Lichty (bottom left), and Paul W[illegible]



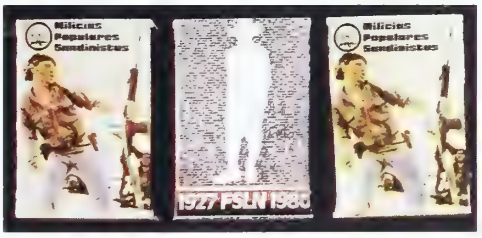
SUSAN MEISELAS: My own relationship to that picture obviously is very different from Joy's. No one can "control" art, of course, but it is important to me—in fact, it is central to my work—that I do what I can to respect the individuality of the people I photograph, all of whom exist in specific times and places. Indeed, Joy's practice of decontextualizing an image as a painter is precisely the opposite of my own hope as a photographer to contextualize an image. So here is some context: I took the picture above in Nicaragua, which had been ruled by the Somoza family since before World War II. The FSLN, popularly known as the Sandinistas, had opposed that regime since the early Sixties. I took the picture below on a hillside known as the place where Anastasio Somoza's national guard would execute suspected rebels.



© Joseph Cavan Meiselas/Magnum Photos

And more context: I made the image in question on July 16, 1979, the eve of the day that Somoza would flee Nicaragua forever. What is happening is anything but a "riot." In fact, the man is throwing his bomb at a Somoza national guard garrison, one of the last such garrisons remaining in Somoza's hands. It was an important moment in the history of Nicaragua—the Sandinistas would soon take power and hold that power for another decade—and this image ended up representing that moment for a long time to come. I don't think it was published anywhere at that time, and it was only published in my book a year or so later, but in the years since, the image has been subjected to many kinds of reappropriations, most of which, far from condemning, I have welcomed.

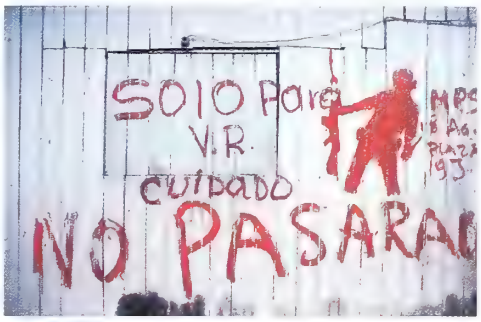
The first time I re-encountered "Molotov Man"—as I had come to think of him—was in 1980, when I saw these matchbox covers celebrating the first anniversary of the Sandinista revolution.



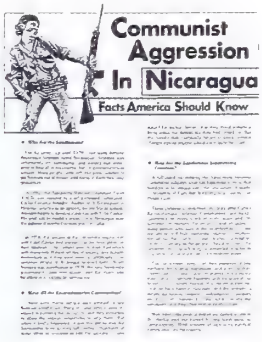
Over the years, though, Molotov Man kept appearing and reappearing, used by different players for different purposes. The leaders of Nicaragua's Catholic Church, for instance, noticed that he had been wearing a crucifix, so they reproduced his image on the cover of this magazine in tribute to Gaspar García Laviana, a Jesuit priest killed in 1978 while fighting the Somoza regime. (This was before the Church itself turned against the Sandinistas.)



In 1983, as CIA-funded Contras flooded across the Honduran border and the counterrevolution gathered strength, the Sandinistas attempted a kind of viral campaign, pre-Internet, on the walls all over Nicaragua to raise a popular militia. They hoped to associate Molotov Man's image with the Spanish Civil War–era anti-fascist slogan NO PASARÁN—"they shall not pass."



At the same time, the Contras themselves used Molotov Man in their fund-raising campaign to gain further support in the United States to fight the Sandinistas.



In 1990, I returned to Nicaragua with two filmmakers to document what had happened to the people in my earlier photographs. I learned that "Molotov Man" was Pablo Arauz, who was known as "Bareta" during the war, still identified himself as a Sandinista, and had ended up with a family and a pretty good job delivering lumber. (He owned his own truck.)

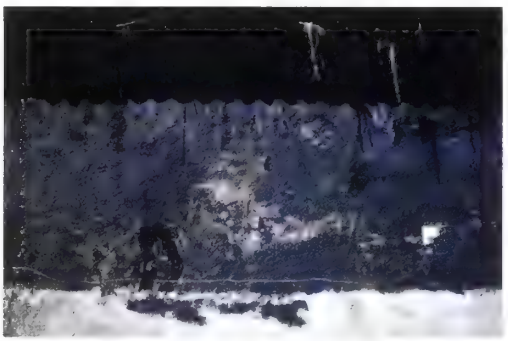


Photographs © Susan Meiselas/Magnum Photos

Meanwhile, the Sandinistas continued to paint Molotov Man on the walls of Nicaragua, along with other heroes of the revolution, including Daniel Ortega's brother Camilo (in glasses), who was killed by Somoza forces in 1978.



Interestingly, when the Sandinistas were voted from office in 1990, that same wall in the province of Masaya was blackened over as if you could just erase history.



Yet when I returned to Nicaragua in 1999, on the twentieth anniversary of the revolution, that same image of Molotov Man was all over the plazas of Managua, only now it was in T-shirt form.



Bareta remained the symbol of that uprising for the twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration in 2004.



That same year, I decided to explore and document how the people of Nicaragua were interacting with this history, and so I brought nineteen mural-sized prints—Molotov Man among them—back to the places I had shot the original images.



In November 2006, Daniel Ortega was elected president of Nicaragua, and the Sandinistas were once again set to take power. The following month, Robert Gates, the number-two man at the CIA when it was funding the Contras, was confirmed by Congress as secretary of defense. He will now prosecute the very war that Joy says caused her to claim the image of Pablo Arauz.

There is no denying in this digital age that images are increasingly dislocated and far more easily decontextualized. Technology allows us to do many things, but that does not mean we must do them. Indeed, it seems to me that if history is working against context, then we must, as artists, work all the harder to reclaim that context. We owe this debt of specificity not just to one another but to our subjects, with whom we have an implicit contract.

I never did sue Joy in the end, nor did I collect any licensing fees. But I still feel strongly, as I watch Pablo Arauz's context being stripped away—as I watch him being converted into the emblem of an abstract riot—that it would be a betrayal of him if I did not at least protest the diminishment of his act of defiance. ■

Photographs © Susan Meiselas/Magnum Photos

THE ECSTASY OF INFLUENCE

A plagiarism

By Jonathan Lethem

All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated. . . .
—John Donne

LOVE AND THEFT

Consider this tale: a cultivated man of middle age looks back on the story of an *amour fou*, one beginning when, traveling abroad, he takes a room as a lodger. The moment he sees the daughter of the house, he is lost. She is a preteen, whose charms instantly enslave him. Heedless of her age, he becomes intimate with her. In the end she dies, and the narrator—marked by her forever—remains alone. The name of the girl supplies the title of the story: *Lolita*.

The author of the story I've described, Heinz von Lichberg, published his tale of Lolita in 1916, forty years before Vladimir Nabokov's novel. Lichberg later became a prominent journalist in the Nazi era, and his youthful works faded from view. Did Nabokov, who remained in Berlin until 1937, adopt Lichberg's tale consciously? Or did the earlier tale exist for Nabokov as a hidden, unacknowledged memory? The history of literature is not without examples of this phenomenon, called cryptomnesia. Another hypothesis is that Nabokov, knowing Lichberg's tale perfectly well, had set himself to that art of quotation that Thomas Mann, himself a master of it, called "higher cribbing." Literature has always been a crucible in which familiar themes are continually recast. Little of what we admire in Nabokov's *Lolita* is to be found in its predecessor; the former is in no way deducible from the latter. Still: did Nabokov consciously borrow and quote?

"When you live outside the law, you have to eliminate dishonesty." The line comes from Don Siegel's 1958 film noir, *The Lineup*, written by Stirling Silliphant. The film still haunts revival houses, likely thanks to Eli Wallach's blazing portrayal of a sociopathic hit man and to Siegel's long, sturdy auteurist career. Yet what were those words worth—to Siegel, or Silliphant, or their audience—in 1958? And again: what was the line worth when Bob Dylan heard it (presumably in some Greenwich Village repertory cinema), cleaned it up a little, and inserted it into "Absolutely Sweet Marie"? What are they worth now, to the culture at large?

Appropriation has always played a key role in Dylan's music. The songwriter has grabbed not only from a panoply of vintage Hollywood films but from Shakespeare and F. Scott Fitzgerald and Junichi Saga's *Confessions of a Yakuza*. He also nabbed the title of Eric Lott's study of minstrelsy for his 2001 album *Love and Theft*. One imagines Dylan liked the [illegible] the title, in which enough [illegible] all the sweetness [illegible] Dylan's song. Lott's title is, of course, itself a riff on Leslie Fiedler's



Jonathan Lethem is the author of seven novels, including Motherless Brooklyn *and* You Don't Love Me Yet, *which will be published in March.*

"Nijinsky Series: Queen," a Polaroid montage by John O'Reilly. Courtesy Julie Saul Gallery, New York City

d Death in the American Novel, famously identifies the literary motif of the interdependence of a white man and a dark man, like Huck and Jim or Ishmael and Queequeg—a series of nested references to Dylan's own appropriating, minstrel-boy self. Dylan's art offers a paradox: while it famously urges us not to look back, it also encodes a knowledge of past sources that might otherwise have little home in contemporary culture, like the Civil War poetry of the Confederate bard Henry Timrod, resuscitated in lyrics on Dylan's newest record, *Modern Times*. Dylan's originality and his appropriations are as one.

The same might be said of *all* art. I realized this forcefully when one day I went looking for the John Donne passage quoted above. I know the lines, I confess, not from a college course but from the movie version of *84, Charing Cross Road* with Anthony Hopkins and Anne Bancroft. I checked out *84, Charing Cross Road* from the library in the hope of finding the Donne passage, but it wasn't in the book. It's alluded to in the play that was adapted from the book, but it isn't reprinted. So I rented the movie again, and there was the passage, read in voice-over by Anthony Hopkins but without attribution. Unfortunately, the line was also abridged so that, when I finally turned to the Web, I found myself searching for the line "all mankind is of one volume" instead of "all mankind is of one author, and is one volume."

My Internet search was initially no more successful than my library search. I had thought that summoning books from the vasty deep was a matter of a few keystrokes, but when I visited the website of the Yale library, I found that most of its books don't yet exist as computer text. As a last-ditch effort I searched the seemingly more obscure phrase "every chapter must be so translated." The passage I wanted finally came to me, as it turns out, not as part of a scholarly library collection but simply because someone who loves Donne had posted it on his homepage. The lines I sought were from Meditation 17 in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, which happens to be the most famous thing Donne ever wrote, containing as it does the line "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." My search had led me from a movie to a book to a play to a website and back to a book. Then again, those words may be as famous as they are only because Hemingway lifted them for his book title.

Literature has been in a plundered, fragmentary state for a long time. When I was thirteen I purchased an anthology of Beat writing. Immediately, and to my very great excitement, I discovered one William S. Burroughs, author of something called *Naked Lunch*, excerpted there in all its coruscating brilliance. Burroughs was then as radical a literary man as the world had to offer. Nothing, in all my experience of literature since, has ever had as strong an effect on my sense of the sheer possibilities of writing. Later, attempting to understand this impact, I discovered that Burroughs had incorporated snippets of other writers' texts into his work, an action I knew my teachers would have called plagiarism. Some of these borrowings had been lifted from American science fiction of the Forties and Fifties, adding a secondary shock of recognition for me. By then I knew that this "cut-up method," as Burroughs called it, was central to whatever he thought he was doing, and that he quite literally believed it to be akin to magic. When he wrote about his process, the hairs on my neck stood up, so palpable was the excitement. Burroughs was interrogating the universe with scissors and a paste pot, and the least imitative of authors was no plagiarist at all.

CONTAMINATION ANXIETY

In 1941, on his front porch, Muddy Waters recorded a song for the folklorist Alan Lomax. After singing the song, which he told Lomax was entitled "Country Blues," Waters described how he came to write it. "I made it on about the eighth of October '38," Waters said. "I was fixin' a puncture on a car. I had been mistreated by a girl. I just felt blue, and the song fell into my mind and it come to me just like that and I started singing." Then Lomax, who knew of the Robert Johnson recording called "Walkin' Blues," asked Waters if there were any other songs that used the same tune. "There's been some blues played like that," Waters replied. "This song comes from the cotton field and a boy once put a record out—Robert Johnson. He put it out as named 'Walkin' Blues.' I heard the tune before I heard it on the record. I learned it from Son House." In nearly one breath, Waters offers five accounts: his own active authorship: he "made it" on a specific date. Then the "passive" explanation: "it come to me just like that." After Lomax raises the question of influence, Waters, without shame, misgivings, or trepidation, says that he heard a version by Johnson, but that his mentor, Son House, taught it to him. In the middle of that complex genealogy, Waters declares that "this song comes from the cotton field."

Blues and jazz musicians have long been enabled by a kind of "open source" culture, in which pre-existing melodic fragments and larger musical frameworks are freely reworked. Technology has only multiplied the possibilities; musicians have gained the power to *duplicate* sounds literally rather than simply approximate them through allusion. In Seventies Jamaica, King Tubby and Lee "Scratch" Perry deconstructed recorded music, using astonishingly primitive pre-digital hardware, creating what they called "versions." The recombinant nature of their means of production quickly spread to DJs in New York and London. Today an endless, gloriously impure, and fundamentally social process generates countless hours of music.

Visual, sound, and text collage—which for many centuries were relatively fugitive traditions (a cento here, a folk pastiche there)—became explosively central to a series of movements in the twentieth century: futurism, cubism, Dada, musique concrète, situationism, pop art, and appropriationism. In fact, collage, the common denominator in that list, might be called *the* art form of the twentieth century, never mind the twenty-first. But forget, for the moment, chronologies, schools, or

ven centuries. As examples accu-
ıulate—Igor Stravinsky's music and
)aniel Johnston's, Francis Bacon's
aintings and Henry Darger's, the
ıovels of the Oulipo group and of
Hannah Crafts (the author who pil-
ıged Dickens's *Bleak House* to write
The Bondwoman's Narrative), as well
s cherished texts that become trou-
)ling to their admirers after the dis-
:overy of their "plagiarized" ele-
nents, like Richard Condon's novels
)r Martin Luther King Jr.'s ser-
nons—it becomes apparent that ap-
)ropriation, mimicry, quotation, allusion, and sublimated collaboration consist of a kind of sine qua non of the creative act, cutting across all forms and genres in the realm of cultural production.

In a courtroom scene from *The Simpsons* that has since entered into the television canon, an argument over the ownership of the animated characters Itchy and Scratchy rapidly escalates into an existential debate on the very nature of cartoons. "Animation is built on plagiarism!" declares the show's hot-tempered cartoon-producer-within-a-cartoon, Roger Meyers Jr. "You take away our right to steal ideas, where are they going to come from?" If nostalgic cartoonists had never borrowed from *Fritz the Cat*, there would be no *Ren & Stimpy Show*; without the Rankin/Bass and Charlie Brown Christmas specials, there would be no *South Park*; and without *The Flintstones*—more or less *The Honeymooners* in cartoon loincloths—*The Simpsons* would cease to exist. If those don't strike you as essential losses, then consider the remarkable series of "plagiarisms" that links Ovid's "Pyramus and Thisbe" with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, or Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra, copied nearly verbatim from Plutarch's life of Mark Antony and also later nicked by T. S. Eliot for *The Waste Land*. If these are examples of plagiarism, then we want more plagiarism.



The Mouse's Tale, by Jess © The Jess Collins Trust, Berkeley, Calif. and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Calif. Gift of Frederic P. Snowden

Most artists are brought to their vocation when their own nascent gifts are awakened by the work of a master. That is to say, most artists are converted to art by art itself. Finding one's voice isn't just an emptying and purifying oneself of the words of others but an adopting and embracing of filiations, communities, and discourses. Inspiration could be called inhaling the memory of an act never experienced. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void but out of chaos. Any artist knows these truths, no matter how deeply he or she submerges that knowing.

What happens when an allusion goes unrecognized? A closer look at *The Waste Land* may help make this point. The body of Eliot's poem is a vertiginous mélange of quotation, allusion, and "original" writing. When Eliot alludes to Edmund Spenser's "Prothalamion" with the line "Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song," what of readers to whom the poem, never one of Spenser's most popular, is unfamiliar? (Indeed, the Spenser is now k[illegible], because of Eliot's [illegible] sponses are poss[illegible] Eliot, or [illegible] and understo[illegible] ism. Eliot evid[illegible]

these matters; the notes he carefully added to *The Waste Land* can be read as a symptom of modernism's contamination anxiety. Taken from this angle, what exactly is postmodernism, except modernism without the anxiety?

SURROUNDED BY SIGNS

The surrealists believed that objects in the world possess a certain but unspecifiable intensity that had been dulled by everyday use and utility. They meant to reanimate this dormant intensity, to bring



their minds once again into close contact with the matter that made up their world. André Breton's maxim "Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table" is an expression of the belief that simply placing objects in an unexpected context reinvigorates their mysterious qualities.

This "crisis" the surrealists identified was being simultaneously diagnosed by others. Martin Heidegger believed that the essence of modernity was found in a certain technological orientation he called "enframing." This tendency encourages us to see the objects in our world only in terms of how they can serve us or be used by us. The task he identified was to find ways to resituate ourselves vis-à-vis these "objects," so that we may see them as "things" pulled into relief against the ground of their functionality. Heidegger believed that art had the great potential to reveal the "thingness" of objects.

The surrealists understood that photography and cinema could carry out this reanimating process automatically; the process of framing objects in a lens was often enough to create the charge they sought. Describing the effect, Walter Benjamin drew a comparison between the photographic apparatus and Freud's psychoanalytic methods. Just as Freud's theories "isolated and made analyzable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception," the photographic apparatus focuses on "hidden details of familiar objects," revealing "entirely new structural formations of the subject."

It's worth noting, then, that early in the history of photography a series of judicial decisions could well have changed the course of that art: courts were asked whether the photographer, amateur or professional, required permission before he could capture and print an image. Was the photographer *stealing* from the person or building whose photograph he shot, pirating something of private and certifiable value? Those early decisions went in favor of the pirates. Just as Walt Disney could take inspiration from Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, the Brothers Grimm, or the existence of real mice, the photographer should be free to capture an image without compensating the source. The world that meets our eye through the lens of a camera was judged to be, with minor exceptions, a sort of public commons, where a cat may look at a king.

Novelists may glance at the stuff of the world too, but we sometimes get called to task for it. For those whose ganglia were formed pre-TV, the mimetic deployment of pop-culture icons seems at best an annoying tic and at worst a dangerous vapidity that compromises fiction's seriousness by dating it out of the Platonic Always, where it ought to reside. In a graduate workshop I briefly passed through, a certain gray eminence tried to convince us that a literary story should always eschew "any feature which serves to date it" because "serious fiction must be Timeless." When we protested that, in his own well-known work, characters moved about electrically lit rooms, drove cars, and spoke not Anglo-Saxon but postwar English—and further, that fiction he'd himself ratified as great, such as Dickens, was liberally strewn with innately topical, commercial, and timebound references—he impatiently amended his proscription to those explicit references that would date a story in the "frivolous Now." When pressed, he said of course he meant the "trendy mass-popular-media" reference. Here, transgenerational discourse broke down.

I was born in 1964; I grew up watching Captain Kangaroo, moon landings, zillions of TV ads, the Banana Splits, *M*A*S*H*, and *The Mary Tyler Moore*

"Double Mona Lisa (Peanut Butter + Jelly)," by Vik Muniz, from *Reflex: A Vik Muniz Primer*
© 2005 Aperture. Artwork courtesy Aperture, New York City. Licensed by VAGA, New York City. Muniz's work will be on view through May 7 at P.S.1, in New York City

now. I was born with words in my mouth—"Band-Aid," "Q-tip," "Xerox"—object-names as fixed and eternal in my logosphere as "taxicab" and "toothbrush." The world is a home littered with pop-culture products and their emblems. I also came of age swamped by parodies that stood for originals yet mysterious to me—I knew Monkees before Beatles, Belmondo before Bogart, and "remember" the movie *Summer of '42* from a *Mad* magazine satire, though I've still never seen the film itself. I'm not alone in having been born backward into an incoherent realm of texts, products, and images, the commercial and cultural environment with which we've both supplemented and blotted out our natural world. I can no more claim it as "mine" than the sidewalks and forests of the world, yet I do dwell in it, and for me to stand a chance as either artist or citizen, I'd probably better be permitted to name it.

Consider Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*:

> Other people, so I have read, treasure memorable moments in their lives: the time one climbed the Parthenon at sunrise, the summer night one met a lonely girl in Central Park and achieved with her a sweet and natural relationship, as they say in books. I too once met a girl in Central Park, but it is not much to remember. What I remember is the time John Wayne killed three men with a carbine as he was falling to the dusty street in *Stagecoach*, and the time the kitten found Orson Welles in the doorway in *The Third Man*.

Today, when we can eat Tex-Mex with chopsticks while listening to reggae and watching a YouTube rebroadcast of the Berlin Wall's fall—i.e., when damn near *everything* presents itself as familiar—it's not a surprise that some of today's most ambitious art is going about trying to *make the familiar strange*. In so doing, in reimagining what human life might truly be like over there across the chasms of illusion, mediation, demographics, marketing, imago, and appearance, artists are paradoxically trying to restore what's taken for "real" to three whole dimensions, to reconstruct a univocally round world out of disparate streams of flat sights.

Whatever charge of tastelessness or trademark violation may be attached to the artistic appropriation of the media environment in which we swim, the alternative—to flinch, or tiptoe away into some ivory tower of irrelevance—is far worse. We're surrounded by signs; our imperative is to ignore none of them.

USEMONOPOLY

The idea that culture can be property—*intellectual* property—is used to justify everything from attempts to force the Girl Scouts to pay royalties for singing songs around campfires to the infringement suit brought by the estate of Margaret Mitchell against the publishers of Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone*. Corporations like Celera Genomics have filed for patents for human genes, while the Recording Industry Association of America has sued music downloaders for copyright infringement, reaching out-of-court settlements for thousands of dollars with defendants as young as twelve. ASCAP bleeds fees from shop owners who play background music in their stores; students and scholars are shamed from placing texts facedown on photocopy machines. At the same time, copyright is revered by most established writers and artists as a birthright and bulwark, the source of nurture for their infinitely fragile practices in a rapacious world. Plagiarism and piracy, after all, are the monsters we working artists are taught to dread, as they roam the woods surrounding our tiny preserves of regard and remuneration.

A time is marked not so much by ideas that are argued about as by ideas that are taken for granted. The character of an era hangs upon what needs no defense. In this regard, few of us question the contemporary construction of copyright. It is taken as a law, both in the sense of a universally recognizable moral absolute, like the law against murder, and as naturally inherent in our world, like the law of gravity. In fact, it is neither. Rather, copyright is an ongoing social negotiation, tenuously forged, endlessly revised, and imperfect in its every incarnation.

Thomas Jefferson, for one, considered copyright a necessary evil: he favored providing just enough incentive to create, nothing more, and thereafter allowing ideas to flow freely, as nature intended. His conception of copyright was enshrined in the Constitution, which gives Congress the authority to "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries." This was a balancing act between creators and society as a whole; second comers might do a much better job than the originator with the original idea.

But Jefferson's vision has not fared well, has in fact been steadily eroded by those who view the culture as a market in which everything of value should be owned by someone or other. The distinctive feature of modern American copyright law is its almost limitless bloating—its expansion in both scope and duration. With no registration requirement, every creative act in a tangible medium is now subject to copyright protection: your email to your child or your child's finger painting, both are automatically protected. The first Congress to grant copyright gave authors an initial term of fourteen years, which could be renewed for another fourteen if the author still lived. The current term is the life of the author plus seventy years. It's only a slight exaggeration to say that each time Mickey Mouse is about to fall into the public domain, the mouse's copyright term is extended.

Even as the law becomes more restrictive, technology is exposing those restrictions as bizarre and arbitrary. When old laws fixed on reproduction as the compensable (or actionable) unit, it wasn't because there was anything fundamentally invasive of an author's rights in the making of a copy. Rather it was because copies were once [illegible] and count, so the [illegible] useful benchmark for deciding when an owner's rights had been invaded. In the contemporary [illegible] the act of "copying" [illegible] sense equivalent [illegible] infringement [illegible]

we accept an emailed text, or send or forward one—and is impossible anymore to regulate or even describe.

At the movies, my entertainment is sometimes lately preceded by a dire trailer, produced by the lobbying group called the Motion Picture Association of America, in which the purchasing of a bootleg copy of a Hollywood film is compared to the theft of a car or a handbag—and, as the bullying supertitles remind us, "You wouldn't steal a handbag!" This conflation forms an incitement to quit thinking. If I were to tell you that pirating DVDs or downloading music is in no way different from loaning a friend a book, my own arguments would be as ethically bankrupt as the MPAA's. The truth lies somewhere in the vast gray area between these two overstated positions. For a car or a handbag, once stolen, no longer is available to its owner, while the appropriation of an article of "intellectual property" leaves the original untouched. As Jefferson wrote, "He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me."

Yet industries of cultural capital, who profit not from creating but from distributing, see the sale of culture as a zero-sum game. The piano-roll publishers fear the record companies, who fear the cassette-tape manufacturers, who fear the online vendors, who fear whoever else is next in line to profit most quickly from the intangible and infinitely reproducible fruits of an artist's labor. It has been the same in every industry and with every technological innovation. Jack Valenti, speaking for the MPAA: "I say to you that the VCR is to the American film producer and the American public as the Boston Strangler is to the woman home alone."

Thinking clearly sometimes requires unbraiding our language. The word "copyright" may eventually seem as dubious in its embedded purposes as "family values," "globalization," and, sure, "intellectual property." Copyright is a "right" in no absolute sense; it is a government-granted monopoly on the use of creative results. So let's try calling it that—not a right but a *monopoly on use*, a "usemonopoly"—and then consider how the rapacious expansion of monopoly rights has always been counter to the public interest, no matter if it is Andrew Carnegie controlling the price of steel or Walt Disney managing the fate of his mouse. Whether the monopolizing beneficiary is a living artist or some artist's heirs or some corporation's shareholders, the loser is the community, including living artists who might make splendid use of a healthy public domain.

THE BEAUTY OF SECOND USE

A few years ago someone brought me a strange gift, purchased at MoMA's downtown design store: a copy of my own first novel, *Gun, With Occasional Music*, expertly cut into the contours of a pistol. The object was the work of Robert The, an artist whose specialty is the reincarnation of everyday materials. I regard my first book as an old friend, one who never fails to remind me of the spirit with which I entered into this game of art and commerce—that to be allowed to insert the materials of my imagination onto the shelves of bookstores and into the minds of readers (if only a handful) was a wild privilege. I was paid $6,000 for three years of writing, but at the time I'd have happily published the results for nothing. Now my old friend had come home in a new form, one I was unlikely to have imagined for it myself. The gun-book wasn't readable, exactly, but I couldn't take offense at that. The fertile spirit of stray connection this appropriated object conveyed back to me—the strange beauty of its second use—was a reward for being a published writer I could never have fathomed in advance. And the world makes room for both my novel and Robert The's gun-book. There's no need to choose between the two.

In the first life of creative property, if the creator is lucky, the content is sold. After the commercial life has ended, our tradition supports a second life as well. A newspaper is delivered to a doorstep, and the next day wraps fish or builds an archive. Most books fall out of print after one year, yet even within that period they can be sold in used bookstores and stored in libraries, quoted in reviews, parodied in magazines, described in conversations, and plundered for costumes for kids to wear on Halloween. The demarcation between various possible uses is beautifully graded and hard to define, the more so as artifacts distill into and repercuss through the realm of culture into which they've been entered, the more so as they engage the receptive minds for whom they were presumably intended.

Active reading is an impertinent raid on the literary preserve. Readers are like nomads, poaching their way across fields they do not own—artists are no more able to control the imaginations of their audiences than the culture industry is able to control second uses of its artifacts. In the children's classic *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the old Skin Horse offers the Rabbit a lecture on the practice of textual poaching. The value of a new toy lies not it its material qualities (not "having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle"), the Skin Horse explains, but rather in how the toy is used. "Real isn't how you are made. . . . It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real." The Rabbit is fearful, recognizing that consumer goods don't become "real" without being actively reworked: "Does it hurt?" Reassuring him, the Skin Horse says: "It doesn't happen all at once. . . . You become. It takes a long time. . . . Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby." Seen from the perspective of the toymaker, the Velveteen Rabbit's loose joints and missing eyes represent vandalism, signs of misuse and rough treatment; for others, these are marks of its loving use.

Artists and their surrogates who fall into the trap of seeking recompense for every possible second use end up attacking their own best au-

ience members for the crime of exlting and enshrining their work. he Recording Industry Association f America prosecuting their own ecord-buying public makes as little ense as the novelists who bristle at utographing used copies of their



books for collectors. And artists, or their heirs, who fall into the trap of attacking the collagists and satirists and digital samplers of their work are attacking the next generation of creators for the crime of being influenced, for the crime of responding with the same mixture of intoxication, resentment, lust, and glee that characterizes all artistic successors. By doing so they make the world smaller, betraying what seems to me the primary motivation for participating in the world of culture in the first place: to make the world larger.

SOURCE HYPOCRISY, OR, DISNIAL

The Walt Disney Company has drawn an astonishing catalogue from the work of others: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Fantasia*, *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*, *Song of the South*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Robin Hood*, *Peter Pan*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *Mulan*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Sword in the Stone*, *The Jungle Book*, and, alas, *Treasure Planet*, a legacy of cultural sampling that Shakespeare, or De La Soul, could get behind. Yet Disney's protectorate of lobbyists has policed the resulting cache of cultural materials as vigilantly as if it were Fort Knox—threatening legal action, for instance, against the artist Dennis Oppenheim for the use of Disney characters in a sculpture, and prohibiting the scholar Holly Crawford from using any Disney-related images—including artwork by Lichtenstein, Warhol, Oldenburg, and others—in her monograph *Attached to the Mouse: Disney and Contemporary Art*.

This peculiar and specific act—the enclosure of commonwealth culture for the benefit of a sole or corporate owner—is close kin to what could be called *imperial plagiarism*, the free use of Third World or "primitive" artworks and styles by more privileged (and better-paid) artists. Think of Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, or some of the albums of Paul Simon or David Byrne: even without violating copyright, those creators have sometimes come in for a certain skepticism when the extent of their outsourcing became evident. And, as when Led Zeppelin found themselves sued for back royalties by the bluesman Willie Dixon, the act can occasionally be an expensive one. *To live outside the law, you must be honest*: perhaps it was this, in part, that spurred David Byrne and Brian Eno to recently launch a "remix" website, where anyone can download easily disassembled versions of two songs from *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, an album reliant on vernacular speech sampled from a host of sources. Perhaps it also explains why Bob Dylan has never refused a request for a sample.

Kenneth Koch once said, "I'm a writer who likes to be influenced." It was a charming confession, and a rare one. For so many artists, the act of creativity is intended as a Napoleonic imposition of one's uniqueness upon the universe—*après moi le déluge* of copycats! And for every James Joyce or Woody Guthrie or Martin Luther King Jr., or Walt Disney, who gathered a constellation of voices in his work, there may seem to be some corporation or literary estate eager to stopper the bottle: cultural debts flow in, but they don't flow out. We might call this tendency "source hypocrisy." Or we could name it after the most pernicious source hypocrites of all time: Disnial.

YOU CAN'T STEAL A GIFT

My reader may, understandably, be on the verge of crying, "Communist!" A large, diverse society cannot survive without property; a large, [illegible] modern society cannot [illegible] some form of intellectual [illegible] But it takes little reflection to see that there is ample value that the term "property" doesn't capture. And works of art exist [illegible] economies, [illegible] *gift economy*

When Paradise Arrived, by Enrique Chagoya. Courtesy di Rosa Preserve, Napa, Calif. Photograph by Stefan Kirkeby

THE COMMONS

Another way of understanding the presence of gift economies—which dwell like ghosts in the commercial machine—is in the area of a *public commons*. A commons, of course, is anything like the green over which we drive, the lake through which we paddle in canoes, or the public parks and beaches on which we dally. A commons is one belonging to everyone and no one, and its use is controlled only by common consent. A commons describes resources like the body of ancient music, redeemed by composers and folk musicians alike, rather than the commercial machine-like "Happy Birthday to You," for which A. C. A.P. 114 years after it was written, continue to collect a fee. In economic theory, of course, a commons is "Wikipedia." Writing in the public domain is a commons. Gossip about celebrities is a commons. The silence in a movie theater is a transitory commons, unpredictable, fragile, treasured by those who create it, and constructed as a mutual gift by those who compose it.

The world of art and culture is a vast commons, one that is salted through with cones of utter commercial set remain pleasantly immune to any overall commodification. The closest resemblance is to the commons of a *language*, altered by every contributor, expanded by even the most passive user. That a language is a commons doesn't mean that the community owns it, rather it belongs *between* people, possessed by no one, not even by society as a whole.

Nearly any commons, though, can be encroached upon, patronized, or enclosed. The American commons include tangible assets such as public forests and minerals, intangible wealth such as copyrights and patents, critical infrastructures such as the Internet and government research, and cultural resources such as the broadcast airwaves and public spaces. They include resources we've paid for as taxpayers and inherited from previous generations

They're not just an inventory of marketable assets; they're social institutions and cultural traditions that define us as Americans and enliven us as human beings. Some invasions of the commons are sanctioned because we can no longer muster a spirited commitment to the public sector. The abuse goes unnoticed because the theft of the commons is seen in glimpses, not in panorama. We may occasionally see a former wetland paved; we may hear about the breakthrough cancer drug that tax dollars helped develop, the rights to which pharmaceutical companies acquired for a song. The larger movement goes too much unremarked. The notion of a *commons of cultural materials* goes more or less unnamed.

Honoring the commons is not a matter of moral exhortation. It is a practical necessity. We in Western society are going through a period of intensifying belief in private ownership, to the detriment of the public good. We have to remain constantly vigilant to prevent raids by those who would selfishly exploit our common heritage for their private gain. Such raids on our natural resources are not examples of enterprise and initiative. They are attempts to take from all the people just for the benefit of a few.

UNDISCOVERED PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Artists and intellectuals despondent over the prospects for originality can take heart from a phenomenon identified about twenty years ago by Don Swanson, a library scientist at the University of Chicago. He called it "undiscovered public knowledge." Swanson showed that standing problems in medical research may be significantly addressed, perhaps even solved, simply by systematically surveying the scientific literature. Left to its own devices, research tends to become more specialized and abstracted from the real-world problems that motivated it and to which it remains relevant. This suggests that such a problem may be tackled effectively not by commissioning more research but by assuming that most or all of the solution can already be found in various scientific journals, waiting to be assembled by someone willing to read across specialties. Swanson himself did this in the case of Raynaud's syndrome, a disease that causes the fingers of young women to become numb. His finding is especially striking—perhaps even scandalous—because it happened in the ever-expanding biomedical sciences.

Undiscovered public knowledge emboldens us to question the extreme claims to originality made in press releases and publishers' notices: Is an intellectual or creative offering truly novel, or have we just forgotten a worthy precursor? Does solving certain scientific problems really require massive additional funding, or could a computerized search engine, creatively deployed, do the same job more quickly and cheaply? Lastly, does our appetite for creative vitality require the violence and exasperation of another avant-garde, with its wearisome killing-the-father imperatives, or might we be better off ratifying *the ecstasy of influence*—and deepening our willingness to understand the commonality and timelessness of the methods and motifs available to artists?

GIVE ALL

A few years ago, the Film Society of Lincoln Center announced a retrospective of the works of Dariush Mehrjui, then a fresh enthusiasm of mine. Mehrjui is one of Iran's finest filmmakers, and the only one whose subject was personal relationships among the upper-middle-class intelligentsia. Needless to say, opportunities to view his films were—and remain—rare indeed. I headed uptown for one, an adaptation of J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*, titled *Pari*, only to discover at the door of the Walter Reade Theater that the screening had been canceled: its announcement had brought threat of a lawsuit down on the Film Society. True, these were Salinger's rights under the law. Yet why would he care that some obscure Iranian filmmaker had paid him homage with a meditation on his heroine? Would it have damaged his book or robbed him of some crucial remuneration had the screening been permitted? The fertile spirit of stray connec-



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aragraph makes a hash of remarks rom an interview with Eric Lott onducted by David McNair and ayson Whitehead, and incorporates oth interviewers' and interviewee's bservations. (The text-interview orm can be seen as a commonly accepted form of multivocal writing. Most interviewers prime their subjects with remarks of their own—leading the witness, so to speak—and gently refine their subjects' statements in the final printed transcript.)

"I realized this . . ." to ". . . for a long time." The anecdote is cribbed, with an elision to avoid appropriating a dead grandmother, from Jonathan Rosen's *The Talmud and the Internet*. I've never seen *84, Charing Cross Road*, nor searched the Web for a Donne quote. For me it was through Rosen to Donne, Hemingway, website, et al.

"When I was thirteen . . ." to ". . . no plagiarist at all." This is from William Gibson's "God's Little Toys," in *Wired* magazine. My own first encounter with William Burroughs, also at age thirteen, was less epiphanic. Having grown up with a painter father who, during family visits to galleries or museums, approvingly noted collage and appropriation techniques in the visual arts (Picasso, Claes Oldenburg, Stuart Davis), I was gratified, but not surprised, to learn that literature could encompass the same methods.

CONTAMINATION ANXIETY

"In 1941, on his front porch . . ." to ". . . 'this song comes from the cotton field.'" Siva Vaidhyanathan, *Copyrights and Copywrongs*.

". . . enabled by a kind . . . freely reworked." Kembrew McLeod, *Freedom of Expression*. In *Owning Culture*, McLeod notes that, as he was writing, he

> happened to be listening to a lot of old country music, and in my casual listening I noticed that *six* country songs shared *exactly* the same vocal melody, including Hank Thompson's "Wild Side of Life," the Carter Family's "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," Roy Acuff's "Great Speckled Bird," Kitty Wells's "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," Reno & Smiley's "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap," and Townes Van Zandt's "Heavenly Houseboat Blues." . . . In his extensively researched book, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock 'n' Roll*, Nick Tosches documents that the melody these songs share is both "ancient and British." There were no recorded lawsuits stemming from these appropriations. . . .

". . . musicians have gained . . . through allusion." Joanna Demers, *Steal This Music*.

"In Seventies Jamaica . . ." to ". . . hours of music." Gibson.

"Visual, sound, and text collage . . ." to ". . . realm of cultural production." This plunders, rewrites, and amplifies paragraphs from McLeod's *Owning Culture*, except for the line about collage being the art form of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which I heard filmmaker Craig Baldwin say, in defense of sampling, in the trailer for a forthcoming documentary, *Copyright Criminals*.

"In a courtroom scene . . ." to ". . . would cease to exist." Dave Itzkoff, *New York Times*.

". . . the remarkable series of 'plagiarisms' . . ." to ". . . we want more plagiarism." Richard Posner, combined from The Becker-Posner Blog and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

"Most artists are brought . . ." to ". . . by art itself." These words, and many more to follow, come from Lewis Hyde's *The Gift*. Above any other book I've here plagiarized, I commend *The Gift* to your attention.

"Finding one's voice . . . filiations, communities, and discourses." Semanticist George L. Dillon, quoted in Rebecca Moore Howard's "The New Abolitionism Comes to Plagiarism."

"Inspiration could be . . . act never experienced." Ned Rorem, found on several "great quotations" sites on the Internet.

"Invention, it must be humbly admitted . . . out of chaos." Mary Shelley, from her introduction to *Frankenstein*.

"What happens . . ." to ". . . contamination anxiety." Kevin J.H. Dettmar, from "The Illusion of Modernist Allusion and the Politics of Postmodern Plagiarism."

SURROUNDED BY SIGNS

"The surrealists believed . . ." to

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the Walter Benjamin quote. Ufo[illegible]
ian Keathley's *Cinephilia and History, or the Wind in the Trees*, a book that treats fannish fetishism as the secret at the heart of film scholarship. Keathley notes, for instance, Joseph Cornell's surrealist-influenced 1936 film *Rose Hobart*, which simply records "the way in which Cornell himself watched the 1931 Hollywood potboiler *East of Borneo*, fascinated and distracted as he was by its B-grade star"—the star, of course, being Rose Hobart herself. This, I suppose, makes Cornell a sort of father to computer-enabled fan-creator reworkings of Hollywood product, like the version of George Lucas's *The Phantom Menace* from which the noxious Jar Jar Binks character was purged; both incorporate a viewer's subjective preferences into a revision of a filmmaker's work.

"... early in the history of photography" to "... without compensating the source." From *Free Culture*, by Lawrence Lessig, the greatest of public advocates for copyright reform, and the best source if you want to get radicalized in a hurry.

"For those whose ganglia ..." to "...discourse broke down." From David Foster Wallace's essay "E Unibus Pluram," reprinted in *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*. I have no idea who Wallace's "gray eminence" is or was. I inserted the example of Dickens into the paragraph; he strikes me as overlooked in the lineage of authors of "brand-name" fiction.

"I was born ... *Mary Tyler Moore Show*." These are the reminiscences of Mark Hosler from Negativland, a collaging musical collective that was sued by U2's record label for their appropriation of "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." Although I had to adjust the birth date, Hosler's cultural menu fits me like a glove.

"The world is a home ... pop-culture products ..." McLeod.

"Today, when we can eat ..." to "... flat sights." Wallace.

"We're surrounded by signs, ignore of them." This phrase, which I ately rendered somewhat lead- he word "imperative," comes ve Erickson's novel *Our Ec-*

USEMONOPOLY

"... everything from attempts ..." to "defendants as young as twelve." Robert Boynton, *The New York Times Magazine*, "The Tyranny of Copyright?"

"A time is marked ..." to "... what needs no defense." Lessig, this time from *The Future of Ideas*.

"Thomas Jefferson, for one ..." to "'... respective Writings and Discoveries.'" Boynton.

"... second comers might do a much better job than the originator ..." I found this phrase in Lessig, who is quoting Vaidhyanathan, who himself is characterizing a judgment written by Learned Hand.

"But Jefferson's vision ... owned by someone or other." Boynton.

"The distinctive feature ..." to "... term is extended." Lessig, again from *The Future of Ideas*.

"When old laws ..." to "... had been invaded." Jessica Litman, *Digital Copyright*.

"'I say to you ... woman home alone.'" I found the Valenti quote in McLeod. Now fill in the blank: Jack Valenti is to the public domain as _____ is to _____.

THE BEAUTY OF SECOND USE

"In the first ..." to "... builds an archive." Lessig.

"Most books ... one year ..." Lessig.

"Active reading is ..." to "... do not own ..." This is a mashup of Henry Jenkins, from his *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, and Michel de Certeau, whom Jenkins quotes.

"In the children's classic ..." to "... its loving use." Jenkins. (Incidentally, have the holders of the copyright to *The Velveteen Rabbit* had a close look at *Toy Story*? There could be a lawsuit there.)

SOURCE HYPOCRISY, OR, DISNIAL

"The Walt Disney Company ... alas, *Treasure Planet* ..." Lessig.

"Imperial Plagiarism" is the title of an essay by Marilyn Randall.

"... spurred David Byrne ... My *Life in the Bush of Ghosts* ..." Chris Dahlen, *Pitchfork*—though in truth by the time I'd finished, his words were so utterly dissolved within my own that had I been an ordinary cutting-and-pasting journalist it never would have occurred to me to give Dahlen a citation. The effort of preserving another's distinctive phrases as I worked on this essay was sometimes beyond my capacities; this form of plagiarism was oddly hard work.

"Kenneth Koch ..." to "... *déluge* of copycats!" Emily Nussbaum, *The New York Times Book Review*.

YOU CAN'T STEAL A GIFT

"You can't steal a gift." Dizzy Gillespie, defending another player who'd been accused of poaching Charlie Parker's style: "You can't steal a gift. Bird gave the world his music, and if you can hear it you can have it."

"A large, diverse society ... intellectual property." Lessig.

"And works of art ..." to "... marriage, parenthood, mentorship." Hyde.

"Yet one ... so naturally with the market." David Bollier, *Silent Theft*.

"Art that matters ..." to "... bought and sold." Hyde.

"We consider it unacceptable ..." to "'... certain unalienable Rights ...'" Bollier, paraphrasing Margaret Jane Radin's *Contested Commodities*.

"A work of art ..." to "... constraint upon our merchandising." Hyde.

"This is the reason ... person it's directed at." Wallace.

"The power of a gift ..." to "... certain extra-market values." Bollier, and also the sociologist Warren O. Hagstrom, whom Bollier is paraphrasing.

THE COMMONS

"Einstein's theory ..." to "... public domain are a commons." Lessig.

"That a language is a commons ... society as a whole." Michael Newton, in the *London Review of Books*, reviewing a book called *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language* by Daniel Heller-Roazen. The paraphrases of book reviewers are another covert form of collaborative culture; as an avid reader of reviews, I know much about books I've never read. To quote Yann Mar-

l on how he came to be accused imperial plagiarism in his Booker-nning novel *Life of Pi*,

> Ten or so years ago, I read a review by John Updike in the *New York Times Review of Books* [sic]. It was of a novel by a Brazilian writer, Moacyr Scliar. I forget the title, and John Updike did worse: he clearly thought the book as a whole was forgettable. His review—one of those that makes you suspicious by being mostly descriptive . . . oozed indifference. But one thing about it struck me: the premise. . . . Oh, the wondrous things I could do with this premise.

Jnfortunately, no one was ever able to ɔcate the Updike review in question.

"The American commons . . ." to . . . for a song." Bollier.

"Honoring the commons . . ." to . . . practical necessity." Bollier.

"We in Western . . . public good." ohn Sulston, Nobel Prize–winner and :o-mapper of the human genome.

"We have to remain . . ." to ". . . ben-efit of a few." Harry S Truman, at the ɔpening of the Everglades National Park. Although it may seem the height of pre-sumption to rip off a president—I found claiming Truman's stolid advocacy as my own embarrassing in the extreme—I didn't rewrite him at all. As the poet Marianne Moore said, "If a thing had been said in the *best* way, how can you say it better?" Moore confessed her penchant for incorporating lines from others' work, explaining, "I have not yet been able to outgrow this hybrid method of composition."

UNDISCOVERED PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

". . . intellectuals despondent . . ." to ". . . quickly and cheaply?" Steve Fuller, *The Intellectual*. There's something of Borges in Fuller's insight here; the notion of a storehouse of knowledge waiting passively to be assembled by future users is suggestive of both "The Library of Babel" and "Kafka and his Precursors."

GIVE ALL

". . . one of Iran's finest . . ." to ". . . meditation on his heroine?" Amy Taubin, *Village Voice*, although it was me who was disappointed at the door of the Walter Reade Theater.

"The primary objective . . ." to ". . . unfair nor unfortunate." Sandra Day O'Connor, 1991.

". . . the future will be much like the past" to ". . . give some things away." Open-source film archivist Rick Prelinger, quoted in McLeod.

"Change may be troubling . . . with certainty." McLeod.

". . . woven entirely . . ." to ". . . without inverted commas." Roland Barthes.

"The kernel, the soul . . ." to ". . . characteristics of phrasing." Mark Twain, from a consoling letter to Helen Keller, who had suffered distressing accusations of plagiarism (!). In fact, her work included unconsciously memorized phrases; under Keller's particular circumstances, her writing could be understood as a kind of allegory of the "constructed" nature of artistic perception. I found the Twain quote in the aforementioned *Copyrights and Copywrongs*, by Siva Vaidhyanathan.

"Old and new . . ." to ". . . we all quote." Ralph Waldo Emerson. These guys all sound alike!

"People live differently . . . wealth as a gift." Hyde.

". . . I'm a cork . . ." to ". . . blown away." This is adapted from The Beach Boys song "'Til I Die," written by Brian Wilson. My own first adventure with song-lyric permissions came when I tried to have a character in my second novel quote the lyrics "There's a world where I can go and/Tell my secrets to/In my room/In my room." After learning the likely expense, at my editor's suggestion I replaced those with "You take the high road/I'll take the low road/I'll be in Scotland before you," a lyric in the public domain. This capitulation always bugged me, and in the subsequent British publication of the same book I restored the Brian Wilson lyric, without permission. *Ocean of Story* is the title of a collection of Christina Stead's short fiction.

Saul Bellow, writing to a friend who'd taken offense at Bellow's fictional use of certain personal facts, said: "The name of the game is Give All. You are welcome to all my facts. You know them, I give them to you. If you have the strength to pick them up, take them with my blessing." I couldn't bring myself to retain Bellow's "strength," which seemed presumptuous in my new context, though it is surely the more elegant phrase. On the other hand, I was pleased to invite the suggestion that the gifts in question may actually be light and easily lifted.

KEY TO THE KEY

The notion of a collage text is, of course, not original to me. Walter Benjamin's incomplete *Arcades Project* seemingly would have featured extensive interlaced quotations. Other precedents include Graham Rawle's novel *Diary of an Amateur Photographer*, its text harvested from photography magazines, and Eduardo Paolozzi's collage-novel *Kex*, cobbled from crime novels and newspaper clippings. Closer to home, my efforts owe a great deal to the recent essays of David Shields, in which diverse quotes are made to closely intertwine and reverberate, and to conversations with editor Sean Howe and archivist Pamela Jackson. Last year David Edelstein, in *New York* magazine, satirized the Kaavya Viswanathan plagiarism case by creating an almost completely plagiarized column denouncing her actions. Edelstein intended to demonstrate, through ironic example, how bricolage such as his own was ipso facto facile and unworthy. Although Viswanathan's version of "creative copying" was a pitiable one, I differ with Edelstein's conclusions.

The phrase *Je est un autre*, with its deliberately awkward syntax, belongs to Arthur Rimbaud. It has been translated both as "I is another" and "I is someone else," as in this excerpt from Rimbaud's letters:

> For *I* is someone else. If brass wakes up a trumpet, it is not its fault. To me this is obvious: I witness the unfolding of my own thought: I watch it, I listen to it: I make a stroke of the bow: the symphony begins to stir in the depths, or springs on to the stage.
>
> If the old fools had not discovered only the *false* sign of their thought, we should not have to balance to sweep away those millions of skeletons which, [illegible] have been piling up since time immemorial and one-eyed [illegible] to be the only [illegible]


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CHILD'S PLAY

By Alice Munro

I suppose there was talk in our house, afterwards.

How sad, how *awful*. (My mother.)

There should have been supervision. Where were the Counselors? (My father.)

Just think, it might have—it might have been— (My mother.)

It wasn't. Just put that idea out of your head. It wasn't. (My father.)

It is even possible that if we ever passed the yellow house my mother said, "Remember? Remember you used to be so scared of her? The poor thing."

My mother had a habit of hanging on to—even treasuring—the foibles of my distant infantile state.

Every year, when you're a child, you become a different person. Generally it's in the fall, when you re-enter school, take your place in a higher grade, leave behind the muddle and lethargy of the summer vacation. That's when you register the change most sharply. Afterwards you are not sure of the month or year, but the changes go on, just the same. For a long while the past drops away from you easily and, it would seem, automatically, properly. Its scenes don't vanish so much as become irrelevant. And then there's a switchback, what's been all over and done with sprouting up fresh, wanting attention, even wanting you to do something about it, though it's plain there is not on this earth a thing to be done.



Marlene and Charlene. People thought we must be twins. There was a fashion in those days for naming twins in rhyme. Bonnie and Connie. Ronald and Donald. And then of course we—Charlene and I—had matching hats. Coolie hats, they were called, wide shallow cones of woven straw with some sort of tie or elastic under the chin. They became familiar later on in the century, from television shots of the war in Vietnam. Men on bicycles riding along a street in Saigon would be wearing them, or women walking in the road against the background of a bombed village.

It was possible at that time—I mean the time when Charlene and I were at camp—to say *coolie* without a thought of offense. Or *darkie*, or to talk about *jewing* a price down. I was in my teens, I think, before I ever related that verb to the noun.

So we had those names and those hats, and at the first roll call the Counselor—the jolly one we liked, Mavis, though we didn't [illegible] as well as the pr[illegible] pointed at us [illegible] Twins," and [illegible] other nam[illegible] deny it.

Alice Munro is the author of numerous story collections, including, most recently, The View from Castle Rock *(Knopf).*

Illustration by Jennifer Renninger

[illegible] to meet the facts and approved of each other. Otherwise one or both of us would have pulled off those brand-new articles and been ready to shove them under our cots, declaring that our mothers had made us wear them and we hated them, and so on.

I may have approved of Charlene, but I was not sure how to make friends with her. Girls nine or ten years old—that was the general range of this crop, though there were a few a bit older—do not pick friends or pair off as easily as girls do at six or seven. I simply followed some other girls from my town—none of them my particular friends—to one of the cabins where there were some unclaimed cots, and dumped my things on top of the brown blanket. Then I heard a voice behind me say, "Could I please be next to my twin sister?"

It was Charlene, speaking to somebody I didn't know. The dormitory cabin held perhaps two dozen girls. The girl she had spoken to said, "Sure," and moved along.

Charlene had used a special voice. Ingratiating, teasing, self-mocking, and with a seductive merriment in it, like a trill of bells. It was evident right away that she had more confidence than I did. And not simply confidence that the other girl would move and not say sturdily, "I got here first." Or—if she was a roughly brought up sort of girl (and some of them were that, having their way paid by the Lions Club or the Church and not by their parents) she might have said, "Go poop your pants, I'm not moving." No. Charlene had confidence that anybody would *want* to do as she asked, not just agree to do it. With me too she had taken a chance, for could I not have said, "I don't want to be twins," and turned back to sort my things? But of course I didn't. I felt flattered, as she had expected, and I watched her dump out the contents of her suitcase with such an air of celebration that some things fell on the floor.

All I could think of to say was, "You got a tan already."

"I always tan easy," she said.

The first of our differences. We applied ourselves to learning them. She tanned, I freckled. We both had brown hair but hers was darker. Hers was wavy, mine bushy. I was half an inch taller, she had thicker wrists and ankles. Her eyes had more green in them, mine more blue. We did not grow tired of inspecting and tabulating even the moles or notable freckles on our backs, length of our second toes (mine longer than the first toe, hers shorter). Or of recounting all the illnesses or accidents that had befallen us so far, as well as the repairs or removals performed on our bodies. Both of us had our tonsils out—a usual precaution in those days—and both of us had had measles and whooping cough but not mumps. I had had an eyetooth pulled because it was growing in over my other teeth, and she had a thumbnail with an imperfect half-moon because her thumb had been slammed under a window.

And once we had the peculiarities and history of our bodies in place we went on to the stories—the dramas or near-dramas or distinctions—of our families. She was the youngest and only girl in her family and I was an only child. I had an aunt who had died of polio in high school and she—Charlene—had an older brother who was in the Navy. For it was wartime, and at the campfire sing-song we would choose "There'll Always Be an England" and "Hearts of Oak," and "Rule Britannia," and sometimes "The Maple Leaf Forever." Bombing raids and battles and sinking ships were the constant, though distant, backdrop of our lives.

And once in a while there was a near strike, frightening but solemn and exhilarating, as when a boy from our town or our street would be killed, and the house where he had lived without having any special wreath or black drapery on it seemed nevertheless to have a special weight inside it, a destiny fulfilled and dragging it down. Though there was nothing special inside it at all, maybe just a car that didn't belong there parked at the curb, showing that some relatives or a minister had come to sit with the bereaved family.

One of the camp Counselors had lost her fiancé in the war and wore his watch—we believed it was his watch—pinned to her blouse. We would like to have felt for her a mournful interest and concern, but she was sharp-voiced and bossy and she even had an unpleasant name. Arva.

The other backdrop of our lives, which was supposed to be emphasized at camp, was religion. But since the United Church of Canada was officially in charge there was not so much harping on that subject as there would have been with the Baptists or the Bible Christians, or so much formal acknowledgment as the Roman Catholics or even the Anglicans would have provided. Most of us had parents who belonged to the United Church (though some of the girls who were having their way paid for them might not have belonged to any church at all), and being used to its hearty secular style, we did not even realize that we were getting off easily with just evening prayers and grace sung at meals and the half-hour special talk—it was called a chat—after breakfast. Even the Chat was relatively free of references to God or Jesus and was more about honesty and loving-kindness and clean thoughts in our daily lives, and promising never to drink or smoke when we grew up. Nobody had any objection to this sort of thing or tried to get out of attending, because it was what we were used to and because it was pleasant to sit on the beach in the warming sun and a little too cold yet for us to long to jump into the water.

Grown-up women do the same sort of thing that Charlene and I did. Not the counting the moles on each other's backs and comparing toe lengths, maybe. But when they meet and feel a particular sympathy with each other they also feel a need to set out the important information, the big events, whether public or secret, and then go ahead to fill in all the blanks between. If they feel this warmth and eagerness it is quite impossible for them to bore each other. They will laugh at the very triviality and silliness of what they're telling, or at the revelation of some appalling selfishness, deception, meanness, sheer badness. There has to be great trust of course, but that trust can be established at once, in an instant.

I've observed this. It's supposed to have begun in those long periods of sitting around the campfire stirring the manioc porridge or whatever, while the men were out in the bush deprived of conversation because it would warn off the wild animals. (I am an an-

ropologist by training, though a ther slack one.) I've observed but ver taken part in these female ex- anges. Not truly. Sometimes I've etended because it seemed to be re- ired, but the woman I was supposed be making friends with always got ind of my pretense and became con- sed and cautious.

As a rule, I've felt less wary with en. They don't expect such transac- ons and are seldom really interested.

This intimacy I'm talking about— ith women—is not erotic, or pre- rotic. I've experienced that as well, efore puberty. Then too there would e confidences, probably lies, maybe ading to games. A certain hot tem- orary excitement, with or without enital teasing. Followed by ill-feeling, enial, disgust.

Charlene did tell me about her rother, but with true repugnance. This vas the brother now in the Navy. She vent into his room looking for her cat nd there he was doing it to his girl- riend. They never knew she saw them.

She said they slapped, as he went up nd down.

You mean they slapped on the bed, said.

No, she said. His thing slapped when it was going in and out. It was sickening.

And his bare white bum had pimples on it. Sickening.

I told her about Verna.

Up until the time I was seven years old my parents had lived in what was called a double house. The word *duplex* was perhaps not in use at that time, and anyway the house was not evenly divided. Verna's grandmother rented the rooms at the back and we rented the rooms at the front. The house was tall and bare and ugly, painted yellow. The town we lived in was too small to have residential divisions that amounted to anything, but I suppose that as far as there were divisions, that house was right on the boundary between decent and fairly dilapidated. I am speaking of the way things were just before the Second World War, at the end of the Depression. (That word, I believe, was unknown to us.)

My father, being a teacher, had a regular job but little money. The street petered out beyond us between the houses of those who had neither. Verna's grandmother must have had a little money because she spoke contemptuously of people who were On Relief. I believe my mother argued with her, unsuccessfully, that it was Not Their Fault. The two women were not particular friends, but they were cordial about clothesline arrangements.

The grandmother's name was Mrs. Home. A man came to see her occasionally. My mother spoke of him as Mrs. Home's friend.

You are not to speak to Mrs. Home's friend.

In fact I was not even allowed to play outside when he came, so there was not much chance of my speaking to him. I don't even remember what he looked like, though I remember his car, which was dark blue, a Ford V-8. I took a special interest in cars, probably because we didn't have one.

Then Verna came.

Mrs. Home spoke of her as her granddaughter and there is no reason to suppose that not to be true, but there was never any sign of a connecting generation. I don't know if Mrs. Home went away and came back with her, or if she was delivered by the friend with the V-8. She appeared in the summer before I was to start school. I can't remember her telling me her name—she was not communicative in the ordinary way and I don't believe I would have asked her. From the very beginning I had an aversion to her unlike anything I had felt up to that time for any other person. I said that I hated her, and my mother said, How can you, what has she ever done to you?

The poor thing.

Children use that word *hate* to mean various things. It may mean that they are frightened. Not that they feel in danger of being attacked—the way I did, for instance, of certain big boys on bicycles who liked to cut in front of you, yelling fearsomely, as you walked on the sidewalk. It is not physical harm that is feared—or that I feared in Verna's case—so much as some spell, or dark intention. It is a feeling you can have when you are very young even about certain house faces, or tree trunks, or very much about moldy cellars or deep closets.

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[redacted] is a good deal taller than I was and I don't know how much older—two years, three years? She was skinny, indeed so narrowly built and with such a small head that she made me think of a snake. Fine black hair lay flat on this head, and fell over her [redacted] head. The skin of her face seemed [redacted] dull to me as the flap of our old [redacted] tent, and her cheeks puffed [redacted] way the flap of that tent [redacted] wind. Her eyes were [redacted] says squin[redacted]

But I believe th[redacted] remarkably unple[redacted] her looks, as other peop[redacted] saw her. Indeed my mother spok[redacted] of her as pretty, or almost pretty (as in, *isn't it too bad, she could be pretty*). Nothing to object to either, as far as my mother could see, in her behavior. *She is young for her age*. A roundabout and inadequate way of saying that Verna had not learned to read or write or skip or play ball, and that her voice was hoarse and unmodulated, her words oddly separated, as if they were chunks of language caught in her throat.

Her way of interfering with me, spoiling my solitary games, was that of an older not a younger girl. But of an older girl who had no skill or rights, nothing but a strenuous determination and an inability to understand that she wasn't wanted.

Children of course are monstrously conventional, repelled at once by whatever is off-center, out-of-whack, unmanageable. And being an only child I had been coddled a good deal (also scolded). I was awkward, precocious, timid, full of my private rituals and aversions. I hated even the celluloid barrette that kept slipping out of Verna's hair, and the peppermints with red or green stripes on them that she kept offering to me. In fact she did more than offer—she would try to catch me and push these candies into my mouth, chuckling all the time in her disconnected way. I dislike peppermint flavoring to this day. And the name Verna—I dislike that. It doesn't sound like spring to me, or like green grass or garlands of flowers or girls in flimsy dresses. It sounds more like a trail of obstinate peppermint, green slime.

I didn't believe my mother really liked Verna either. But because of some hypocrisy in her nature, as I saw it, because of a decision she had made, as it seemed, to spite me, she pre[redacted] [redacted] her. She told [redacted] first she said that [redacted] not be staying long and [redacted] the summer holidays [redacted] ack to wherever she had [redacted] fore. Then, when it became [redacted] that there was nowhere for Verna to go back to, the placating message was that we ourselves would be moving soon. I had only to be kind for a little while longer. (As a matter of fact it was a whole year before we moved.) Finally, out of patience, she said that I was a disappointment to her and that she would never have thought I had so mean a nature.

"How can you blame a person for the way she was born? How is it her fault?"

That made no sense to me. If I had been more skilled at arguing I might have said that I didn't blame Verna, I just did not want her to come near me. But I certainly did blame her. I did not question that it was somehow her fault. And in this, whatever my mother might say, I was in tune to some degree with an unspoken verdict of the time and place I lived in. Even grown-ups smiled in a certain way, there was some irrepressible gratification and taken-for-granted superiority that I could see, in the way they mentioned people who were *simple*, or *a few bricks short of a load*. And I believed my mother must be really like this, underneath.

I started school. Verna started school. She was put into a special class in a special building in a corner of the school grounds. This was actually the original school building in the town, but nobody had any time for local history then, and a few years later it was pulled down. There was a fenced-off corner in which pupils housed in that building spent recess. They went to school a half hour later than we did in the morning and got out a half hour earlier in the afternoon. Nobody was supposed to harass them at recess, but since they usually hung on the fence watching whatever went on in the regular school grounds there would be occasions when there was a rush, a whooping and brandishing of sticks, to scare them. I never went near that corner, hardly ever saw Verna. It was at home I still had to deal with her.

First she would stand at the corner of the yellow house, watching me, and I would pretend that I didn't know she was there. Then she would wander into the front yard, taking up a position on the front steps of the part of the house that was mine. If I wanted to go inside to the bathroom, or because I was cold, I would have to go so close as to touch her and to risk her touching me.

She could stay in one place longer than anybody I ever knew, staring at just one thing. Usually me.

I had a swing hung from a maple tree, so that I either faced the house or the street. That is, I either had to face her or to know that she was staring at my back, and might come up to give me a push. After a while she would decide to do that. She always pushed me crooked, but that was not the worst thing. The worst was that her fingers had pressed my back. Through my coat, through my other clothing, her fingers like so many cold snouts.

Another activity of mine was to build a leaf house. That is, I raked up and carried armloads of leaves fallen from the maple tree that held the swing, and I dumped and arranged these leaves into a house plan. Here was the living room, here was the kitchen, here was a big soft pile for the bed in the bedroom, and so on. I had not invented this occupation—leaf houses of a more expansive sort were laid out, and even in a way furnished, every recess in the girls' playground at school, until the janitor finally raked up all the leaves and burned them.

At first Verna just watched what I was doing, with her squinty-eyed expression of what seemed to me superior (how could she think herself superior?) puzzlement. Then the time came when she moved closer, lifted an armful of leaves that dripped all over because of her uncertainty or clumsiness. And these came not from the pile of spare leaves but from the very wall of my house. She picked them up and carried them a short distance and let them fall—dumped them, in the middle of one of my tidy rooms.

I yelled at her to stop, but she bent to pick up her scattered load again,

d was unable to hang on to them, so e just flung them about and when ey were all on the ground began to ck them foolishly here and there. I as still yelling at her to stop, but this id no effect, or else she took it for en-ouragement. So I lowered my head id ran at her and bunted her in the omach. I was not wearing a cap, so ie hairs of my head came in contact ith the woolly coat or jacket she had n, and it seemed to me that I had ctually touched bristling hairs on the kin of a gross hard belly. I ran hol-ring with complaint up the steps of ie house, and when my mother heard ie story she further maddened me by aying, "She only wants to play. She oesn't know how to *play*."

By the next fall we were in the bun-alow and I never had to go past the ellow house that reminded me so uch of Verna, as if it had positively aken on her narrow slyness, her hreatening squint. The yellow paint eemed to be the very color of insult, nd the front door, being off-center, dded a touch of deformity. The bun-galow was only three blocks away from hat house, close to the school. But ny idea of the town's size and com-plexity was still such that it seemed I was escaping Verna altogether. I real-zed that this was not true, not alto-gether true, when a schoolmate and I came face to face with her one day on the main street. We must have been sent on some errand by one of our mothers. I did not look up but I be-lieved I heard a chuckle of greeting or recognition as we passed.

The other girl said a horrifying thing to me.

She said, "I used to think that was your sister."

"What?"

"Well I knew you lived in the same house, so I thought you must be related. Like cousins, anyway. Aren't you? Cousins?"

"*No.*"

The old building where the Special Classes had been held was condemned, and its pupils were transferred to the Bible Chapel, now rented on week-days by the town. The Bible Chapel happened to be across the street and around a corner from the bungalow where my mother and father and I now lived. There were a couple of ways that Verna could have walked to school but the way she chose was past our house. And our house was only a few feet from the sidewalk, so this meant that her shadow could practically fall across our steps. If she wished she could kick pebbles onto our grass, and unless we kept the blinds down she could peer into our hall and front room.

The hours of the Special Classes had been changed to coincide with ordinary school hours, at least in the morning—they still went home earlier in the afternoon. Once they were in the Bible Chapel it must have been felt that there was no need to keep them free of the rest of us on the way to school. This meant, now, that I had a chance of running into Verna on the sidewalk. I would always look in the direction from which she might be coming, and if I saw her I would duck back into the house with the excuse that I had forgotten something, or that one of my shoes was rubbing my heel and needed a plaster, or a ribbon was coming loose on my hair. I would never have been so foolish now as to mention Verna and hear my mother say, "What's the problem, what are you afraid of, do you think she's going to eat you?"

What was the problem? Contamination, infection? Verna was decently clean and healthy. And it was hardly likely that she was going to attack and pummel me or pull out my hair. But only adults would be so stupid as to believe she had no power. A power, moreover, that was specifically directed at me. I was the one she had her eye on. Or so I believed. As if we had an understanding between us that could not be described and was not to be disposed of. Something that clings, in the way of love, though on my side it felt like hate.

When I told Charlene about her we had got into the deeper reaches of our conversation—that conversation that seems to have been broken only when we swam or slept. Verna was not so solid an offering, not so vividly repulsive as Charlene's brother's pimpled bum, and I remember saying that she was awful in a way that I could not describe. But then I did describe her, and my feelings about her, and I must have done not too bad a job, because one day towards the end of our two-week stay at camp Charlene came rushing into the dining hall at midday, her face lit up with horror and strange delight.

"She's here. She's here. That girl. That awful girl. Verna. She's *here*."

Lunch was over. We were in the process of tidying up, putting our plates and mugs on the kitchen shelf to be grabbed away and washed by the girls on kitchen duty that day. Then we would line up to go to the Tuck Shop, which opened every day at one o'clock. Charlene had just run back to the dormitory to get some money. Being rich, with a father who was an undertaker, she was rather careless, keeping money in her pillowcase. Except when swimming I always had mine on my person. All of us who could in any way afford to went to the Tuck Shop after lunch, to get something to take away the taste of the desserts we hated but always tried, just to see if they were as disgusting as we expected. Tapioca pudding, mushy baked apples, slimy custard.

Verna? How could Verna be here?

This must have been a Friday. Two more days at camp, two more days to go. And it turned out that a contingent of Specials—here too they were called Specials—had been brought in to enjoy with us the final weekend. Not many of them—maybe twenty altogether—and not all from my town but from other towns nearby. In fact as Charlene was trying to get the news through to me a whistle was being blown, and Counselor Arva had jumped up on a bench to address us.

She said that she knew we would all do our best to make these visitors—these new campers—welcome, and that they had brought their own tents and their own Counselor with them. But they would eat and swim and play games and attend the Morning Circle with the rest of us. She was sure, she said, with that familiar warning or upbraiding note in her voice that we would all treat this as an opportunity to make new friends.

It took some time [illegible] and these new [illegible] sessions settled. Some apparently took no interest and [illegible] off and had to be called [illegible] back. Since

it was our free time, or Rest Time, we got our chocolate bars or licorice whips or sponge toffee from the Tuck Shop and went to lie on our bunks and enjoy them.

Charlene kept saying, "Imagine. Imagine. She's here. I can't believe it. Do you think she followed you?"

"Probably," I said.

"Do you think I can always hide you like that?"

When we were in the Tuck Shop line I had ducked my head and made Charlene get between me and the Specials as they were being herded by. I had taken one peek and recognized Verna from behind. Her drooping snaky head.

"We should think of some way to disguise you."

From what I had said, Charlene seemed to have got the idea that Verna had actively harassed me. And I believed that was true, except that the harassment had been more subtle, more secret, than I had been able to describe. Now I let Charlene think as she liked because it was more exciting that way.

Verna did not spot me immediately, because of the elaborate dodges Charlene and I kept making, and perhaps because she was rather dazed, as most of the Specials appeared to be, trying to figure out what they were doing here. They were soon taken off to their own swimming class, at the far end of the beach.

At the supper table they were marched in while we sang.

"*The more we get together, together, together,*

The more we get together,

The happier we'll be."

They were then deliberately separated, and distributed among the rest of us. They all wore nametags. Across from me there was one named Mary Ellen something, not from my town. But I had hardly time to be glad of that when I saw Verna at the next table, taller than those around her but thank God facing the same way I was so she could not see me during the meal.

She was the tallest of them, and yet not so tall, not so notable a presence, as I remembered her. The reason was probably that I had had a growing spurt during the last year, while she had perhaps stopped her growing altogether.

After the meal, when we stood up and collected our dishes, I kept my head bowed, I never looked in her direction, and yet I knew when her eyes rested on me, when she recognized me, when she smiled her sagging little smile or made that odd chuckle in her throat.

"She's seen you," said Charlene. "Don't look. Don't look. I'll get between you and her. Move. Keep moving."

"Is she coming this way?"

"No. She's just standing there. She's just looking at you."

"Smiling?"

"Sort of."

"I can't look at her. I'd be sick."

How much did she persecute me in the remaining day and a half? Charlene and I used that word constantly, though in fact Verna never got near us. *Persecute*. It had an adult, legal sound. We were always on the lookout, as if we were being stalked, or I was. We tried to keep track of Verna's whereabouts, and Charlene reported on her attitude or expression. I did risk looking at her a couple of times, when Charlene had said, "Okay. She won't notice now."

At those times Verna appeared slightly cast down, or sullen, or bewildered, as if, like most of the Specials, she had been set adrift and did not completely understand where she was or what she was doing there. Some of them had caused a commotion by wandering away into the pine and cedar and poplar woods on the bluff behind the beach, or along the sandy road that led to the highway. After that a meeting was called, and we were all asked to watch out for our new friends, who were not so familiar with the place as we were. Charlene poked me in the ribs at that. She of course was not aware of any change, any falling away of confidence or even a diminishing of physical size in this Verna, and she continually reported on her sly and evil expression, her look of menace. And maybe she was right—maybe Verna saw in Charlene, this new friend or bodyguard of mine, this stranger, some sign of how everything was changed and uncertain here, and that made her scowl, though I didn't see it.

"You never told me about her hands," said Charlene.

"What about them?"

"She's got the longest fingers I have ever seen. She could just twist them round your neck and strangle you. She could. Wouldn't it be awful to be in a tent with her at night?"

I said that it would be. Awful.

There was a change, that last weekend, a whole different feeling in the camp. Nothing drastic. The meals were announced by the dining-room gong at the regular times, and the food served did not improve or deteriorate. Rest time arrived, game time and swimming time. The Tuck Shop operated as usual and we were drawn together as always for the Chat. But there was an air of growing restlessness and inattention. You could detect it even in the Counselors, who might not have the same reprimands or words of encouragement on the tip of their tongues and would look at you for a second as if recalling what it was they usually said. And all this seemed to have begun with the arrival of the Specials. Their presence had changed the camp. There had been a real camp before, with all its rules and deprivations and enjoyments set up, as inevitable as school or any part of a child's life, and then it had begun to crumple at the edges, to reveal itself as something provisional. Playacting.

Was it because we could look at the Specials and think that if they could be campers, then there was no such thing as real campers? Partly it was that. But it was partly that the time was coming very soon when all this would be over, the routines would be broken up and we would be fetched by our parents to resume our old lives, and the Counselors would go back to being ordinary people, not even teachers. We were living in a stage set about to be dismantled, and with it all the friendships, enmities, rivalries that had flourished in the last two weeks. Who could believe it had been only two weeks?

Nobody knew how to speak of this, but a lassitude spread among us, a bored ill-temper, and even the weather reflected this feeling. It was probably not true that every day during the past two weeks had been hot and sunny, but most of us would certainly go away with that impression. And now, on Sunday morning, there was a change.

While we were having the Outdoor evotions (that was what we had on ındays instead of the Chat) the ouds darkened. There was no change temperature—if anything, the heat the day increased, but there was in ıe air what some people called the nell of a storm. And yet such stillness. he Counselors, and even the Minis- r who drove out on Sundays from ıe nearest town, looked up occasion- lly and warily at the sky.

A few drops did fall, but no more. he service came to its end and no torm had broken. The clouds grew omewhat lighter, not so much as to romise sunshine but enough so that ur last swim would not have to be can- eled. After that there would be no unch—the kitchen had been closed lown after breakfast. The shutters on he Tuck Shop would not be opened. Our parents would begin arriving short- y after noon to take us home, and the us would come for the Specials. Most f our things were already packed, the heets were stripped and the rough rown blankets, which always felt clam- my, were folded across the foot of each ot. Even when it was full of us, chat- tering and changing into our bathing suits, the inside of the dormitory cabin revealed itself as makeshift and gloomy.

It was the same with the beach. There appeared to be less sand than usual, more stones. And what sand there was seemed gray. The water looked as if it might be cold though in fact it was quite warm. Nevertheless our enthusiasm for swimming had waned and most of us were wading about aimlessly. The Swimming Counselors—Pauline and the middle-aged woman in charge of the Specials—had to clap their hands at us.

"Hurry up, what are you waiting for? Last chance this summer."

There were good swimmers among us who usually struck out at once for the raft. And all who were even passable swimmers—that included Charlene and me—were supposed to swim out to the raft at least once and turn around and swim back, in order to prove that we could swim at least a couple of yards in water over our heads. Pauline would usually swim out there right away, and stay in the deeper water, to watch out for anybody who got into trouble and also to make sure that everybody who was supposed to do the swim had done it. On this day, however, fewer swimmers than usual seemed to be doing as they were supposed to, and Pauline herself after her first cries of encouragement or exasperation was just bobbing around the raft laughing with and teasing the faithful ones who had made their way out there. Most of us were still paddling around in the shallows, swimming a few feet or yards, then standing on the bottom and splashing each other or turning over and doing the dead man's float, as if swimming was something hardly anybody could be bothered with anymore. The woman in charge of the Specials was standing where the water came barely up to her knees—most of the Specials themselves went no farther than where the water came up to *their* knees—and the top part of her flowered skirted bathing suit had not even got wet. She was bending over and making little handsplashes at her charges, laughing and telling them *isn't this fun*.

The water Charlene and I were in was probably up to our chests and no more. We were in the ranks of the silly swimmers, doing the dead man's float, and flopping about backstroking or breaststroking, with nobody telling us to stop fooling around. We were trying to see how long we could keep our eyes open under water, we were sneaking up and jumping on each other's back. All around us were plenty of others yelling and screeching with laughter as they did the same things.

During this swim some parents or collectors of campers had arrived early, and let it be known they had no time to waste, so the campers who belonged to them were being summoned from the water. This made for some extra calling and confusion.

"Look. Look," said Charlene. Or sputtered, in fact, because I had pushed her underwater and she had just come up soaked and spitting. I looked, and there was Verna making her way towards us, wearing a pale-blue rubber bathing cap, slapping at the water with her long hands and smiling, as if her rights over me had suddenly been restored.

I have not kept up with Charlene. I don't even remember how we said good-bye. If we said good-bye. I have





a notion that both sets of parents arrived at around the same time and that we scrambled into separate cars and gave ourselves over—what else could we do?—to our old lives. Charlene's parents would certainly have had a car not so shabby and noisy and unreliable as the one my parents now owned, but even if that had not been so we would never have thought of making the two sets of relatives acquainted with each other. Everybody, and we ourselves, would have been in a hurry to get off, to leave behind the pockets of uproar about lost property or who had or had not met their relatives or boarded the bus.

By chance, years later, I saw her wedding picture. This was at a time when wedding pictures were still published in the newspapers, not just in small towns but in the city papers as well. I saw it in a Toronto paper I was looking through while I waited for a friend in a café on Bloor Street.

The wedding had taken place in Guelph. The groom was a native of Toronto and a graduate of Osgoode Hall. He was quite tall—or else Charlene had turned out to be quite short. She barely came up to his shoulder, even with her hair done up in the dense, polished helmet-style of the day. The hair made her face seem squashed and insignificant, but I got the impression her eyes were outlined heavily, Cleopatra fashion, her lips pale. This sounds grotesque, but it was certainly the look admired at the time. All that reminded me of her childself was the little humorous bump of her chin.

She—the bride, it said—had graduated from St. Hilda's College, in Toronto.

So she must have been here in Toronto, going to St. Hilda's, while I was in the same city, going to University College. We had been walking around perhaps at the same time and on some of the same streets or paths on the campus. And never met. I did not think that she would have seen me and avoided speaking to me. I would not have avoided speaking to her. Of course I would have considered myself a more serious student, once I discovered she was going to St. Hilda's. My friends and I regarded St. Hilda's as a Ladies College.

Now I was a graduate student in anthropology. I had decided never to get married, though I did not rule out having lovers. I wore my hair long and straight—my friends and I were anticipating the style of the hippies. My memories of childhood were much more distant and faded and unimportant than they seem today.

I could have written to Charlene, in care of her parents, whose Guelph address had been published in the paper. But I didn't do so. I would have thought it the height of hypocrisy to congratulate any woman on the occasion of her marriage.

But she wrote to me, perhaps fifteen years later. She wrote in care of my publishers.

"My old pal Marlene," she wrote. "How excited and happy I was to see your name in *Maclean's* magazine. And how dazzled I am to think you have written a book. I have not picked it up yet because we have been away on holidays but I mean to do so—and read it too—as soon as I can. I was just going through the magazines that had accumulated in our absence and there I saw the striking picture of you and the interesting review. And I thought that I must write and congratulate you.

"Perhaps you are married but use your maiden name to write under? Perhaps you have a family? Do write and tell me all about yourself. Sadly, I am childless, but I keep busy with volunteer work, gardening and sailing with Kit (my husband). There always seems to be plenty to do. I am presently serving on the Library Board and will twist their arms if they have not already ordered your book.

"Congratulations again. I must say I was surprised but not entirely because I always suspected you might do something special."

I did not get in touch with her at that time either. There seemed to be no point to it. At first I took no notice of the word "special" right at the end but it gave me a small jolt when I thought of it later. However, I told myself, and still believe, that she meant nothing by it.

The book that she referred to was one that had grown out of a thesis I had been discouraged from writing. I went ahead and wrote another thesis but went back to the earlier one a sort of hobby project when I had tu I have collaborated on a couple books since then, as was duly expec ed of me, but that book I did on n own is the only one that got me small flurry of attention in the ou side world (and needless to say son disapproval from colleagues). It is o of print now. It was called *Imbecil and Idols*—a title I would never ge away with today and that even the made my publishers nervous, thoug it was admitted to be catchy.

What I was trying to explore was th attitude of people in various cultures—t one does not dare say the word *primitiv* to describe such cultures—the attitud towards people who are mentally o physically unique. The words *deficient handicapped*, *retarded*, being of course also consigned to the dustbin and prob ably for good reason—not simply be cause such words may indicate a supe rior attitude and habitual unkindness but because they are not truly descrip tive. Those words push aside a good deal that is remarkable, even awe some—another word to go by the boards—or at any rate peculiarly pow erful, in such people. And what was in teresting was to discover a certain amount of veneration as well as perse cution, and the ascribing—not entire ly inaccurately—of quite a range of abil ities, seen as sacred, magical, dangerous, or valuable. I did the best I could with historical as well as contemporary re search and took into account poetry and fiction and of course religious cus tom. Naturally I was criticized in my profession for being too literary and for getting all my information out of books, but I could not run around the world then. I had not been able to get a grant.

Of course I could see a connection, a connection that I thought it just possible Charlene might get to see, too. It's strange how distant and unimportant that seemed, only a starting point. As anything in childhood appeared to me then. Because of the journey I had made since, the achievement of adulthood. Safety.

Maiden name, Charlene had written. That was an expression I had not heard for quite a while. It is next door to *maiden lady*, which sounds so chaste and sad. And remarkably inappropriate in my case. Even when I looked at

harlene's wedding picture I was not a rgin—though I don't suppose she was ther. Not that I have had a swarm of vers—or would even want to call ost of them *lovers*. Like most women my age group who have not lived in monogamous marriage, I know the mber. Sixteen. I'm sure that for many unger women that total would have en reached before they were out of eir twenties or possibly out of their ens. (When I got Charlene's letter, of urse, the total would have been less. cannot—this is true—I cannot be othered getting that straight now.) hree of them were important and all ree of those were in the chronologcal first half-dozen of the count. What mean by "important" is that with hose three—no, only two, the third eaning a great deal more to me than to him—with those two, then, the imes would come when you want to plit open, surrender far more than your ody, dump your whole life into one asket with his.

I kept myself from doing so, but just barely.

Not long ago I got another letter. This was forwarded from the college where I taught before I retired. I found it waiting when I returned from a trip to Patagonia. (I have become a hardy traveler.) It was over a month old.

A typed letter—a fact for which the writer immediately apologized.

"My handwriting is lamentable," he wrote, and went on to introduce himself as the husband of "your old childhood buddy, Charlene." He said that he was sorry, very sorry, to send me bad news. Charlene was in Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. Her cancer had begun in the lungs and spread to the liver. She had, regrettably, been a lifelong smoker. She had only a short time left to live. She had not spoken of me very often but when she did, over the years, it was always with delight in my remarkable accomplishments. He knew how much she valued me and now at the end of her life she seemed very keen to see me. She had asked him to get hold of me.

Well she is probably dead by now, I thought.

But if she was—this is how I worked things out—if she was, I would run no risk in going to the hospital and inquiring. Then my conscience or whatever you wanted to call it would be clear. I could write him a note saying that unfortunately I had been away, but had come as soon as I could.

No. Better not a note. He might show up in my life, thanking me. The word *buddy* made me uncomfortable.

So in a different way did *remarkable accomplishments*.

Princess Margaret Hospital is only a few blocks away from my apartment building. On a sunny spring day I walked over there. I don't know why I didn't just phone. Perhaps I wanted to think I'd made as much effort as I could.

At the main desk I discovered that Charlene was still alive. When asked if I wanted to see her I could hardly say no.

I went up in the elevator still thinking that I might be able to turn away, before I found the nurses' station on her floor. Or that I might make a simple U-turn, taking the next elevator down. The receptionist at the main desk downstairs would never notice my leaving. As a matter of fact she would not have noticed my leaving the moment she had turned her attention to the next person in line, and even if she had noticed, what would it have mattered?

I would have been ashamed, I suppose. Not ashamed at my lack of feeling so much as at my lack of fortitude.

I stopped at the nurses' station and was given the number of the room.

It was a private room, quite a small room, with no impressive apparatus or flowers or balloons. At first I could not see Charlene. A nurse was bending over the bed in which there seemed to be a mound of bedclothes but no visible person. The enlarged liver, I thought, and wished I had run while I could.

The nurse straightened up, turned, and smiled at me. She was a plump brown woman who spoke in a soft beguiling voice that might have meant she came from the West Indies.

"You are the Marlin," she said.

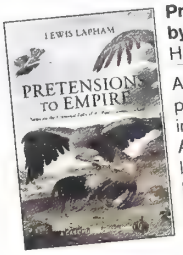
Something in the word seemed to delight her.

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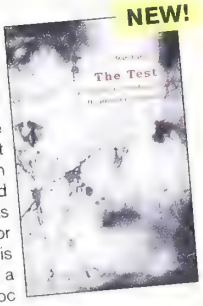


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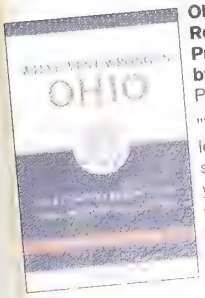
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"She was so wanting for you to come. You can come closer."

I obeyed, and looked down at a bloated body and a sharp ruined face, a chicken's neck for which the hospital gown was a mile too wide. A frizz of hair—still brown—about a quarter of an inch long on her scalp. No sign of Charlene.

I had seen the faces of dying people before. The faces of my mother and father, even the face of the man I had been afraid to love. I was not surprised.

"She is sleeping now," said the nurse. "She was so hoping you would come."

"She's not unconscious?"

"No. But she sleeps."

Yes there was, I saw it now, there was a sign of Charlene. What was it? Maybe a twitch, that confident playful tucking away of a corner of her mouth.

The nurse was speaking to me in her soft happy voice. "I don't know if she would recognize you," she said. "But she hoped you would come. There is something for you."

"Will she wake up?"

A shrug. "We have to give her injections often for the pain."

She was opening the bedside table.

"Here. This. She told me to give it to you if it was too late for her. She did not want her husband to give it. Now you are here, she would be glad."

A sealed envelope with my name on it, printed in shaky capital letters.

"Not her husband," the nurse said, with a twinkle, then a broadening smile. Did she scent something illicit, a women's secret, an old love?

"Come back tomorrow," she said. "Who knows? I will tell her if it is possible."

I read the note as soon as I got down to the lobby. Charlene had managed to write in an almost normal script, not wildly as in the sprawling letters on the envelope. Of course she might have written the note first and put it in the envelope, then sealed the envelope and put it by, thinking she would get to hand it to me herself. Only later would she see a need to put my name on it.

Marlene. I am writing this in case I get too far gone to speak. Please do what I ask you. Please go to Guelph and go to the church and ask Father Hofstrader. Church of Our Lady Immaculate. Must be personal they may open his mail. Father Hofstrader. This I cannot ask C and do not want him ever to know. Father H knows and I have asked him and he says it is possible to save me. Only I left so late. Marlene please do this bless you. Nothing about you.

C. That must be her husband. He doesn't know. Of course he doesn't.

Father Hofstrader.

Nothing about me.

I was free to crumple this up and throw it away once I got out into the street. And so I did, I threw the envelope away and let the wind sweep it into the gutter on University Avenue. Then I realized the note was not in the envelope, it was still in my pocket.

I would never go to the hospital again.

Kit was her husband's name. Now I remembered. They went sailing. Christoper. Kit.

When I got back to my apartment building I found myself taking the elevator down to the garage, not up to my apartment. Dressed just as I was, I got into my car and drove out onto the street, and began to head towards the Gardiner Expressway.

The Gardiner Expressway, Highway 427, Highway 401. It was rush hour now, a bad time to get out of the city. I hate this sort of driving, I don't do it often enough to be confident. There was under half a tank of gas, and what was more, I had to go to the bathroom. Around Milton, I thought, I could pull off the highway and fill up on gas and use the toilet and reconsider. At present I could do nothing but what I was doing, heading north, then heading west.

I didn't get off. I passed the Mississauga exit and the Milton exit. I saw a highway sign telling me how many kilometers to Guelph, and I translated that roughly into miles in my head, as I always have to do, and I figured the gas would hold out. The excuse I made to myself for not stopping was that the sun would be getting lower and more troublesome, now that we were leaving the faint haze that lies over the city even on the finest day.

At the first stop after I took the Guelph turnoff I got out and walked to the ladies' washroom with stiff trembling legs. Afterwards I filled the tank with gas and asked, when I paid, for directions to the church. The directions were not very clear but I was told that it was on a big hill and I could find it from anywhere in the heart of town.

Of course that was not true, though. I could see it from almost anywhere. A collection of delicate spires rising from four fine towers. A beautiful building where I had expected only a grand one. It was grand, too, of course, a grand dominating church for such a relatively small city.

Could that have been where Charlene was married?

No. Of course not. She had been sent to a United Church camp, and there were no Catholic girls at that camp though there was quite a variety of Protestants. And then there was the business about C not knowing.

She might have converted secretly. Since.

I found my way in time to the church parking lot, and sat there wondering what I should do. I was wearing slacks and a jacket. My idea of what was required in a Catholic church were so antiquated that I was not even sure if my outfit would be all right. I tried to recall visits to great churches in Europe. Something about the arms being covered? Head scarves, skirts?

What a bright high silence there was up on this hill. April, not a leaf out yet on the trees, but the sun after all was still well up in the sky. There was one low bank of snow as gray as the paving in the church lot.

The jacket I had on was too light for evening wear, or maybe it was colder here, the wind stronger, than in Toronto.

The building might well be locked, at this time, locked and empty.

The grand front doors appeared to be so. I did not even bother to climb the steps to try them, because I decided to follow a couple of old women—old like me—who had just come up the long flight from the street and who bypassed those steps entirely, heading around to an easier entrance at the side of the building.

There were more people inside, maybe two or three dozen people, but

ere wasn't a sense that they were hered for a service. They were scated here and there in the pews, some eeling and some chatting. The omen ahead of me dipped their nds in a marble font without looking at what they were doing and said llo—hardly lowering their voices—a man who was setting out baskets a table.

"It looks a lot warmer out than it " said one of them, and the man said e wind would bite your nose off.

I recognized the confessionals. ke separate small cottages or large ayhouses in a Gothic style, with a t of dark wooden carving, dark rown curtains. Elsewhere all was owing, dazzling. The high curved eiling most celestially blue, the low- curves of the ceiling—those that oined the upright walls—decorated ith holy images on gold-painted nedallions. Stained-glass windows it by the sun at this time of day ere turned into columns of jewels. I nade my way discreetly down one isle, trying to get a look at the altar, ut the chancel, being in the west- rn wall, was too bright for me to ook into. Above the windows, hough, I saw that there were paint- d angels. Flocks of angels, all fresh nd gauzy and pure as light.

It was a most insistent place but nobody seemed to be overwhelmed by all the insistence. The chatting adies kept chatting softly but not in whispers. And other people, after some businesslike nodding and crossing, knelt down and went about their business.

As I ought to be going about mine. I looked around for a priest but there was not one in sight. Priests as well as other people must have a working day. They must drive home and go into their living rooms or offices or dens and turn on the television and loosen their collars. Fetch a drink and wonder if they were going to get anything decent for supper. When they did come into the church they would come officially. In their vestments ready to perform some ceremony. Mass.

Or to hear confessions. But then you would never know when they were there. Didn't they enter and leave their grilled stalls by a private door?

I would have to ask somebody. The man who had distributed the baskets seemed to be here for reasons that were not purely private though he was apparently not an usher. Nobody needed an usher. People chose where they wanted to sit—or kneel—and sometimes decided to get up and choose another spot, perhaps being bothered by the glare of the jewel-inflaming sun. When I spoke to him I whispered, out of old habit in a church—and he had to ask me to speak again. Puzzled or embarrassed, he nodded in a wobbly way towards one of the confessionals. I had to become very specific and convincing.

"No, no. I just want to talk to a priest. I've been sent to talk to a priest. A priest called Father Hofstrader."

The basket man disappeared down the more distant side aisle and came back in a little while with a briskly moving stout young priest in ordinary black costume.

He motioned me into a room I had not noticed—not a room actually, we went through an archway, not a doorway—at the back of the church.

"Give us a chance to talk, in here," he said, and pulled out a chair for me.

"Father Hofstrader—"

"Oh no, I must tell you, I am not Father Hofstrader. Father Hofstrader is not here. He is on vacation."

For a moment I did not know how to proceed.

"I will do my best to help you."

"There is a woman," I said, "a woman who is dying in Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto—"

"Yes, yes. We know of Princess Margaret Hospital."

"She asks me—I have a note from her here—She wants to see Father Hofstrader."

"Is she a member of this parish?"

"I don't know. I don't know if she is a Catholic or not. She is from here. From Guelph. She is a friend I have not seen for a long time."

"When did you talk with her?"

I had to explain that I hadn't talked with her, she had been asleep, but she had left the note for me.

"But you don't know if she is a Catholic?"

He had a cracked sore at the corner of his mouth. It must have been painful for him to talk.

"I think she is, but her husband isn't and he doesn't know she is. She doesn't want him to know."

I said this in the hope of making things clearer, even though I didn't know for sure if it was true. I had an idea that this priest might shortly lose interest altogether. "Father Hofstrader must have known all this," I said.

"You didn't speak with her?"

I said that she had been under medication but that this was not the case all the time and I was sure she would have periods of lucidity. This too I stressed because I thought it necessary.

"If she wishes to make a confession, you know, there are priests available at Princess Margaret's."

I could not think of what else to say. I got out the note, smoothed the paper, and handed it to him. I saw that the handwriting was not as good as I had thought. It was legible only in comparison to the letters on the envelope.

He made a troubled face.

"Who is this C?"

"Her husband." I was worried that he might ask for the husband's name, to get in touch with him, but instead he asked for Charlene's. This woman's name, he said.

"Charlene Sullivan." It was a wonder that I even remembered the surname. And I was reassured for a moment, because it was a name that sounded Catholic. Of course that meant that it was the husband who could be Catholic. But the priest might conclude that the husband had lapsed, and that would surely make Charlene's secrecy more understandable, her message more urgent.

"Why does she need Father Hofstrader?"

"I think perhaps it's something special."

"All confessions are special."

He made a move to get up but I stayed where I was. He sat down again.

"Father Hofstrader is [illegible] but he is not out [illegible] I could phone and ask h[illegible] if you insist."

"Yes. Please."

"I do not [illegible] He has not been well."

I said that if he was not well enough

to drive himself to Toronto I could drive him.

"We can take care of his transportation if necessary."

He looked around and did not see what he wanted, unclipped a pen from his pocket, and then decided that the blank side of the note would do to write on.

"If you'll just make sure I've got the name. Charlotte—"

"Charlene."

Was I not tempted, during all this palaver? Not once? Not swayed by longing, by a magic-lantern show, the promise of pardon? No. Not really. It's not for me. What's done is done, what's done remains. Flocks of angels, tears of blood, notwithstanding.

I sat in the car without thinking to turn the motor on, though it was freezing cold by now. I didn't know what to do next. That is, I knew what I could do. Find my way to the highway and join the bright everlasting flow of cars towards Toronto. Or find a place to stay overnight, if I did not think I had the strength to drive. Most places would provide you with a toothbrush, or direct you to a machine where you could get one. I knew what was necessary and possible, but it was beyond my strength, for the moment, to do it.

The motorboats on the lake were supposed to stay a good distance out from the shore. And especially from our camping area, so that the waves they raised would not disturb our swimming. But on that last morning, that Sunday morning, a couple of them started a race and circled close in—not as close as the raft of course, but close enough to raise waves. The raft was tossed around, and Pauline's voice was lifted in a cry of reproach and dismay. The boats made far too much noise for their drivers to hear her, and they had already set a big wave rolling towards the shore, causing most of us in the shallows either to jump with it or be tumbled off our feet.

Charlene and I both lost our footing. We had our backs to the raft, because we were watching Verna come towards us. We were standing in water about up to our armpits, and we seemed to be lifted and tossed at the same moment that we heard Pauline's cry. We may have cried out as many others did, first in fear and then in delight as we regained our footing and that wave washed on ahead of us. The waves that followed proved to be not as strong, so that we could hold ourselves against them.

At the moment we tumbled, Verna had pitched towards us. When we came up, with our faces streaming, arms flailing, she was spread out under the surface of the water. There was a tumult of screaming and shouting all around, and this increased as the lesser waves arrived and people who had somehow missed the first attack pretended to be knocked over by the second. Verna's head did not break the surface, though now she was not inert but turning in a leisurely way, light as a jellyfish in the water. Charlene and I had our hands on her, on her rubber cap.

This could have been an accident. As if we, in trying to get our balance, grabbed on to this nearby large rubbery object, hardly realizing what it was or what we were doing. I have thought it all out. I think we would have been forgiven. Young children. Terrified.

Is this in any way true? It is true in the sense that we did not decide anything, in the beginning. We did not look at each other and decide to do what we subsequently and consciously did. Consciously, because our eyes did meet as the head of Verna tried to rise up to the surface of the water. Her head was determined to rise, like a dumpling in a stew. The rest of her was making misguided feeble movements down in the water, but the head knew what it should do. We might have lost our grip on the rubber head, the rubber cap, were it not for the raised pattern that made it less slippery. I can recall the color perfectly, the pale insipid blue, but I never deciphered the pattern—a fish, a mermaid, a flower—whose ridges pushed into my palms.

Charlene and I kept our eyes on each other then, rather than looking down at what our hands were doing. Her eyes were wide and gleeful, as I suppose mine were too. I don't think we felt wicked, triumphing in our wickedness. More as if we were doing just what was—amazingly—demanded of us, as if this was the absolute high point, the culmination, in our lives of our being ourselves.

The whole business probably took no more than two minutes. Three? Or a minute and a half?

It seems too much to say that the discouraging clouds cleared up just at that time, but at some point—perhaps at the trespass of the motorboats, or when Pauline screamed, or when the first wave hit, or when the rubber object under our palms ceased to have a will of its own—the sun burst out, and more parents popped up on the beach, and there were calls to all of us to stop horsing around and come out of the water. Swimming was over. Over for the summer, for those who lived out of reach of the lake or municipal swimming pools. Private pools were only in the movie magazines.

As I've said, my memory fails when it comes to parting from Charlene, getting into my parents' car. Because it didn't matter. At that age, things ended. You expected things to end.

I am sure we never said anything as banal, as insulting or unnecessary, as *Don't tell.*

I can imagine the unease starting, but not spreading quite so fast as it might have if there had not been competing dramas. A child has lost a sandal, one of the youngest children is screaming that she got sand in her eye from the waves. Almost certainly a child is throwing up, because of the excitement in the water or the excitement of families arriving or the too-swift consumption of contraband candy. And the anxiety running through this, that someone is missing.

"Who?"

"One of the Specials."

"Oh drat. Wouldn't you know."

The woman in charge of the Specials running around, still in her flowered bathing suit, with the custard flesh wobbling on her thick arms and legs. Her voice wild and weepy.

Somebody go check in the woods, run up the trail, call her name.

"What is her name?"

"Verna."

"Wait."

"What?"

"Is that not something out there in the water?" ■

NEW BOOKS

By John Leonard



When Ayaan Hirsi Ali was five years old, it wasn't her father who did her wrong; he was in prison for his politics. Nor was it her mother, who was off on a trip. It was her grandmother, the one who used to tell her stories, on a grass mat under a talal tree in dusty Mogadishu, about hyenas and snakes in the Somali desert, about the great clan of the Darod and He Who Rubs Himself with a Stick. In the absence of Ayaan's parents, Granny arranged for a stranger from the blacksmith clan to cut off the girl's inner labia and clitoris with a pair of scissors—"like a butcher snipping the fat off a piece of meat." The terror palpable early on in Hirsi Ali's mesmerizing memoir, INFIDEL (Free Press, $26), then goes underground for years and pages, subconscious and subcutaneous, like radioactive dye waiting for magnetic resonance.

You will recall Alice Walker's furious novel about genital mutilation, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, in which Cleopatra, Nefertiti, and Carl Jung were enlisted to overthrow a patriarchal god. But because Hirsi Ali is as gorgeous as she is controversial, her true-life "Up from Islam" story is also the stuff of *Marie Claire* magazine covers. She spent her childhood and adolescence in a refugee's flux and reflux, between civil wars, petty despotisms, and parental abandonments, in Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, trying hard in her *hijab* to believe in "the beauty of obedience and submission," while sneaking off to Bollywood epics, devouring romance novels and trashy thrillers, and entertaining doubts about a tradition that advised her to make herself sexually available to her future husband "even on the saddle of a camel." She fled a forced marriage in 1992, running all the way to Holland, where she earned a degree in political science, did social work among immigrant Muslim women, got elected to parliament, and opposed any Dutch appeasement of radical Islam.

From dismay at specific Muslim regimes and cultural practices (such as honor killings), she graduated to a general disdain for the Koran ("It spreads a culture that is brutal, bigoted, fixated on controlling women") and the Prophet ("By adhering to His rules of what is permitted and what is forbidden, Muslims suppressed the freedom to think for ourselves and to act as we chose. We froze the moral outlook of billions of people into the mind-set of the Arab desert in the seventh century"). She wrote the screenplay for *Submission: Part One*, Theo van Gogh's short TV film featuring women who described their abuse by Muslim men while revealing Koranic verses written on their bodies. The fanatic who murdered van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004 left a letter stabbed to his chest, promising that Hirsi Ali would be next. Her neighbors wanted her evicted, for fear of the violence she attracted. And last spring the immigration minister she considered an ally tried to deport her for having lied on her original application for asylum.

No wonder she quits Europe for the American Enterprise Institute. Fed up with the "slow and frustrating" legislative process, impatient with the minutiae of agriculture and transportation policies, disgusted by "media frenzies," and resentful of the "ridiculous amounts of energy" wasted on "building coalitions with people who accepted my ideas but wouldn't vote with me," she needed a tank in which to think. We should be grateful she published *Infidel* before going into that tank. We're encouraged to admire her courage and [illegible] marvel at her steely feminist self-creation, to mourn her sister and [illegible] mother, and share her [illegible] believers on a misogynist [illegible], while reserving for another time our qualms



Sahara, by Firyal Al-Adhamy © Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library; *Hyena*, from *Drawings of Animals, Insects, and Reptiles from Malacca*, c. 1805–1818 © Royal Asiatic Society, London/Bridgeman Art Library

about her crude stereotyping of all Muslims and most liberals, our doubts about [illegible] she keeps, and our misgivings about a geopolitics of religious profiling—of borders closed except to mandarins and supermodels. Nor am I persuaded that Western secular ideas of tolerance, forgiveness, and respect are as jellyfishy as her quick but simple mind imagines them to be.

That the West has a lot to forgive and forget is blue-sky clear in Giles Tremlett's [illegible] (Walker, $26.95). Tremlett, Madrid correspondent for the *Guardian*, went native almost immediately upon his arrival in Spain twenty years ago. He wants us to see, hear, touch, and taste exactly why. He will drag us from the beaches of the Costa Blanca, where bikinis saved Spain for northern European tourism, to the slums of Seville, where abused Gypsies and authentic flamenco are still to be found. We will follow him from the brothels of Valencia to the alcazars of Al Andalus to the serpent and axe of Bilbao and Basque terror to the latest statistics on child-rearing, golf courses, homosexuality, and cocaine consumption. We meet drug dealers, real estate hustlers, soccer stars, corrupt businessmen and pols, incorruptible judges, not-so-former Falangists, and Opus Dei. We speak Catalan in Barcelona, listen to the *cántigas* of *trovadores* in Galicia, look at Picasso's *Guernica* in Madrid, watch Pedro Almodóvar on TV in La Mancha, and learn that the novelist Camilo José Cela, winner of the 1989 Nobel Prize for Literature, once upon a time snitched on fellow writers to Franco's thugs. El Cid, Unamuno, Don Quixote, García Lorca—there are pages here on almost every exemplary, cautionary, and symbolic aspect of Old Spain and New except, perhaps, the Manolete Mausoleum in Córdoba; Tremlett doesn't much care for bullfighting.

But mostly there are ghosts. And most of these ghosts belong to the Spanish Civil War and Franco's subsequent fascistic Brigadoon. In return for a bloodless transition to democracy after the dictator's death in 1975, all sides seem to have signed some unspoken agreement to subscribe to what Tremlett calls "Amnistía and Amnesia"—a plague of forgetting right out of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. But now the bodies buried in nameless dumps are turning up, literally, wherever ground is broken for a shopping mall. And nothing like South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has ever occurred to Spain, because nobody like Nelson Mandela has ever exerted an influence. Tremlett is excited, hopeful, worried. If we already know that, at our worst, we are capable of radical evil, can't we dream that our best might muster some radical good? Then, also waiting to be heard from, there are those other Spanish ghosts: the Moor and the Jew.

Like some surreal chime, Daniel Alarcón's eerie new novel, [illegible] (HarperCollins, $24.95), signals directly to this amnesia from the reverse side of the Hispanic cultural mirror. We are to imagine a nameless Latin American country, with the usual jungles, soldiers, Indians, juju, curfews, plazas, lizards, churches, vegetable carts, "unhinged nostalgia," vanguards, pork kebabs, carnivals, torture camps, sycophants, phantoms, dissidents, intellectuals, and assassins, ten years after a civil war in which the government and military have finally defeated what they call the "Illegitimate Legion." A village boy whose mother has drowned, who never knew his father, comes to the capital with a list. He is to present this to fortysomething Norma, the warm, anguishing, insinuating voice of a nighttime program called *Lost City Radio*, on which she reads the names of all those who have disappeared in the violence and invites reunion and remembrance. This is the only past the regime allows; otherwise, the cities have been bulldozed and the names of the villages turned into numbers and the whole country is make-believe.



Naturally, Norma will have lost a husband in this civil war, a professor of science who had another, clandestine identity. Naturally, the face of the man in the drawing the boy has brought from his village is of this husband. Naturally, the inquiry thus launched into violence and silence and history and intimacy, threatens to topple everybody's fragile castles of pretend. We have a parable that is weirdly specific, both shadowy and tactile: Joan Didion in Graham Greeneland or J. M. Coetzee meets Amos Oz, as if politics devoured privacy on its way to abstractions as shiny as the guillotine. Alarcón, a native of Peru who teaches at Mills College in Oakland, California, is up to something other than Magic Realism here. (Oz in his novel *Fima* dismissed M.R. as "fireworks and cotton candy.") Nothing implausible but everything dreadful just . . . happens. And the dead never show up again, not even on the radio.

For my sins and his, I've followed Norman Mailer more faithfully than not, from Harvard to the South Pacific to Brooklyn Bolshevism to *Deer Park* sex crimes to existential dreadlocks to American dreaming and the man in the moon, as he elaborated psychologies, anthropologies, and demonologies of air-conditioning, fiberglass, graffiti, shopping malls, fallout, plastic, cancer, and prophylactics, on the royal road to Marilyn Monroe and Gary Gilmore, the CIA and Ancient Egypt, Pablo Picasso and Jesus Christ. Having put up with Lee Harvey Oswald, do I really deserve Hitler?

So he insists, in [illegible] (Random House, $27.95), a Grimm Brothers gothic whimsy that blames everything we know and loathe about Adolf on incest, child abuse, honeybees, and actual demons—the shock troops and flunkies of Satan himself, who urge the little monster on his way. I thought I could make a case for *Castle* as Mailer's version of Mikail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, in which Satan showed up in Moscow just when Stalin needed help. But I have reconsidered. Making such a case would be even sillier than this novel. The devil made him do it! ■

Don Quixote, by Honoré Daumier © Neue Pinakothek, Munich. Erich Lessing/Art Resource/Bridgeman Art Library

THE DEVOTED

Susan Sontag's self-corrections

by Robert Boyers

Discussed in this essay:

At the Same Time, by Susan Sontag. Edited by Paolo Dilonardo and Anne Jump. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 256 pages. $23.

For much of her writing life, Susan Sontag wished to be, and to remain, ahead of her reader. She was willing to be understood, but not to confirm a prejudice or to be thought pleasing, and was delighted to announce in the preface to her first book of essays, *Against Interpretation*, that she didn't "care about handing out grades to works of art." Neither did she harbor illusions about the prospect that she might be wrong. So long as one wrote out of "a passionate interest," one had no reason to regret occasional errors. Sontag believed that even the essays she wrote as reviews were perhaps not to be regarded as "criticism at all" but as "case studies for an aesthetics, a theory of my own sensibility." Not for her the foolish Victorian pretense to disinterestedness.

Along the same lines, readers who expected a critic to interpret works of art or to dwell principally on their content would have to learn how to become interested in other, more demanding things. The "idea of content," Sontag declared, was best regarded as "a nuisance, a subtle or not so subtle philistinism," and those among her own readers who insisted upon sniffing around in books for meanings and truths and underlying intentions were "reactionary, impertinent, cowardly." Interpretation was to be understood as "the revenge of the intellect upon art," for works of art wanted to be left simply and sublimely alone. Most readers, Sontag suggested, were typically incapable of letting things be what they were, and though she often disparaged the high-handedness of Victorian sages like Matthew Arnold, she consistently threw around terms like "callow pseudo-intellectuality," "coarse," and "crude." Even in the essays and addresses posthumously collected in *At the Same Time* (Sontag died in December of 2004), one finds frequent references to "philistines" and "conformists."



Soon after her first essays and reviews appeared in the pages of *Partisan Review* in the early 1960s, Sontag attracted an enthusiastic following and rapidly became one of the country's best-known intellectuals. Readers who might well have felt [illegible] whose attitudes and practices were under steady assault in her essays were nonetheless charmed by her [illegible] her combativeness, even her condescending

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"Quai des Grands Augustins, Paris, December 2003" © Annie Leibovitz/Contact
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marked by an odd combination of formality and reckless assertiveness. Sontag's *Against Interpretation* was a cancel of a book." Sixteen-year-old kids were better able than intellectuals to understand *Doctor Strangelove*. To call Communism a "secular religion" was to commit the sort of vulgarity best left to "Western liberals."

Nevertheless, for all of her sharp formulations and argument-closing aphorisms ("The antipathy to style is always an antipathy to a given style"), she wrote with what appeared to be an enormous, patient absorption in her subject. Although her essayistic manner often inspired others to speak of its "irritating intellectual formality"—"a style," as James Wood has put it, "never out of its uniform"—she was impressive in her determination to construct an elaborated framework for insights that otherwise would have seemed absurdly peremptory, comically self-assured. And of course it is hard not to smile, more than a little, at Sontag's carefully worded exaggerations and ringing certitudes—"an account of mental ruin as grand as anything I know," "Walser's virtues are those of the most mature, most civilized art"—coming as they do from a writer who was ever ready to point out distortion in other critics. In this new volume we find familiar habits: Haldór Laxness's novel, *Under the Glacier*, is said to be "a work of supreme derision and freedom and wit." *Supreme*. It is "one of the funniest books ever written." *Ever*.

In the main, though, Sontag won over her audience with her ability to make unfamiliar ideas irresistibly compelling. If she was, as her detractors often noted, "humorless," she was never obtuse, and she wrote with a seriousness of purpose that recommended to our attention those cultural forms—such as pornography and rock music—that many of us had done our best not to notice. She was one of the great stimulants to innovation in a period notable for its prodigality, and although she had reason to want to put back in the bottle some of the reckless spirits she had let out, she herself did not long remain drunk on her own avant-garde discoveries.

Just also remember that Sontag could be a thrilling prose writer, and that her gift—for evocation, for epigram and paradox—was extraordinary. Although she mistrusted mere eloquence and did not strain in her own prose for poetic effects, her formulations were often surprising for their color and concision, as when she remarked upon "the solitary autistic acts of grace" in Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, or noted, with a brusque, classical severity, that "the philosopher's aptitude for martyrdom is almost part of his good manners."

But beyond the shapeliness and restrained virility of individual sentences, there is the fact that a writer less agile, less audacious, would not have been able to take on questions so various. Nor did Sontag's self-assurance diminish as she grew older, though now and again she had to note, ruefully, that changes in the culture were forcing her to reconsider matters she had once thought settled. One brilliant instance of this is a passage in "Fascinating Fascism," perhaps her single greatest essay, in which she revisits what she had earlier written about the Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl:

> Art which evokes the themes of fascist aesthetics is popular now, and for most people it is probably no more than a variant of camp. Fascism may be merely fashionable, and perhaps fashion with its irrepressible promiscuity of taste will save us. But the judgments of taste themselves seem less innocent. Art that seemed eminently worth defending ten years ago, as a minority or adversary taste, no longer seems defensible today, because the ethical and cultural issues it raises have become serious, even dangerous, in a way they were not then. The hard truth is that what may be acceptable in elite culture may not be acceptable in mass culture, that tastes which pose only innocuous ethical issues as the property of a minority become corrupting when they become more established. Taste is context, and the context has changed.

For anybody familiar with Sontag's work, it was not possible to ignore the strenuous effort of revision this passage entailed. In her early essay "On Style," Sontag had argued that Riefenstahl's Nazi films "transcend the categories of propaganda or even reportage" and that her "genius as a filmmaker" had allowed the "content" of her film "to play a purely formal role." But what had seemed defensible "as a minority or adversary taste" was no longer defensible in a culture all too ready to suspend human and political values in its rage to adopt ostensibly avant-garde postures. Sontag's willingness to speak of a "purely formal role" for content in Riefenstahl was the result of a strenuous engagement with the films and with the issues they raised. She had intended that her remarks be received as difficult and provocative, not simply or comfortably programmatic. But the culture, as she observed, had changed, and its promiscuous embrace of everything now made her attempt to receive Riefenstahl purely in aesthetic terms seem to her dangerous and potentially corrupting.

The self-correction demonstrates, like so many other features of Sontag's work, the essential restlessness and drive of her intelligence, to say nothing of the uncertainty she felt even where her self-assurance remained—or seemed to remain—intact. Indeed, there was always a considerable tension in Sontag's work that she was never able to banish and rarely acknowledged, even an uncertainty as to what sort of critic she wished to be. Critics such as Edmund Wilson and George Steiner, for instance, often wrote to instruct. They relied a good deal on the biographies of writers and artists and liked to tell stories that would illustrate the ideas they hoped to convey. Wilson spoke for both men when he wrote that he tried "to make it possible for our literate public . . . to deal with systems of art and thought that have previously seemed inaccessible."

By contrast, until very late in her writing life, Sontag did not often think of her role in this way. She wrote not principally to inform but to discover. Although she was not a poet, she thought of her criticism as having more in common with the prose of poets than with the critical essays of haute journalists like Wilson and Steiner. She admired the "fervor, density, velocity, fiber" of the prose she found in Joseph Brodsky, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Osip Mandelstam, with its impatience, its fondness for the elliptical, and its willingness to employ "discon-

ious or broken forms." As was her it, she made of her discovery a d of theory, a somewhat theatri- generalization at once striking and te than a little dubious. "A poet's se," she wrote, "is the autobiogra- of ardor," and the essays of poets ress a "love for 'what is highest.'" think of such writing as predomi- ntly instructional, explanatory, or lytical would be to misunderstand very nature.

Yet Sontag was more ambivalent ut this vocation of hers than she let . In a wonderful 1963 essay on Ca- is, she developed a telling distinc- n between the writer as lover and writer as husband, concluding that mus was "the ideal husband of con- nporary letters," offering his readers ch "solid virtues" as "reliability, in- ligibility, generosity, decency." By ntrast, she argued, "the gifts of a ver" were temperamental. Women, e went on, pressing her point about far as it might be driven, "tolerate ialities in a lover ... that they would ver countenance in a husband," and aders likewise tolerate in certain nds of writers "unintelligibility, ob- ssiveness, painful truths, lies," so ng as such writers "allow them to vor rare emotions and dangerous nsations." Although she herself was awn to excess, she had to concede at "as in life, so in art both are nec- ssary, husbands and lovers. It's a great ity when one is forced to choose be- veen them."

And so, whatever she told her- self to the contrary, Sontag didn't choose. Consider, in he new collection, an essay original- y written as an introduction to eonid Tsypkin's novel, *Summer in Baden-Baden*. It is marked, through- ut, by a touching and uninhibited rdor. The critic here is unashamed- y an enthusiast, a devotee, willing o recommend and promote with all ner vulnerable heart. Tsypkin's slen- der novel is said to be "among the nost beautiful, exalting, and original achievements of a century's worth of fiction." Its author wrote "for litera- ture itself." The book belongs "to a rare and exquisitely ambitious sub- genre of the novel." One finds in it "prodigious, uncanny acts of empa- thy," and if you read it, it may "fortify your soul and give you a larger idea of feeling, and of breathing."

Clearly, Sontag is willing to be thought excessive, rapturous, hortatory, infatuated. She is thrilled with her discovery of an obscure book that might well have been lost to her and to literature, a book written in 1981 and issued twenty years later as a "lost masterpiece." Although she is alert to complexity in Tsypkin's novel, her own attitude is resolutely uncomplicated, without any trace of an adversarial instinct. The lover here is in the first flush of her infatuation: eager, entirely given over to her admiration, trusting her own surging enthusiasm.

But the essay on Tsypkin also does the patient work of exposition, analysis, and instruction. Contexts are provided, the Russian scene outlined, Tsypkin's life history scrupulously sketched over several pages, the "true life" of Dostoevsky matched against the ostensibly accurate account of the life given in the Tsypkin novel, in which Dostoevsky is a central character. Sontag's virtues in this essay are mainly the husbandly ones. She makes the novel she recommends more intelligible than it would be without her assistance, and she happily endorses a work that is not itself committed to perversity, obscurity, or disorder. She notes its "emotional intensity" and "adamancy," but her essay has more to do with appreciation and instruction than with recommending dangerous, Dostoevskian emotions.

In fact, Sontag's approach to the critical task varies drastically from one assignment to another. In *At the Same Time*, the essay on the novelist Victor Serge is not only loaded with information about his life and about the politics of revolutionary anti-Communism; it is clearly an occasion for the critic to make several shrewd political observations and, not incidentally, to settle a number of old scores, especially with those on the American left who scorned Sontag's own robust anti-Communism. Wasn't Serge himself vilified by radicals who regarded his truth-telling about Soviet Communism as "counter-productive"? Wasn't Czeslaw Milosz's indispensable 1953 book, *The Captive Mind*, "discounted by much of the American literary public as a work of Cold War propaganda," just as her own motives were impugned when, in the early 1980s, she spoke of Communism as "fascism with a human face"? When we consider why Serge was not properly celebrated for dramatizing "the toll of suffering that the Bolshevik system inflicted on the Russian people," should we not recall the Sartre who refused to "broach the subject of the Gulag on the grounds that it would discourage the just militancy of the French working class"?

Similarly, we might also consider Sontag's tribute to the Italian writer Anna Banti, a piece written to introduce Banti's novel, *Artemisia*. Sontag carefully steers clear of the novel's faults and instead rapturously identifies with the struggles of two women, Banti and her subject, Artemisia, the great Italian Renaissance painter, who managed against great odds to sustain a commitment to the highest artistic ambitions. But Sontag also remarks, with a combination of wonder and sympathy, Banti's refusal to declare herself a feminist, and seizes the opportunity this affords to expatiate on the gratifications of a work that might well be read as a feminist document and to assert the strength of her own feminist convictions. Although Sontag avoids any personal references, it is hard for anyone who has long followed her career not to think of the charges of anti-feminism that had been leveled against her, most notably by Adrienne Rich in a controversy that surfaced in the pages of *The New York Review of Books* in 1975, just after Sontag had published "Fascinating Fascism." Sontag clearly smarted from the charge that she was somehow less than a committed feminist, that she had "let down the good cause," as Sontag put it, and the Banti essay is only another instance of her determination to assert a muscular feminism of her own. As far back as 1975, in an interview with *Salmagundi*, Sontag had urged feminists not only to point out "the omnipresence of sexist stereotypes in the language, behavior, and imagery of our society" but to be willing to let "the feminist implications be residual or implicit in their work, without risking being charged by their sisters with

desertion." Party lines, Sontag argued, "make for intellectual monotony and [bad prose," and result in "demands for intellectual simplicity."

In other essays, where she has no scores to settle and no wish to provide instruction, Sontag occasionally writes simply to praise, as where she celebrates, with no more than a single quoted passage to support her enthusiasm, the letters of three Russian poets. Reading these letters, she declares in the essay entitled "1926," we know that the poets were to become "future gods," and we must not "dismiss as 'romantic'" their "purity of aspiration." The letters give us "angelic conversation." And if we do not learn much from Sontag's homage, we do learn at least that she is susceptible to a big-time crush on her literary heroes and that she laments the condition of a culture—our own—in which opera alone remains a medium where "it is still acceptable to rhapsodize."

Sontag's predilection for extravagance goes back to her earliest books, though there the extravagance had more to do with overstatement than with rhapsodizing. In some of her most admired early essays on great film directors—on Bergman, Bresson, and Godard—Sontag had a tendency to insist and exaggerate, which often led her to say things more than a little misleading. Was it necessary, for example, to assert that a Godard film "shows [only] *that* something happened, not *why* it happened," and that such a film "does not explain anything"? Sontag's determination not to reduce works of art to message or anecdote was always an admirable feature of her criticism, and surely no reader of her essays wanted to think himself the sort of pedestrian filmgoer who persistently asks "why?" when confronted by works that seem indifferent to a viewer's anxiety about elementary meanings. But narratives built around situation, story, character, and dialogue—even spasmodic, violently fragmented films by a director like Godard—will inevitably invite the exertions we associate with analysis and explanation. It is clear, moreover, that an artist like Godard deliberately builds into his films codes, anecdotal passages, and symbols of the sort it would be foolish not to analyze—even where the viewer finds that many of these elements are inserted to make us feel uneasy, so slippery are the devices employed by so restless a filmmaker. Sontag's programmatic refusal to concede that the "exploratory posture" of such an artist might be fully compatible with analysis decidedly limits the accuracy of her account.

Sontag never abandoned her passionate commitment to the arts; in her later essays especially, she wrote to recommend authors who deserved to be better known and loved, authors as various as Witold Gombrowicz, Machado de Assis, and Juan Rulfo, as well as those—Serge, Laxness, Tsypkin, Banti, and others—engaged in *At the Same Time*. In these instances, she was an inspired close reader, attentive to everything and, for the most part, disinclined to force the texts she studied into an unnatural compliance with fixed critical principles. No doubt a part of the pleasure she took in many of these projects had to do with the scandal she routinely uncovered—namely, that so many first-rate writers had been carelessly discarded. Even when the very boldness of her claims for these writers invited not simply assent but resistance, she was willing to seem foolish, definite, fond.

Sontag also demanded to have her say on social and political matters, and she outgrew the fitful romanticism of her early political essays without abandoning her taste for polemic. She was, as others often noted, a "European-style" intellectual, and thus not content to regard herself simply as a "creative" writer or a specialist devoted to a handful of narrow concerns. Her commitment to participate in the major debates of the day often took her away from both the great literary essays and the two late novels that, when they were published, brought her some measure of the acclaim she sought for herself as an artist, but she was willing to pay the price for her divided loyalties. In the new volume, roughly half of the pages are given over to politics and to culture, with "culture" understood as the study of values, tradition, and the common language. Several of the pieces assembled on these subjects were addresses written for particular occasions and are often stirring, occasionally flatulent. Sontag is never at her best when giving advice about how to be serious or to avoid selling out. But she can be incendiary and biting, and a few of the more recent pieces remind us that, unlike many other polemicists, she could think and feel more than one emotion at a time. She was never complacent, and she didn't at all mind being taken for a child—a preternaturally demanding child—of her historical moment.

Included in the new volume is an important late essay entitled "Regarding the Torture of Others," which considers the notorious photographs taken by American soldiers at Abu Ghraib. For Sontag, these photographs, which document the brutality and humiliation visited upon prisoners of war in Iraq, are an occasion for thinking about a number of issues, including the relation between torture and pornography, "the increasing acceptance of brutality in American life" ("its evidence is everywhere, starting with the video games of killing that are a principal entertainment of boys") and the politics of an American administration whose "triumphalist justification of America's right to unilateral action on the world stage" is a disgrace. Working outward from a particular instance, Sontag is moved to note that the "shamelessness" revealed in the taking and dissemination of the Abu Ghraib photographs is intimately related to our having become "a society in which secrets of private life that formerly you would have given nearly anything to conceal, you now clamor to be invited on a television show to reveal." The ferocity of Sontag's analysis is conveyed in a prose at once level and brimming, the informing indignation perfectly checked by a determination not to overstate or to strike the posture of the noble rebel heady with rectitude.

Of course, there is always the danger that the critic responding to events as they occur will inflate the importance of small things or, in haste, fail to convey precisely what she means. The brief statement Sontag gave to *The New Yorker* magazine a few days after the September 11 attacks is included in this posthumous volume along with two follow-up

ces that reformulate her intentions. Although she wrote *The New Yorker* piece largely to deplore "the self-righteous drivel . . . being peddled" by American leaders, declaring that 9/11 was to be understood as "an attack on the world's self-proclaimed superpower, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions," she wrote only a month later that "the devastation, and the immensity of the loss of life, made my initial focus on the rhetoric surrounding the event seem to me less relevant." It was necessary, she felt, to acknowledge the "simplistic cowboy rhetoric of Bush, which . . . oscillated between the cretinous and the sinister" while also noting that "it is wrong to think of terrorism—this terrorism—as the pursuit of legitimate demands by illegitimate means." The attacks were, among other things, "an attack on modernity (the only culture that makes possible the emancipation of women)," and, however deplorable all aspects of American foreign policy, "the first thing to keep in mind is that what happened on September 11th was an appalling crime." I have noted other instances of self-correction in Sontag's work, but this one seems to me especially attractive.

For all of the political criticism she wrote, Sontag tried to think of herself as a writer still primarily preoccupied with words and images, a writer somewhat at odds with the "human rights activist" and provocateur. This was not easy to accomplish. In the later stages of her career, Sontag was more and more celebrated for her courage and her principled involvement in political affairs, and, in fact, she often trumpeted that involvement. In their preface, the editors of *At the Same Time* note her "political engagement," her willingness to "respond" to and "participate" in "world events." They speak of her as "a passionate member of the republic of letters" and remark upon "the inseparability in her work of literature and politics."

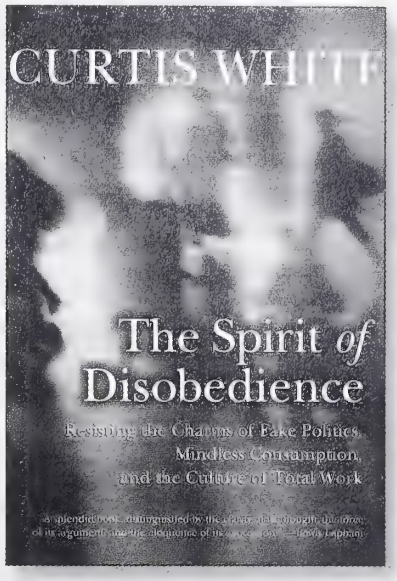
This emphasis is unfortunate. After all, it should be possible to admire Sontag's courage in traveling to war zones and her often controversial takes on political matters without suggesting that these are principally

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SOLUTION TO THE FEBRUARY PUZZLE

B	A	S	I	C	S	A	I	R	M	E	N	
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NOTES FOR "SIXES AND SEVENS—AND TWELVES":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

ACROSS: 11. (J)uly; 12. I'M(rev.)-me-O; 28. (s)iren-E; 29. rev.

DOWN: 2. rev.; 7. muff-tea, homophone; 9. NY-Lon.; 23. P.(ris[rev.])M.; 24. *; 26. (b)ante(r).

SIX-LETTER WORDS: a. AIRMEN*; b. STY-L-U.S.; c. ME(LE)ES, rev.; d. BILL-Y(oo-Ho)O; e. SO-LON(G)S; f. BASICS*; g. AMUSES*; h. SIGHTS, homophone; i. RULERS, two mngs.; j. STAG-ED; k. A(ztec)-POLLO; l. STALLS, two mngs.

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS: a. SEMINAR*; b. E(L[eftover])USORY*; c. J(ew)-OYLESS, pun; d. INSURES*; e. TROUNCE*; f. OVERLAP*; g. RESORTS, two mngs.; h. BOM(rev.)-BAST*; i. ULSTERS*; j. ROOM(F[or])UL.

TWELVE-LETTER WORDS: a. ISOLATIONISM*; b. [illegible]; c. CLO(THE-SHOR[T's])SE; d. ANNI(HI)LATION*.

The solution to "Morphology," the December puzzle, misspelled ACTAEON. *This, along with an omitted letter, rendered the anagram offered in the instructions a less than helpful hint. The puzzle itself was not affected, and both* ACTAEON *and* ACTAEAN *were considered acceptable solutions.*

commend her to us. To be sure, she did not manage to balance the aesthetic and the ethical, and she more than occasionally wondered how it was possible to think about literature and art without also taking on moral and political issues. Yet most of Sontag's best essays are not the ones devoted to politics but the much more sustaining work on literature, culture, and ideas. To read the obituary tributes that appeared at the time of Sontag's death is to feel, alas, that the essays themselves now matter a great deal less than her image as an intrepid visitor to Hanoi, Gaza, and Sarajevo.

In this sense, we might usefully note that *At the Same Time* does not include a kind of essay that Sontag did better than anyone else. This is the essay devoted to the work, the influence, the worldview of a thinker—often, like herself, deeply conflicted—with whom she identified while also striving to keep her distance. Over many years she devoted such essays to writers like Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Elias Canetti, Simone Weil, and E. M. Cioran, among others; these are exercises in admiration, at once intimate and impersonal, invested in ideas and in matters of sensibility. They are frankly devotional, though rigorous, and we find in them, again and again, Sontag's willing suspension of self in the approach to an alien consciousness. Particularly moving in these negotiations with admired, seductive others is the trust Sontag demonstrates in the meaningfulness of work that could seem forbidding and in the seriousness of thinkers who could seem implacable. Nowhere else is Sontag so strenuously, and appealingly, earnest in what she once called the "willingness to serve." This, certainly, was a writer who wished to identify completely with the prejudices, the misgivings, the intellectual intensity of those she admired, and who appropriated the most bracing and difficult ideas with the hunger of someone who needed them to breathe. She was most alive when possessed by other writers, thinkers, books, works of art that seemed to her "engulfing" and altogether, indisputably, themselves. ■

FLAMING BITUMEN

Romancing the Algerian war

By *Sam Stark*

Discussed in this essay:

A Savage War of Peace, by Alistair Horne. New York Review Books. 608 pages. $19.95.

After failing at agriculture, chemistry, medicine, zoology, paleontology, and archaeology, the two bumbling eponyms of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, Gustave Flaubert's unfinished encyclopedia of the middlebrow mind, take up the study of recent French history. They start with *The History of the French Revolution* by Adolphe Thiers, a bestseller published in ten volumes between 1823 and 1827, which gives them flashbacks, of a sort: "Old men had talked to them of 1793, and memories which were almost personal enlivened the prosaic descriptions of the author." They can see the mob before them, "brandishing at the end of a pike some discoloured head with trailing hair," and hear the guillotine "thudding like a piston" to the rhythm of the Marseillaise. Bouvard is relieved, at a pause, to find himself in 1845 in their garden, where the breeze rustles the barley and only a blackbird whistles eerily in the distance: "What a pity that people had not been able to agree from the start! For if the royalists had thought like the patriots . . . many misfortunes would never have occurred!" But soon the peace is broken by argument; Bouvard, "liberal and sensitive," defends the life of Louis XVI, whereas Pécuchet, "bilious and inclined to authoritarianism," clamors for the guillotine. The history lesson ends, like everything else the pair attempts, in chaos.

The scene is a sly parody of Thiers's preface, in which the historian, admitting the difficulty of writing objectively about the Revolution while living under Charles X, goes on to say that the time is ripe for his *History*. "Old men," he writes, "still full of their memories, and still aroused by their impressions, reveal to us the spirit and the character of the causes, and teach us to understand them." Thiers advises the younger historian not to waste such an opportunity, for "the moment when the actors are about to expire" is the best time to "glean their evidence without collecting all their passions." One can imagine oneself either "born in a cottage, animated with a just ambition," or "bred in palaces, the heir to ancient privileges," and one "could not harbor enmity against either party."

A certain amount of fairness ought to be assumed in an historian; to feel the need to advertise it, like a news channel that sells itself as "fair and balanced," is an ominous sign. Elsewhere, Thiers is less politic, referring to "those barbarians, teeming at the bottom of the social scale and ever ready to besmirch society with all their crimes." Later in Thiers's career, his views would become increasingly clear: suspicious of the "vile mob" and therefore of democracy, he propagandized for the citizen-king Louis Philippe, became minister of finance in the July monarchy, and went on to defend the interests of the "enlightened classes" against such inconveniences as free speech, mass suffrage, and public education. As "Chief of Executive Power of the French Republic" during the Franco-Prussian War, he oversaw the slaughter of 20,000 half-starved Communards. Comparing himself with Guicciardini or Frederick the Great, Thiers saw his histories as an accessory to politics. He once told a friend that he would give ten successful his-

Sam Stark is an Assistant Editor of Harper's Magazine.

ies for a single successful campaign. Flaubert was obsessed with Thiers, om he saw as embodying the decay Western civilization. In a letter to orge Sand, Flaubert labeled him ercoraceous," from the Latin *stercus*, eaning dung. "Nothing," he spat, an give the idea of the puking with ich this old diplomatic idiot inspires e in piling up his stupidity on the ng-hill of bourgeoisie!" The author *A Sentimental Education* was particarly irked by Thiers's pretenses to litature, by his claim to have made not st a record but a portrait, capturing he spirit and the character" of a revution. Just as Flaubert had parodied ie provincial reveries inspired in





Emma Bovary by the historical fiction of Walter Scott, he used Bouvard and Pécuchet to show that the memories of Thiers's "old men" were permeated by clichés that charmed readers with familiarity. Reflecting common fears and fantasies, those memories were biased toward lurid images, resistant to analysis and thus to critical judgment. To bring to life the preface of Thiers's book was to undercut with bracing irony the historian's pseudo-realism. It was a literary punishment for a literary crime. As Flaubert, the son of a surgeon, put it, "to dissect is to take vengeance."

Surprisingly, the same passage from Thiers's *History* resurfaces as the epigraph to *A Savage War of Peace*, Alistair Horne's 1977 account of the French-Algerian war of 1954–62. Like Thiers, Horne promises to have seen both sides, and, as with Thiers's claim to impartiality, that alone ought to put the reader on guard. Horne is the more candid of the two when he compares writing about France to having "a love affair with an irresistible woman, inspiring in her beauty, often agonizing and maddening, but always exciting," an analogy that suggests *A Savage War of Peace* will be a guilty thrill, a hell that can be spelunked with morbid pleasure in the garden or at the beach. Here is a book touted by both Zbigniew Brzezinski and Ariel Sharon, in which shrapnel in the corpse of an obese car-bomb victim is likened to "truffles in a Perigord pâté." Here is a book, out of print for twenty years (but, according to the *Washington Post*, hotly sought by officers bound for Iraq), in which Algerian ambushes on sluggish French patrols evoke that scene from Flaubert's *Salammbô* wherein "the wily Spendius stampeded the Carthaginian elephants by driving pigs smeared with flaming bitumen towards them." Wicked moments like these show what Horne means by saying he writes out of love.

The mood is set in the second chapter, with a catalogue of the flora in a Roman ruin on the Barbary shore: "In springtime the ruins are a blaze of contrapuntal colour: wild gladioli of magenta, bright yellow inulas and spiky acanthus thrust up among sarcophagi carpeted with tiny blue saxifrage. . . ." After this wild bouquet on the grave of the West we are whisked to the "luxurious Hôtel Saint-George" in Algiers, "through whose exotic gardens of giant contorted euphorbia and sweet-smelling moonflowers Churchill and the titans of the Second World War strolled, laying plans for a world in which Anglo-Saxon predominance seemed assured in perpetuity." Botany serves bathos up to the end of the affair, when Horne, near the site of a gory massacre by the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), notices that "here and there geraniums still flower out of untended window-boxes." The little blossoms call to mind an entry in Flaubert's *Dictionary of Received Ideas*—"RUINS: Induce reverie; make a landscape poetic"—as well as another—"COLONIES (OUR): Show sadness when speaking of them."

Like love, Horne's story unfolds through anecdotes, perceptions, and situations, rather than analyses of documents, ideologies, or diplomatic schemes. Those characteristic details that the medievalist Marc Bloch calls "the delight of the small fry of romantic historians" are here writ large. Several characters are remembered for how they wear their hats. [illegible] the red fez without which Messali Hadj, founder of an early Algerian liberation movement, [illegible] this incongruous Wehrmacht steel helmet" on FLN leader Mohamedi Said. (The avant-

Paix en Algérie, by Raymond Hains © Collection Ginette Dutrène, Paris/Artists Rights Society, New York City/ADAGP, Paris. From *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* © 2006 Thames & Hudson; Photograph of FLN soldiers in training, 1957 © Kryn Taconis/Magnum Photos

revolutionary army . . . which caused the *pieds noirs* to nickname them, with a touch of ridicule, the 'lizards.'") Many others excel at various sports. Yves Godard, chief of staff of the 10th Para Division and "a champion skier," faces off in the Battle of Algiers with Saadi Yacef, FLN terrorist and "keen footballer." In an old photograph, the founding members of the FLN look "like the over-earnest members of a local darts team." Later, in prison, some of them play Ping-Pong—Mohamed Boudiaf "emerged the steady champion"—while, unbeknownst to them, mayhem is plotted by a counterterrorist group led by "Jim Alcheik, a Jewish-Tunisian karate champion."

Horne's sources are mainly memoirs and eyewitness journalism. Like his mentor Thiers, he also draws on an incomparable collection of interviews with prominent "old men," including five former French premiers and many of the generals who fought the war, former Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba, FLN leader Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, and Harold Macmillan, who was Britain's prime minister beginning in 1957 and eventually became Horne's publisher. (The relationship evokes that of Thiers to his patron, friend, and sometime informant on diplomatic history, Talleyrand.) Although many interviewees, more than half, are also listed in the bibliography as authors of memoirs, or histories, or miscellaneous punditry, suggesting there may be little new here to mine, they still offer occasional gems for the historical record. Horne captures brilliantly the successive waves of pride, courage, fear, surprise, ambivalence, disgust, anger, and confusion of French civilian and military leaders, who, when open rebellion broke out in Algeria in November 1954, were still recovering from the shame of Dien Bien Phu the previous May. Horne adds color with casual digressions on *The Plague* and *The Stranger*; on the articles of Janet Flanner, Paris correspondent for *The New Yorker*; on the diary of Algerian novelist Mouloud Feraoun, a moderate killed by the French fascist O.A.S. at the end of the war; and on *The Centurions* and *The Praetorians*, two novels by the French paratrooper Jean Larteguy (the former was the basis for the 1966 B-movie *Lost Command*, starring Anthony Quinn, with George Segal as an Arab terrorist named Mahidi). The result is a cinematic picture of the war as it was perceived at the time from many points of view. Given the complexity of the event, Horne's narrative craftwork could be envied by Jean Renoir; he deftly shifts perspective, without interrupting his tragic, twisted arc. A few scenes follow a manipulative emotional logic: when de Gaulle speaks or, worse, falls silent, someone must cry; before each unexpected crisis, it must be either stormy or eerily sunny. These scenes are evidence of Horne's chivalrous commitment to writing popular history, doing without theories and taking even the unprepared reader "there," but they occasionally raise the worry that there is, as in Gertrude Stein's Oakland, "no there there"—that his emphasis on the immediate, as in an alibi, betrays a lack of deeper ground.

A Savage War of Peace was first published in 1977, only fifteen years after Algerian independence, closer in time to the event than many academic historians would dare to go. Like Thiers, Horne did not have the advantage of accumulated scholarship, or official archives, which remained sealed on the French side for decades and were inadequate altogether in Algeria. Whereas Thiers could rely on the memories of "old men" even thirty years after the French Revolution, history has quickened and memory seems to have weakened since the 1820s, so that on a research visit to the Casbah, Horne finds no trace of the climactic urban battle re-created in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film, *The Battle of Algiers*. "There is not the smallest plaque or commemoration to indicate where such heroes of the Revolution as Ali la Pointe fought and died; and often it is hard to find residents who can guide or inform you, even though little more than a decade has elapsed." He attributes this lack of public history to the Algerian's "natural instinct for secretiveness"; to an "Arab tradition" that "holds a concept of history that is rather different from the European" ("The essential fatalism of religious teaching," Horne explains, "suggests that man is strictly limited in his capacity to shape his destiny") and to the fact that "the Algerian Revolution was, from the beginning, a movement of *collectivity*: of collective leadership, of collective suffering, and collective anonymity."

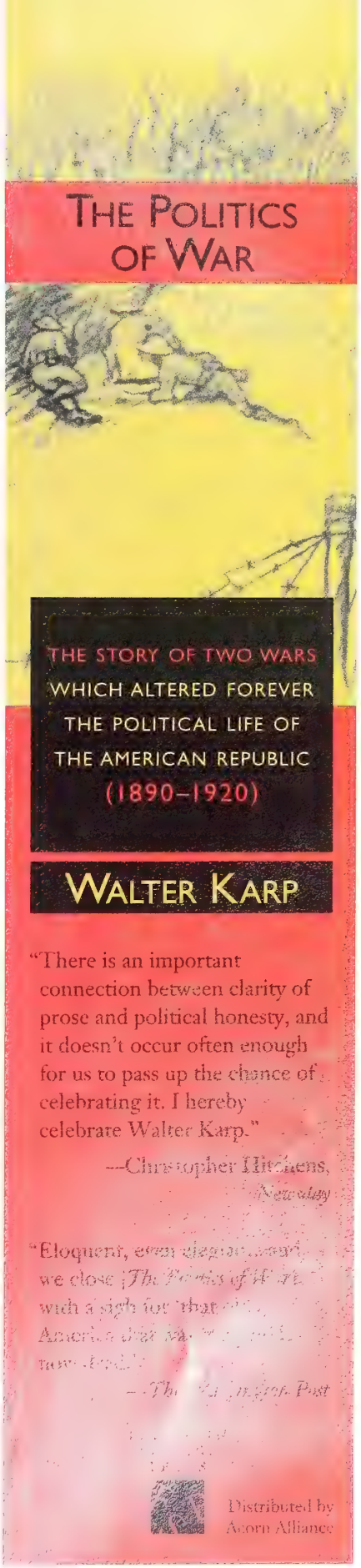
Chauvinism is not only a human vice but also a historian's fallacy, and here it appears to blind Horne to the real difficulties of writing about the Algerian war. Common sense suggests several reasons why the wartime memories of "old men" might be rare in the Casbah: when Horne did his research, for example, nearly half the population of Algeria was under fifteen. Many of those who lived through the war had done so as refugees or had been "regrouped" into camps. Those with the most intimate knowledge of events would likely have been among the 500,000 to one million killed, and it is not clear how much the average Algerian would have known, beyond propaganda, about the details of the insurgency that, at its largest, numbered just under 25,000 armed participants in a country of 10 million. But perhaps the most fundamental reason for the peculiar alienation that Horne describes is that the Algerian war was one of conspiracies, terrorism, secret torture, and summary executions, in which perceptions were tightly controlled by official propaganda and censorship. Even today, the best-known representation of the war, at least in the United States, is *The Battle of Algiers*, a masterpiece of agitprop produced by a leader of the FLN. Algeria's post-revolutionary government maintained a close hold on its history for decades, issuing hagiographies and discouraging scrutiny of its rise to power. In France, a heap of high-profile trials, press conferences, action movies, and memoirs—such as the scandalous 2001 tell-all by French general and unapologetic torturer Paul Aussaresses—continues to bury the war in moral and political controversy.

The historian of the Algerian war, therefore, is confronted not only by gaps in the historical record but by intentional distortions that exploited to the fullest the new weapons of the information age. Films were one way that

rnational opinion was courted; oth- included Madison Avenue P.R. ns and *engagé* intellectuals such as n-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon. (In umorous scene in *The Battle of Al- rs*, when Mathieu, the French onel in charge of the counterinsur- cy effort, is told that Sartre has writ- another article, he asks, "Why are Sartres all born on the same side?") e French banned dissident journals, flattering magazines, and even at e point *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. t such efforts were useless against e omnipresent and most intimate m of propaganda, delivered via the w technology of the transistor radio. adio has changed everything," ex- ained Egyptian president Gamal Ab- l Nasser, whose "Voice of the Arabs" as broadcasting nationalist messages ross the Arab world, shaping not ly Algerian but also French misper- ptions of the war. "Today people in e most remote villages hear of what happening everywhere and form their inions. Leaders cannot govern as ey once did. We live in a new world." It could be said that the Algerian ar was one of the first postmodern ars—not only a war of simulation and ssimulation but one that completely efied liberal and Communist "meta- arratives" of the Cold War. Its novelty as embarrassing in particular to those ntellectuals in France, such as Francis ukuyama's idol Alexandre Kojève, ho had been rewarming since the 930s Hegel's idea of the "end of his- ory." Sartre noted in 1954 the obvious act that history would not be ended so asily; as Simone de Beauvoir would ater recall, even the first tests of ther- nonuclear bombs a thousand times arger than Little Boy coincided with the intervention in world affairs of ountries that . . . in order to win their ndependence, were launching national vars against which atomic bombs were owerless." Sartre's ex-comrade Mau- ice Merleau-Ponty expressed a view f history that was even more frag- nented: "There is no universal clock," e wrote in 1960, "but local histories ake form beneath our eyes, and begin o regulate themselves." Algeria was nly one of those new local histories, but it was closest to home; its revolu- tion was a formative political experi- ence for the new generation of French intellectuals, some of whom, like Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida, had been born there. All of the early works by Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze that appeared during the war years aimed, in different ways, to re- think the concept of history. One de- voted socialist advocate for the Alger- ian cause, Jean-François Lyotard, would go on to become one of the most im- portant popularizers of the term "post- modern." But no neologisms are need- ed to see that it was a time out of joint, full of overwhelming surprises, hard to measure by any precedents. Algeria threatened not only the military might but also the moral and intellectual au- thority of the West, at least for those who imagined that postwar France would be a bastion of civilization in a barbaric world.

The challenges to the historian of the Algerian war are, in oth- er words, extreme. Even the fundamental units, France and Alge- ria, are controversial. As Algerian lib- erals observed early on, there was no such thing as an Algerian nation out- side of the colonial state. "I will not die for the Algerian nation," wrote Ferhat Abbas in 1936, "because it does not exist." Nor were the French in Algeria quite French; settlers came from such places as Italy, Spain, and Malta, so that by World War I only one in five was of French descent. The unique ethnic composition of the *pieds noirs*, described by soldiers from the Métropole as *mediterranéens-et- demi*, could make it seem at the worst of times as if the French were strug- gling to integrate and subdue not just one but several mistrustful foreign populations. Nonetheless, Algeria was much more tightly bound to France than other colonies. It was governed as three *départements* that were represented by senators and deputies in Paris, who were elected by a system from which Muslims were excluded first by law and then by fraud. The fact that Algeria was de jure not a colony at all but part of France—Eisenhower compared it to Texas—often gave the later conflict the tint of a French civil war.

Moreover, the dominant, some- what socialist strand of Algerian na- tionalism came largely from France.



thousands of Algerians had been recruited to fight or requisitioned to work in France's factories, where some of them, like the fez-bedecked Messali Hadj, mingled with French labor movements. This socialist element combined and conflicted with the Islamist version of Arab nationalism promoted by clerics; such divisions—along with other factions of regions, classes, and ethnic groups—at times made the Algerian revolution as complex as France in 1789 or Russia in 1917. At the end of the war, when the *pieds noirs* and the disillusioned French military formed their own fascist counterterrorist organization, it was as if two revolutions were happening at once.

The Algerian revolution is also the story, in Eisenhower's words, of that "hopeless, helpless mass of protoplasm," the French Fourth Republic itself, which was governed by a shifting constellation of parties that shared no underlying consensus of what politics ought to be. About two hundred representatives in the National Assembly were either Communist or represented the far-right Poujadists, and were therefore openly opposed to liberal democracy. There were no fewer than six premiers during the eight years of the war; it sometimes seemed that no one knew or cared who was running the country. In late 1957, for example, a poll of draftees showed that only 15 percent could name the premier. (Ninety-seven percent could name the winner of that year's Tour de France.) Another survey found that only 4 percent of French citizens would fight to defend their government in case of a coup. Midway through the war, in May 1958, the Fourth Republic collapsed entirely, and de Gaulle assumed emergency powers, invoking memories of World War II. Defeating an attempted putsch by four of his top generals, de Gaulle (whom Horne declares "the most impenetrable, enigmatic statesman of modern times" and a more affecting wartime speaker than Churchill) was later subject to more than a dozen assassination plots. By the end of *A Savage War of Peace*, the reader is less surprised that France lost the war than that France survived.

A Savage War of Peace is certainly a lively chronicle of the Algerian war, written by an admired military historian who had apparently found his gruesome muse. On the topic of counterinsurgency, for example, it deserves its place on military curricula. If it also remains one of the best general histories on the war, however, this can only be due to a dearth of competition. The book is preliminary, not definitive; as an attempt to capture "the spirit and the character" of a key event in twentieth-century history, it has troubling flaws—flaws that the author has inherited from Thiers, flaws that were neatly dissected by Flaubert. There is the same comic terror of the "vile mob," whose crude violence—committed with stones, knives, old hunting rifles, and primitive homemade bombs—looms disproportionately large when compared with French war crimes of vastly greater scale, simply because the former were intended to make an impression and the latter were supposed to be hidden. A Muslim riot at Sétif, a small town not far from Constantine, on V-E Day, May 8, 1945, is described by Horne as an "indiscriminate massacre of any Europeans caught out in the streets," led by "small groups of killers, the scent of blood in their nostrils," who were "egged on by the blood-curdling *you-you* ululations of their women." Unsparingly graphic, Horne informs us that there were "a number of women brutally raped, including one aged eighty-four," and that "many of the corpses were appallingly mutilated: women with their breasts slashed off, men with their severed sexual organs stuffed into their mouths."

All told, about a hundred Europeans were murdered. In the French backlash, however, between ten and sixty times as many Muslims were killed (to take the lowest and the moderate French estimates and to dismiss as exaggerated the Arab-world estimates of 15,000 to 45,000 dead). Horne duly notes these figures, with sterile precision instead of gore: more than forty villages were bombed from the air, others were fired on randomly by warships, and in one village more than two hundred individuals "were reported to have been shot out of hand." That last phrase euphemistically refers to the mass execution of unarmed prisoners, which seems to have been a sanctioned French tactic. In his memoir, General Aussaresses coolly describes rounding up 1,500 of the in a courtyard, selecting out "the diehards" to shoot, then using a backhoe to dig in a Muslim cemetery a ditch a hundred meters long, in which bodies were laid to face Mecca and sprinkled with lime to hasten decomposition. On the topic of summary execution and other French atrocities, Horne is painfully equivocal, referring to "what, in another context and depending upon the point of view, might perhaps be termed 'war crimes.'"

That said, Horne's deep sympathy for the French military often leads him to valuable insights that others might miss. His discussion of torture, which was authorized by the French Army for intelligence-gathering purposes, remains particularly valuable. He shows the psychological trauma it imposes on those ordered to commit it, as well as the corrosion of military discipline and morale that spreads as exceptions to the laws of war become the norm. Donald Rumsfeld, it is reassuring to know, received a personal copy of *A Savage War of Peace*, alerting him to such relevant passages as the chilling words of Paul Teitgen, a former hero of the Resistance, who, as secretary-general of Algiers, recognized in Algerian prisoners "profound traces of the cruelties and tortures that I personally suffered fourteen years ago in the Gestapo cellars." "Once you get into the torture business," Teitgen told Horne in an interview, "you're lost. . . . All our so-called civilization is covered with a varnish. Scratch it, and underneath you find *fear*."

Alistair Horne certainly scratches that surface, even if he does not dig much deeper. There is plenty of terror but very little fear for the future in *A Savage War of Peace*; Horne's romanticism is precisely the opposite of the "impulse of a kind of religious dread inspired by contemplation of this irresistible revolution," which drove the young Alexis de Tocqueville to study

Continued on page 98

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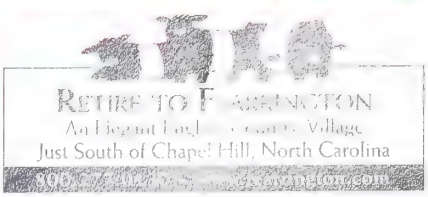
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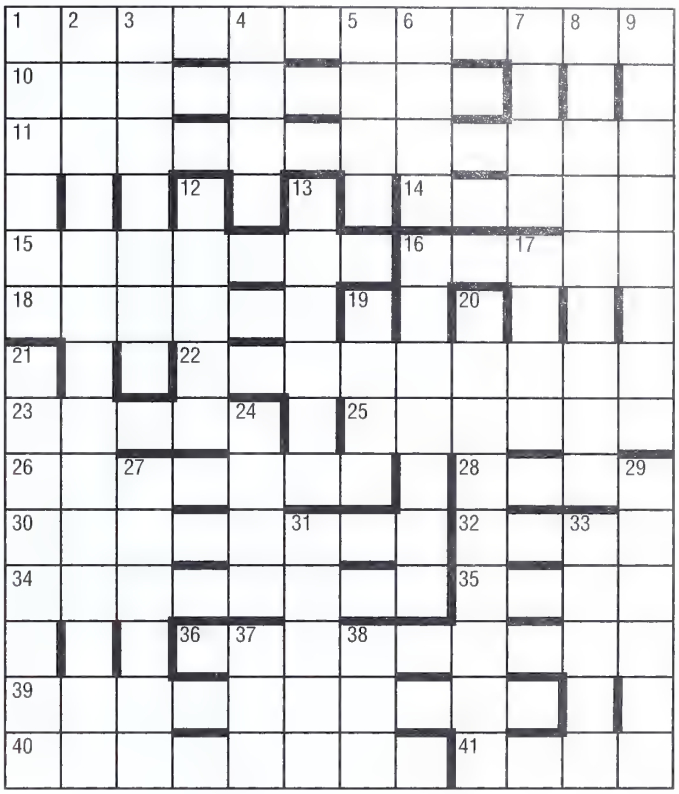
Continued from page 96

democracy in America. The finality implied by the title of Horne's last chapter, "The Page Is Turned," seems ironic in this new edition, which includes an introduction relating the Algerian war to our own war on terror. But the connection between the two wars is weak. The revolutionaries of 1954 were diplomats as well as terrorists; they did not oppose democracy but demanded it for themselves. There is no hint, in the original edition, of what would later be called radical Islam, and that omission may be what is most relevant about *A Savage War of Peace* today. This thirty-year-old history, written before the Iranian revolution, the Algerian civil war, and Al Qaeda, captures a contingent moment in the conflict between the West and the Arab world when present-day dogmas were hardly imagined by most. It provides a much needed reminder that modern history is not made by the "clash of civilizations" but by people.

February Index Sources

1–3 World Public Opinion (Washington); **4,5** James Fearon, Stanford University (Stanford, Calif.); **6** U.S. Central Command Air Forces (Shaw, S.C.); **7** Medica Mondiale (Köln, Germany); **8,9** U.S. Army Human Resources Command (Alexandria, Va.); **10,11** Stephen Slivinski (Washington); **12,13** U.S. Department of Justice; **14,15** Dealogic (N.Y.C.); **16,17** Thomson Financial (N.Y.C.); **18,19** Jacob Hacker, Yale University (New Haven, Conn.); **20** The World Bank (Washington)/U.N. Development Programme (N.Y.C.); **21** U.S. Energy Information Administration; **22** Office of Fair Trading (London); **23** Javelin Strategy & Research (Pleasanton, Calif.); **24** Andy Kahan, Mayor's Office (Houston); **25** National Rifle Association of America (Fairfax, Va.); **26** GfK Automotive (Southfield, Mich.); **27** Energy & Environmental Research Center (Grand Forks, N.Dak.); **28** Belgian Defense Staff (Brussels); **29** Infratest dimap (Berlin); **30** U.N. Human Development Report Office (N.Y.C.); **31** Norsk Telegrambyrå (Oslo); **32,33** *India Today* (New Delhi); **34,35** Adrian North, University of Leicester (Leicester, England); **36,37** Durex (Manchester, England); **38,39** MTV Networks International (N.Y.C.).

PUZZLE



THEME AND VARIATIONS

By Richard Maltby Jr.

(with acknowledgments to The Listener)

Nine diagram entries are unclued. Three of them, Theme-Words A, B, and C form a familiar group. Each Theme-Word then has a pair of Variations. The Variations are different in each case. For example, if the Theme-Words were OPEN and SHUT, the A Variations might be HOUSE and SEASON (phrases), and the B Variations THUS and HUTS (anagrams).

Clue answers include two proper names and one common foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 91.

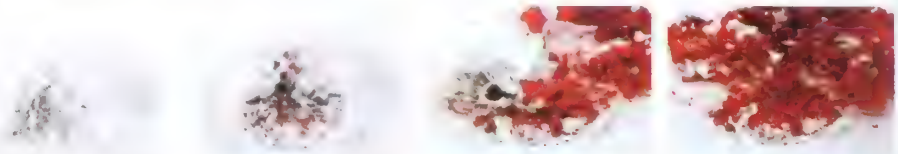
ACROSS

1. *Theme-Word B (12)*
10. Putting in time, resolve U.S. uproar over the moon (9)
11. Undiscerning, unruly child, terrible creep, gets little time I have (12)
14. Those underfoot are people listened to (5)
15. Work a drudge reserved (7)
16. *Theme-Word C (5)*
18. *Variation on Theme-Word B (6)*
22. Rock that's moving to me: "Die or Otherwise" (9)
23. Complete state (5)
25. Violin piece is good in *The Woman in White* (6)
26. They can bring on blackouts. Not so smart, signor (7)
28. Turn one state into another, get things together (4)
30. *Variation on Theme-Word A (8)*
32. A bit put on first, and . . . voilà! (2-2)
34. Railroad yard one hung around in, making tracks (8)
35. Act naughty (just a little grass) (4)
36. One final letter follows this: and it's settled (9)
39. Sawing wood is finally sawing wood (10)
40. *Variation on Theme-Word C (8)*
41. *Theme-Word A (4)*

DOWN

1. Broken finger put me on the edge! (6)
2. Obscure U.S. acronym built without any order (14)
3. It's like housing soft fruit to build crops up (7)
4. Kind of Iraqi cheese-maker announced (4)
5. Not a bit of training required for *A Christmas Carol* (4)
6. Measures Catholic deliverers (4)
7. Get horny covering clinch? (4)
8. *Variation on Theme-Word A (9)*
9. The "Yes" had everyone embracing light coverup! (8)
12. Set up used for farm all around England (5)
13. Waver from choppers: husbandless Queen Elizabeth (6)
16. Dock in low circle (7)
17. Cross, exit up (4)
19. Those coming out for a Socialist presidential candidate (4)
20. Carry about revised list, ready for a fight (9)
21. Tramp around Center to diddle with a man's faith (8)
24. Bank response is heartless (4)
27. *Variation on Theme-Word C (6)*
29. *Variation on Theme-Word B (6)*
31. Dirty, heading off drunk (5)
33. Live and thrive, losing nothing (5)
37. Love loving men and women—it can hold you together (3)
38. Conquistadors said, "It's gold or nothing!" (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Themes and Variations," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by February 12. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the December puzzle, "Morphology," are Webster McBride, Berkeley, California; Martin Siebold, Rockaway, New Jersey; and Walter Sondheim, Baltimore, Maryland.



FINDINGS

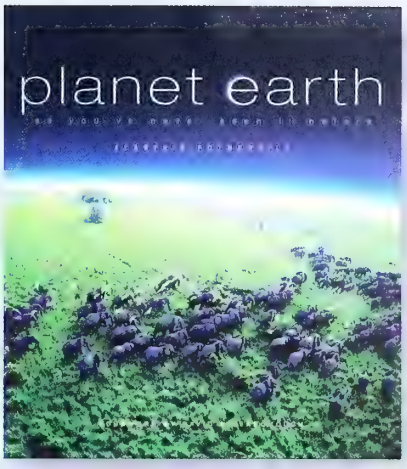
The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization warned that livestock such as cows, pigs, sheep, and chickens are among the world's top three environmental threats: the agency said that livestock production, largely driven by the demand for meat, pollutes water, destroys biodiversity, and, when the entire production cycle is taken into account, produces more greenhouse gases than the transportation sector. Scientists demonstrated that halal and kosher butchers, contrary to traditional beliefs, need not bleed slaughtered animals to death while they are awake; animals that were stunned before being bled drained just as quickly and completely as those that were not stunned. Archaeologists reported that Neanderthals practiced cannibalism. Antidepressant drugs can improve one's sense of taste, a study found, and China agreed to ban organ-transplant tourism. A new kind of male contraceptive pill was announced that men can simply take a few hours before sex, and chewable spearmint-flavored birth-control pills for women are in stores now. Mallard ducks were dying by the thousands in southern Idaho, and sewage effluent from the Boulder, Colorado, Wastewater Treatment Plant can change male fish into females in just seven days.

James Lovelock, the father of the Gaia hypothesis, said that the earth has a fever, and predicted that a warmer planet would be unlikely to support more than 500 million humans. He praised efforts to halt global warming but said they wouldn't do much good. "It is a bit like if your kidneys fail you can go on dialysis—and who would refuse dialysis if death is the alternative. We should think of it in that context." British researchers discovered that small plastic pellets known as mermaids' tears are poisoning the seas. Scientists said that phytoplankton, the tiny ocean plants that make up the base layer of the food chain and are responsible for half the photosynthesis on Earth, are suffering a persistent decline because of ocean warming. Arctic sea ice will almost disappear in summertime by 2040, predicted the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and geologists said that global warming might cause shallow deposits of frozen methane to melt, thus accelerating climate change. NASA announced that it will establish a permanent moon colony by 2024.

Dark-energy prospectors concluded from a study of ancient supernovae that the mysterious repulsive force was at work in the universe as soon as 5 billion years after the big bang, which would tend to undermine theories holding that dark energy was an attractive force in the early universe. French physicists built a tabletop particle accelerator. Astronomers found evidence, in the form of newly carved gullies, that liquid water has flowed on Mars within the last five years; skeptics suggested that the channels were made by avalanches of carbon dioxide or rivers of dust. A giant tsunami was observed passing across the face of the sun. Yet another black hole was observed eating a star. New studies found that the brains of psychopaths are abnormal; that new mothers are more likely to go crazy; that left-handed people are better at multitasking. A female psychiatrist claimed that women talk more than men. Researchers at Los Alamos National Laboratory taught bees to sniff out explosives, and computer scientists claimed to have developed a self-aware, curious robot that can diagnose its own problems and take concrete steps to heal itself. ■

16mm film stills from "Violent Pop Paintings," by Joan Wallace. Courtesy the artist and Dinter Fine Art, New York City

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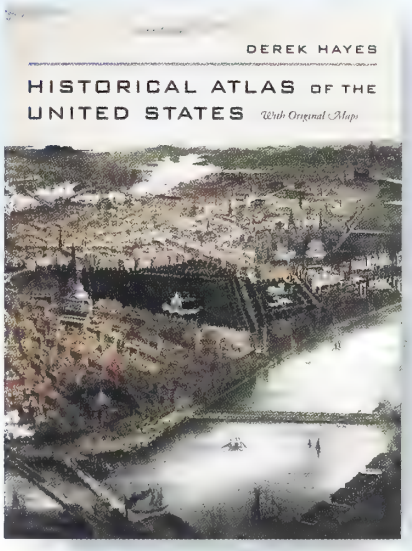
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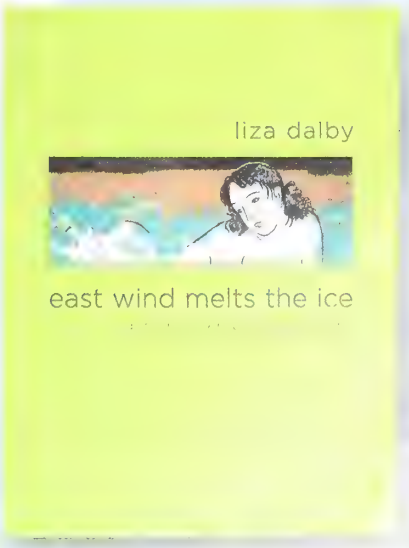
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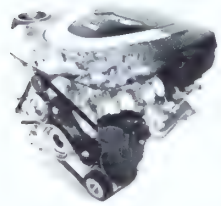


fig. 1

THE ICONIC DESIGN FEATURES SIDE WINDOWS WITH NO B-PILLARS INTERRUPTING THE VIEW, YET HAS THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF A TRADITIONAL COUPE. AND IT'S JUST ONE OF THIS VEHICLE'S MANY ENGINEERING WONDERS.

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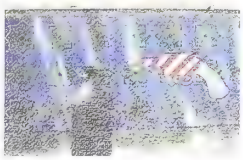
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Cover: Photograph of a mural in front of the former United States Embassy in Tehran, 2005 (detail). Lenses Advanced Objects

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LETTERS

A Schoolroom of One's Own

Having once undertaken an historiographic study of high school textbooks, I read with interest Jeff Sharlet's essay on fundamentalist reimaginings of the past ("Through a Glass, Darkly," December). I share Sharlet's low esteem for most Christian homeschool curricula, but I find mainstream textbooks are often driven by equally suspect historical teleologies. Sadly, Sharlet's essay lends credence to conservative Christian claims that the secular left obscures the history of American religion. To cite one example, he describes a fundamentalist author as emphasizing "history's losers, forgotten Americans—minor political figures such as John Winthrop." Winthrop, the founding governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and perhaps the most important spokesman for New England Puritanism, is hardly a marginal figure in the cultural and political history of Anglo-America.

Secularized narratives can be just as intellectually dishonest as theological ones. Sharlet closes his article by exclaiming that "Fundamentalism is writing us [secular people] out of history." Might not conservative Christians make the same complaint?

Sean McEnroe
San Francisco

Perhaps evangelical Christians are predominant among homeschoolers, but they are not the entirety. Many people have kept their children out of school so that they would not be indoctrinated or "dumbed down," to use a phrase of former New York State teacher-of-the-year John Taylor Gatto. Compulsive schooling, the brainchild of industrial magnates in the late 1800s, had the repugnant goal of creating a docile, easily exploited workforce. Schooling was, and is, intended to create parameters within which we are allowed to think. My children, whom I homeschooled, can think independently, express outrage when it's appropriate, and find time to read *Harper's*. They're a minority in the homeschooling world, but they are also a minority in mainstream America.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

There are, of course, some excel-nt schoolteachers. But schools emselves are antidemocratic and ar great responsibility for the eeplike behavior of our compatri-s. To dismiss homeschooling itself dysfunctional is to eliminate a otentially powerful tool for re-essing the greater dysfunction of ociety. To assume that home-hooling belongs to evangelical hristians is no more accurate or ir than to assume that the whole ountry does.

enny Teal
lystic, Conn.

In his essay, Jeff Sharlet suggests nat Dutch theologian and states-nan Abraham Kuyper was a prog-nitor of Rousas John Rushdoony's heocratic project. This is over-eaching. Although Kuyper was ritical of the divide between the acred and the secular (particularly s inherited from the Enlighten-nent), his critique did not entail ny pretension to theocracy. Its central theme, "sphere sovereignty," carefully and rigorously distinguished between the proper realms of authority for the state, the church, and commerce—a Dutch rendition of the "wall of separation." As prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905, Kuyper translated his vision into a robust pluralism that has never really been entertained in the United States, not even by the left.

In addition, the legacy of Francis Schaeffer is also complex. Granted, the later works of Schaeffer gave license to the rants of Jerry Falwell and Tim LaHaye, as well as others, but a significant number of scholars and activists shaped by Schaeffer's early writings have articulated a mode of cultural critique that explicitly rejects the campaign of "culture war," for reasons that Schaeffer himself articulated.

James K. A. Smith
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Empire Falls?

The photograph of the National Mall accompanying Chalmers Johnson's January essay on imperial America, "Republic or Empire," unfortunately predates the addition of the National World War II Memorial to the "monumental core" of Washington, D.C. Dedicated in 2004, this sprawling, neoclassically themed structure—embellished with granite pillars, triumphal arches, bronze wreaths and eagles, and stirring inscriptions—exemplifies Johnson's insights about the current administration's "imperial ambitions." Ostensibly dedicated to the "greatest generation," it more obviously aims to seduce contemporary audiences to the glories of war. Moreover, its celebrated purpose as a war memorial has markedly shifted national and popular understanding of two other major monuments on the National Mall. Neither the Lincoln Memorial nor the Washington Monument has traditionally been viewed as a war

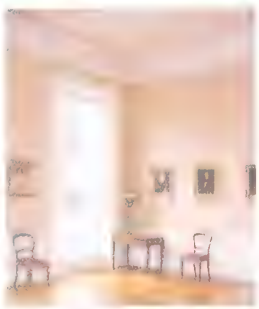


The Great Writers of Ireland

James Joyce



The eldest of ten surviving children, James Joyce was born in 1882 and grew up in the Dublin suburb of Rathmines. Joyce was educated by Jesuits, and while he would eventually reject his Catholic upbringing, his relationship to Catholicism deeply influenced his work. As a student at University College Dublin, Joyce focused his studies on modern languages. Upon graduating in 1902, he left for Paris to pursue medicine, but returned to Dublin after only a few months due to his mother's declining health. He began work on his first book of poems, *Chamber Music*, as well as the story that would later become *A Portrait of the Artist of a Young Man*. Around the same time, Joyce met his wife-to-be, Nora Barnacle, who would later inspire the character Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*. The couple left Ireland in late 1904, shortly after the publication of Joyce's first story. They eventually settled in Trieste, where he wrote *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and his only play, *Exiles*. Joyce went on to live in Zurich and Paris, returning only infrequently to Ireland. While Joyce spent much of his adult life abroad, his hometown of Dublin served as the backdrop for much of his work. In 1922, Joyce published his seminal work, *Ulysses*, the action of which takes place over the course of a single day, June 16, 1904, [illegible] *Ulysses* in [illegible] *Ulysses*, "I [illegible] Dublin so completely [illegible] suddenly disappeared [illegible] could be reconstructed [illegible] *Ulysses* [illegible] the [illegible] novel, *Finnegans Wake*, [illegible] 1939. Joyce influenced [illegible] writers and scholars, including Samuel Beckett. The James Joyce Centre in Dublin was established in 1996 to continue the exploration of Joyce's life and work.



The Kenmare Corner at The James Joyce Centre

Tourism Ireland

memorial. Now, however, they serve as militarized, monumental bookends to the ever-expanding U.S. imperial project.

Erika Doss
Professor of Art History
University of Colorado
Boulder

Chalmers Johnson's critique of American history over the past fifty years is intellectually unassailable. I would, however, suggest a third alternative to the two possibilities he sees (revolt of the generals, bankruptcy) for reining in the commercial and military colossus that the United States has become. Because empire was, in part, forged by a coherent ideology of economic and cultural expansion, it can be undone by equally compelling countervailing ideas. It is incumbent upon intellectual elites, educators, and citizens sharing Johnson's concerns to confront the assumptions of empire and fundamentally alter the debate about America's future. When the sufficiently concerned begin asking whether we should, rather than how we might, continue complicity with rampant militarism and commercialism, an intellectual tipping point will be reached, and a build-down can commence.

David Dilco
Professor of History
Saddleback College
Mission Viejo, Calif.

Woe, Canada

The December Reading "Our Home and Native Brand" refers to the "firing" of Emeritus Scientist Andrew Okulitch. Members of the emeritus scientist program are not employees; they are retired scientists who continue to contribute their time and expertise to Natural Resources Canada. As deputy minister, I am responsible for managing the department, and when Dr. Okulitch was removed from the program for sending a disrespectful email to his colleagues criticizing the use of the phrase "Canada's New Government," I was concerned. I believed that the decision had been made precipitously and infringed on some of the core values held by the Public Service of Canada.

These values allow public servants to provide the highest level of service to Canadians while ensuring our ability to remain politically neutral. They also allow us to question—within reason—activities that might hinder our political neutrality. Okulitch was welcomed back to continue in his role as an emeritus scientist.

Cassie L. Doyle
Deputy Minister
Natural Resources Canada
Ottawa

As a Canadian citizen living in the United States, sufficiently distanced and yet still involved, I sympathize with Andrew Okulitch's balanced and long view of governmental policies and the longevity of particular politicians. There are indeed public servants who wax and wane at the whim of ego, party, and common sense. What does not wane, though, is the ballooned sense of self and significance that fills so many politicians' brains with something other than reason. The assistant deputy minister's reactions to Okulitch and the pomposity of his response are wonderful examples of this narcissistic inflation. Canada's New Government, indeed.

Terrance Millet
Albany, Oreg.

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NOTEBOOK

Terror Alerts

By Lewis H. Lapham

One thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era. By day it pursues its enemies. It is cunning and ruthless, it sends its bloodhounds everywhere. By night it feeds on images of disaster: the sack of cities, the rape of populations, pyramids of bones, acres of desolation.

—J. M. Coetzee

Count the number of movies these days that play to America's fear of losing its way in the world, and it's a wonder that Congress doesn't appoint an Iraq Study Group drawn from the company of studio executives seated poolside in Santa Monica and Beverly Hills. The Hollywood field commanders might not know the difference between an Arab and a Turk, or how much to tip the lieutenant for valet parking the tank, but Western civilization they know to be running low on its stores of weapons-grade triumphalism, and dystopia they recognize as a travel destination no farther away than next month's bomb blast in Paris or Wichita Falls. Such at least was the holiday message brought to Manhattan's Cineplex screens last Christmas with the big-ticket movies storming the objective of an Academy Award, among them *Babel*, *Apocalypto*, *Blood Diamond*, *Letters from Iwo Jima*, *The Good Shepherd*, and *Children of Men*. Twinkling with the glitter of box-office celebrity (Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Clint Eastwood, Clive Owen, Angelina Jolie, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mel Gibson, Robert De Niro), the images of disaster came wrapped in the ribbons of critical acclaim—"nervously plausible future," "frighteningly, violently precarious," a "glorious bummer that lifts you to the rafters, transporting you with the greatness of its filmmaking."

The superlatives speak to the art of reformatting news bulletins as fashion statements. The set designs strive to match the CNN broadcasts from Baghdad, Ramallah, and Darfur, the foregrounds decorated with dead children, burning cars, fortified checkpoints, shattered glass, dismembered corpses, pillars of smoke. The cinematography dotes lovingly on the blood-smeared streets envisioned by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as "the face of the early part of the twenty-first century," the Moroccan desert and the jungles of West Africa seen as projections of the not-too-distant future slouching towards the suburbs of San Diego. Intent upon the composition of metaphors deserving a place in the Book of Revelation, the filmmakers don't give much thought to the problems of character and plot, which is just as well because many of the actors speak in strange tongues (Japanese, Yucatec, Berber, Spanish, Krio), their voices heard as sounds indistinguishable from the twittering of birds in a godforsaken wilderness.

In the absence of coherent narrative or intelligible speech, how then to respond to the elevated terrorist alerts? If in Hollywood as in Washington the authors of political pulp fiction shape the product to reassure or entertain as many people as possible, it's safe to assume that the postcards from the frontiers of the apocalypse admit of at least two interpretations, one of them likely to be preferred by audiences that wish to withdraw our troops from Iraq, the other by theatergoers who support the Bush Administration's plan to send more and heavier hired guns.

The first variant offers the gift of redemption. The doomed heroes of *Blood Diamond* and *Children of Men* appear in the opening sequences marked with the stigmata of cynicism and despair—Leonardo DiCaprio as a heartless, former mercenary soldier engaged in the illegal diamond trade in Sierra Leone during the civil war, in 1999, Clive Owen as an alienated intellectual in the city of London fast-forwarded to the year 2027 and there imagined as a pyramid of industrial wreckage and desolation of lost souls. Owen feels "like shit, all day every day"; DiCaprio inhabits a "shit world" in which "killing is a way of life" embraced by the multinational corporations and revolutionary gangs pillaging a country that "God left a long time ago." Neither man believes himself capable of an act of charity or conscience. The movies prove them wrong; against their will and better judgment both men find themselves transformed into imitations of Christ. From the dead moon of Iwo Jima, Clive Owen rescues a young black woman pregnant with [illegible] the year 2027 has become [illegible] a human baby's [illegible] recovery of her compassion in a refugee camp resembling [illegible] present-day Gaza, [illegible] and child

Lewis H. Lapham is the National Correspondent for Harper's Magazine.

Paramount. The movie ends with Danny dancing through the ground of the Zap Dandy, visible in the juice in the name, thus suggesting a major key ripe with the promise of civic redemption.

DiCaprio does give up his life for the sake of a child, an eight-year-old African boy captured by rebels, programmed to mouth agitprop, and trained to the practice of serial murder. The boy's father, a simple fisherman, stumbles across a diamond so valuable and rare that its price on the market in Amsterdam must admit the seller to the gardens of an earthly Paradise. DiCaprio sets out to steal the stone, but halfway through the film he meets a beautiful American journalist and succumbs to a change of heart. Love blooms, DiCaprio turns his talent for killing against his former associates and arranges the boy's escape from Africa (together with the father and the diamond) in a light plane lifting off into a Norman Rockwell sunset. DiCaprio stays behind to die of his wounds, but the beautiful journalist doesn't let the world forget the meaning of his sacrifice. She writes a magazine article in which she exposes the wickedness of the African resource wars. The movie ends with an exhortation to the buyers of engagement rings at Cartier and Tiffany to remember that it is up to the consumer to insist that the diamond is conflict-free.

Although most clearly stated in *Blood Diamond* and *Children of Men*, the theme of redemption wanders through the existential gloom of *Babel*, infiltrates the headquarters of the CIA in *The Good Shepherd*, lurks in the forests of *Apocalypto*, hides in caves in *Letters from Iwo Jima*. In *The Good Shepherd*, Matt Damon discovers the capacity for true emotion taken from him during his long years of service in America's bodyguard of lies; Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett in *Babel* come to recognize in the person of a Moroccan villager the presence of a fellow human being, thus stumbling upon the discovery that there's more to life than misery. On Iwo Jima in March 1945, the death of Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, like the death of Leonidas the Spartan at Thermopylae in 480 B.C., invests the horror of war with the meaning of immortal sacrifice; Mel Gibson's noble savage learns from his trials by combat that the time has come for what the subtitles translate as "a new beginning."

In one way or another, the storylines reiterate Hollywood's Christmas message to worried environmentalists and concerned human-rights activists: Yes, maybe it's true that America is busy at the task of devouring the earth, our global financial markets blind to the wretchedness of the naked and undernourished poor, deaf to the cries of drowning polar bears, but all is not lost. We might know that America is doing things that good people shouldn't be doing, but because we feel bad about it, sorry for the luckless victims of unfortunate circumstance, we haven't been robbed of our humanity. We have feelings, feelings as innocent and fine as the ones worn on the sleeves of this year's Democratic presidential candidates, and because we have feelings, our moral perfections remain intact, and our conscience, like the flag at old Fort McHenry, is still there. The guarantee presumably comes as a comfort to theatergoers looking for the cinematic equivalents of a federal witness protection program.

Audiences seated further to the Republican or Christian right don't need to be told that their hearts are pure or that their cause is just. Both propositions they take on faith and know to be a fact. Through no fault of its own, America now finds itself surrounded by sinister enemies as numberless as the names for grief—by communicable diseases and corrupt Russians as well as by angry Muslims and poisoned oceans—and therefore we're justified in the use of any and all means necessary (no matter how brutal or seemingly barbaric) to cleanse the world of its impurities. To theatergoers secure in the righteousness that all Americans inherit at birth, Hollywood's glorious bummers invite interpretation not as assuagings of doubt but as calls to arms. Behold the world for what it is—a raging of beasts and a writhing of serpents. Get used to it, harden the resolve, defend the homeland against the deadly imports of unlicensed evil. Know that the war on terror will be with us for the next forty years and that the way forward in Iraq as in *Apocalypto* and *Children of Men* is through the splashing of blood and the trampling out of the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

The stronger line of film appreciation accords with the geopolitical thinking of President George W. Bush, also with the enthusiasms of the Washington warrior intellectuals who continue to hold fast, despite the results of last November's election, to the neoconservative doctrines of forward deterrence and preemptive strike—obliterate Iran's nuclear-weapons laboratories before the mullahs can assemble a bomb, intimidate North Korea, punish China, deploy the tactic of targeted assassination. On the latter point, *National Review* last August published an article entitled "An Arrow in Our Quiver," in which the author, Michael Rubin, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, argued that it was foolish on the part of the United States to make unlawful the loosing of the assassin's arrow, so useful a "policy tool," against foreign heads of state clearly identified as the scum of the earth. Rubin conceded that in some quarters of American opinion "there remains a gut-level revulsion to assassination," but he found the squeamishness more prevalent among the country's effete academics than among "ordinary Americans."

The observation has become a commonplace around Dick Cheney's campfires in Wyoming. As often as not it leads to a series of further remarks about how as a people we've become too rich and too comfortable for our own good, that having gone soft in the head as well as the heart, we've misplaced our *joie du combat*, forgotten how to take casualties, lost touch with our inner barbarian. John Podhoretz, one of the more ferocious apostles of American empire, ad-

essed the problem in a newspaper lumn published last summer in the *ew York Post* during the weeks nen Israel was sending its raiding rties into southern Lebanon. The raelis were being condemned in e world press for inflicting disproortionate damage on the city of eirut, also for leaving behind in the ebanese countryside a plantation of many as one million unexploded luster bombs—small objects resemling a child's toy, stuck in the anches of olive trees, buried in the ubble of what once were villages, rewn across farm fields, orchards, oads, school playgrounds. Taking ffense at the suggestion that somehow Israel had committed atrocities, odhoretz asked a number of momentous questions that could as easily have occurred to Lieutenant General Kuribayashi:

"Could World War II have been won by Britain and the United States if the two countries did not have it in them to firebomb Dresden and nuke Hiroshima and Nagasaki?"

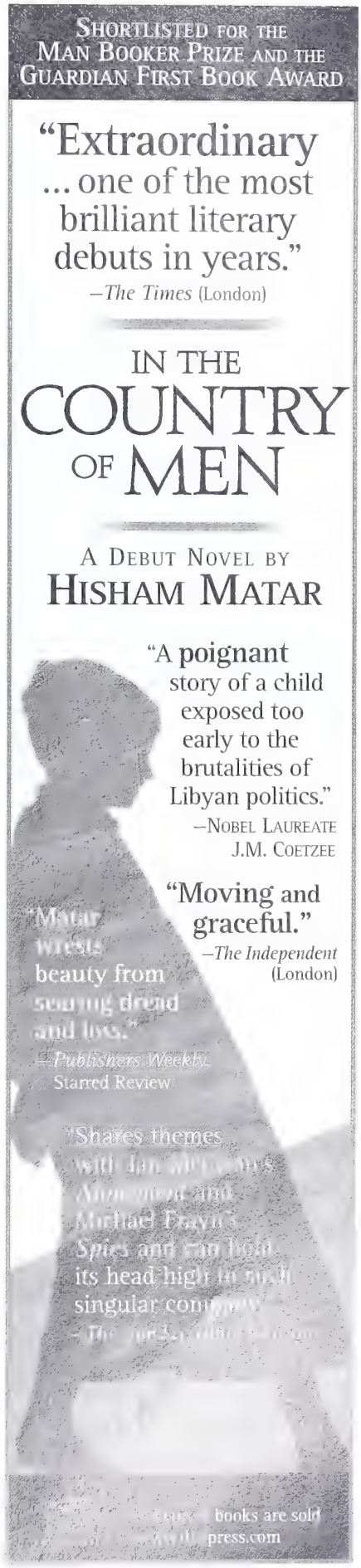
"What if liberal democracies have now evolved to a point where they can no longer wage war effectively because they have achieved a level of humanitarian concern for others that dwarfs any really cold-eyed pursuit of their own national interests?"

"And as for the United States, what if we have every tool at our disposal to win a war—every weapons system we could want manned by the most superbly trained military in history—except the ability to match or exceed our antagonists in ruthlessness?"

Neither Mr. Rubin nor Mr. Podhoretz should have much trouble finding work in Hollywood, if not as technical advisers updating the list of America's enemies, then as library scouts looking for doomsday scenarios (the sack of Corinth, the Albigensian Crusade) that haven't already been made into dystopian romance by Steven Spielberg or converted into self-fulfilling prophecies by the military strategists in Washington. During the same week that I was making the rounds of Manhattan's movie screens, the *New York Times* was reporting a boom in the American arms trades—next year's Pentagon budget pegged at $560 billion, together with an additional $100 billion in supplemental spending that President Bush is likely to seek this spring for Iraq and Afghanistan; gains of 30 and 40 percent in last year's stock prices for Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and General Dynamics. None of the industry spokesmen foresaw a dwindling of the profit margins as a result of the unhappiness in Congress about the bungling of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The gentleman from Lockheed Martin figured that the Democrats couldn't bear the risk of being seen as disloyal Americans abandoning our troops in time of war: "You certainly cannot deny that there is a lot of uncertainty in the world—North Korea, Iran, Iraq. The Democratic Congress will see the reality of the dangerous world we live in, and will make decisions accordingly."

So strong is the demand for the myth of the apocalypse that the Pentagon is giving away or selling at steep discounts its old, unused, or unwanted weapons (secondhand helicopters, torpedoes, M16 rifles, utility landing craft, missiles, ammunition, patrol boats, jet aircraft, and a wind tunnel) to smaller countries (Pakistan, Jordan, Guatemala, Yemen, Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Portugal) that otherwise might be forced to content themselves with conflict-free merchandise and therefore be unable to stage the blood-smeared spectacles that inspire Hollywood to feats of glorious filmmaking.

Whether made in Washington or California, the images of disaster confirm the presence of a monstrous enemy in opposition to whom or what or which America can define itself both as the Old Testament Father in Heaven and the New Testament Son on the Cross. Both interpretations assume that we're the world's designated good guys, released from the prison of history and therefore free to imagine that our era will never pass, that our day will never die. The delusion constitutes the necessary instrument of power than no self-respecting military empire can afford to be without. ■





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HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that an Iraqi has fled his or her home since the beginning of the war : 1 in 8

Number of Iraqis who have been given refugee status in the United States since 2003 : 764

Number between 1999 and 2002 : 8,051

Percentage of U.S. military personnel in December who thought more troops should be sent to Iraq : 38

Percentage who said that success in Iraq was "not very likely" or "not at all likely" : 41

Percentage of U.S. voters who said in December that "America's best days" were "in the past" : 48

Number of consecutive months that the American workforce has spent more than its take-home pay : 20

Number of previous months since the Depression that this had been the case : 0

Average number of new banks chartered annually in the United States since 1995 : 167

Month when the total value of euros in circulation worldwide surpassed that of U.S. dollars : 6/2006

Average number of miles driven by an American in 2004 and 2005, respectively : 13,711, 13,657

Last year there was a decrease : 1980

Estimated amount that Americans lose each year by buying overheated gasoline, which has less energy per gallon : $959,000,000

Percentage change between 1990 and 1999 in the world's global carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels : +0.8

Percentage change between 2000 and 2005 : +3.2

Percentage of the world's fished species that have lost at least 90 percent of their peak populations : 29

Year by which the world's seafood will run out, at current rates of decline : 2048

Estimated portion of the earth where forests reduce global warming, through consumption of CO_2 : 1/3

Estimated portion where forests increase warming, by trapping more heat than their CO_2 consumption reduces : 1/3

Number of U.S. states where marijuana is the top cash crop : 12

Percentage change since 2002 in the number of U.S. teens using illegal drugs : –15

Percentage change in the number of adults in their fifties doing so : +63

Number of the 541 members of India's lower house of parliament who have been charged with crimes : 125

Number whose alleged crime is murder : 14

Minimum hourly wage last year of a member of the U.S. House of Representatives : $203.95

Minimum wage this year, given new rules that require more hours in session : $139.97

Official vote percentage with which Belarus's president was reelected last winter : 86

Percentage he says he actually got, before he "falsified" the number to make it acceptable to Europe : 93.5

Rank of the U.K. and the U.S., respectively, among thirty-six "nation brands" rated by worldwide polling last year : 1, 9

Rank of Turkey and Israel : 35, 36

Number of anti-Zionist Orthodox rabbis who appeared at Iran's conference to "discuss" the Holocaust last December : 6

Rank of Iran and the United States, respectively, among nations with the most living kidney donors per capita : 1, 2

Amount that Iran's tourism ministry says it pays travel agents for every Westerner they bring to the country : $20

Amount it pays for an Asian : $10

Estimated median personal wealth worldwide : $2,161

Average number of Legos owned by each person worldwide : 75

Estimated percentage of U.S. household spending that is controlled or influenced by children under 14 : 47

Minimum number of hits received each month by the GM website Hummerkids.com : 40,000

Portion of female college students and graduates who say attending Spring Break results in "increased sexual activity" : 3/4

Portion of Girls Gone Wild footage that is shot in the month of March : 1/4

Figures cited are the latest available as of January 2007. Sources are listed on page 72.
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READINGS

[Story]

KNALL

By Primo Levi, from A Tranquil Star, *a collection of his stories appearing for the first time in English, to be published next month by W. W. Norton. The story was included in Levi's 1971 volume* Vizio di forma. *Translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein.*

It's not the first time something like this has happened here: a habit, or an object, or an idea becomes, within a few weeks, almost universally widespread, without the newspapers or the mass media having anything to do with it. There was the craze for the yo-yo, then for Chinese mushrooms, then pop art, Zen Buddhism, the hula-hoop. Now it is time for the knall.

No one knows who invented it, but, to judge from the price (a four-inch knall costs the equivalent of 3,000 lire or a little more), it doesn't contain much in the way of costly materials or inventive genius or software. I bought one myself, down at the port, right in front of a cop, who didn't bat an eyelash. Of course I have no intention of using it. I just wanted to see how it works and how it's constructed: it seems a legitimate curiosity.

A knall is a small, smooth cylinder, as long and thick as a Tuscan cigar, and not much heavier: it is sold loose or in boxes of twenty. Some are solid-colored, gray or red, but the majority come in wrappers printed with revoltingly tasteless little scenes and comic figures, in the style of decorations on jukeboxes and pinball machines: a bare-breasted girl fires a knall at her suitor's enormous rear end; a pair of tiny Max and Moritz types with insolent expressions, chased by a furious farmer, turn at the last minute, knalls in hand, and the pursuer falls backward, kicking his long, booted legs in the air.

Nothing is known about the mechanism by which the knall kills, or at least nothing has been published to date. *Knall,* in German, means crack, bang, crash; *abknallen,* in the slang of the Second World War, came to mean "kill with a firearm," whereas the firing of a knall is typically silent. Maybe the name—unless it has a completely different origin, or it's an abbreviation—alludes to the moment of death, which in effect is instantaneous: the person who is struck—even if only superficially, on the hand or on the ear—falls lifeless immediately, and the corpse shows no sign of trauma, except for a small ring-shaped XXX at the point of contact, along the knall's geometric axis.

A knall can be used only once, then is thrown away. This is a neat, clean town, and knalls are not usually found on the sidewalks but only in the garbage cans on street corners and at tram stops. Exploded knalls are darker and more flaccid than unused ones; they are easily recognizable. It's not that they haven't been employed for criminal purposes: fortunately, we are still a long way from this. But in certain circles carrying a knall, quite openly—in a breast pocket, or attached to the belt, or

REASONS FOR THE PLAGUE

"Ballade Showing the Causes and Reasons for the Plague," by Eustache Deschamps, published in English for the first time in the Winter issue of The Paris Review. *A native of the Champagne region of France, Deschamps (c. 1340–1406) was a bailiff, a diplomat, and a correspondent of Chaucer's. Translated from the Middle French by Anne M. Dropick.*

Contaminated air, poisoned ground,
Infected bodies in the cemetery, and the dead
Scattered in the fields in grievous wars,
Latrines piled with infectious dung,
Stench from garbage dumped
In fields, towns, and castles,
Great filth and heaps of excrement,
Refuse which is foolhardy to make,
Stale, polluted air, and swine:
All of these cause plague in many places.

To have a gluttonous mouth, scurrilous life,
To drink and eat without appetite,
To sit long at table is dangerous to do,
And likewise to eat too many courses.
Eating overly salted venison, beef, oxen and pork,
Tench, eel, conger, all beasts,
Ocean fish, dairy products, fruit, leeks,
Onions and garlic, cheap wine with murky dregs,
Hard bread and unleavened cakes:
All of these cause plague in many places.

To live on water from swampy ground,
To be in heavy air when fog is thick,
Waking too early, leading a lewd life,
And to be stiff with anger are death.
To be too hot or too cold when doors are open,
To partake of spas and baths among those
Who are infected, putrid and depressed
Engenders many similar diseases
And such matters as in these prime examples:
All of these cause plague in many places.

Prince, one would do well in these special cases
And scurrilous circumstances, for one's health,
To flee from them all, or at least some.
One should purge the body and keep warm,
Since without protection from such defects,
All of these cause plague in many places.

behind one ear the way a pork butcher carries a pencil—has become de rigueur. Now, since knalls have an expiration date, like antibiotics or film, many people feel obliged to fire them before they expire, not so much out of prudence as because the firing of a knall has unusual effects, which, though they have been described and studied only in part, are already widely known among consumers. It shatters stone and cement and in general all solid materials—the harder the material the more easily. It pierces wood and paper, sometimes setting them on fire; it melts metals; in water it creates a tiny steaming whirlpool, which, however, disappears immediately. In addition, with a skillfully directed shot one can light a cigarette or even a pipe—a bravura move that, in spite of the disproportionate expense, many young people practice, precisely because of the risk involved. In fact, it has been suggested that this is why the majority of knalls are used for lawful purposes.

The knall is undoubtedly a handy device: it isn't metal, and hence its presence is not detected by common magnetic instruments or X-rays; it weighs and costs little; its action is silent, swift, and sure; it's very easy to dispose of. Some psychologists, however, insist that these qualities are not sufficient to explain the knall's proliferation. They maintain that its use would be limited to criminal and terrorist circles if setting it off required a simple movement, such as pressure or friction; however, the knall goes off only if it is maneuvered in a particular way, a precise and rhythmic sequence of twists in one direction and then the other—an operation, in short, that requires skill and dexterity, a little like unlocking the combination of a safe. This operation, it should be noted, is only hinted at but not described in the instructions for use that accompany every box. Therefore, shooting the knall is the object of a secret rite in which initiates indoctrinate neophytes, a rite that has taken on a ceremonial and esoteric character, and is performed in cleverly camouflaged clubs. We might recall here, as an extreme case, the grim discovery that was made in April by the police in F.: in the basement of a restaurant a group of fifteen twelve-year-old boys and a youth of twenty-three were found dead, all clutching in their right hand a discharged knall, and all displaying on the tip of the left ring finger the typical circular bruise.

The police believe that it's better not to draw too much attention to the knall, because doing so would only encourage its spread: this seems to me a questionable opinion, springing, perhaps, from the considerable impotence of the police themselves. At the moment, the only means at their disposal for aid in capturing the biggest knall dis-



COURTESY OK HARRIS WORKS OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

Newsstand No. 88 (Popular Words on the Net), *by Masaaki Sato, was on display in January at OK Harris Works of Art, in New York City.*

tributors, whose profits must be monstrous, are informers and anonymous telephone calls.

Being hit by a knall is certainly fatal, but only at close range; beyond a meter, it's completely harmless, and doesn't even hurt. This feature has had some unusual consequences. Moviegoing has decreased significantly, because audience habits have changed: those who go to the movies, alone or in groups, leave at least two seats between them and the other spectators, and if this isn't possible, often they prefer to turn in their tickets. The same thing happens on the trams, on the subway, and in the stadiums: people, in short, have developed a "crowd reflex," similar to that of many animals who can't bear the close proximity of others of their kind. Also the behavior of people on the streets has changed: many prefer to remain home, or to stay off the sidewalks, thus exposing themselves to other dangers, or obstructing traffic. Many, meeting face to face in hallways or on sidewalks, avoid going around each other, resisting each other like magnetic poles.

The experts have not shown excessive concern about the dangers connected with the widespread use of the knall. They would observe that this device does not spill blood, which is reassuring. In fact, it's indisputable

that the great majority of men feel the need, acute or chronic, to kill their neighbor or themselves, but it's not a matter of generic killing: in every instance they have the desire "to shed blood," "to wash away with blood" their own infamy or that of others, "to give their blood" to their country or other institutions. Those who strangle (themselves) or poison (themselves) are much less highly esteemed. In brief, blood, along with fire and wine, is at the center of a grand, glowing-red emotional nexus, vivid in a thousand dreams, poems, and idiomatic expressions: it is sacred and profane, and in its presence, man, like the bull and the shark, becomes agitated and fierce. Now, precisely because the knall kills without bloodshed, it's doubtful that it will last. Perhaps that's why, in spite of its obvious advantages, it has not, so far, become a danger to society.

[Transcripts]

THE WAR ON CHRISTMAS

From recordings quoted in an affidavit filed last December in Cook County, Illinois, by FBI agent Jared Ruddy, against twenty-two-year-old Derrick Shareef, who is accused of plotting to set off grenades in the CherryVale Mall in Rockford, Illinois. Shareef was arrested on December 6 after trading a pair of stereo speakers to an undercover federal agent for a pistol and four nonfunctioning grenades. The recordings were made by an acquaintance of Shareef's, indicated below as "CS," who was cooperating with federal authorities. In January, Shareef, a Muslim convert, pleaded not guilty to one count of attempting to damage or destroy a building by fire or explosion and one count of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction. The affidavit was posted on The Smoking Gun. In Arabic, kafir *means infidel,* ummah *means the Muslim community,* Juma *means Friday afternoon prayers, and* falous *means money.*

[*November 29, 2006, audio recording*]

CS: When you were talking to me earlier, you seemed really upset.

DERRICK SHAREEF: I was already upset from previous things.

CS: I don't know how serious you are, 'cause I gotta know.

SHAREEF: No, hell no, I don't talk calm when it comes to this, 'cause, man, the courthouse in DeKalb where I be going every month, them niggers do weak as hell. You clock the first three niggers they got at the door and you up in there, you know what I'm saying? And everything else is gonna have to be tactical. But with a courthouse, there's always a police station right down the block. I just want to smoke a judge.

CS: When you plan on doing this? Because we need to make specific plans and dates.

SHAREEF: What do you think? I like the holiday season. Hell, we ain't gonna hit nobody, just blow the place up. You gotta do stuff under severe weather conditions—snow, rain—because you see less pigs out there. That's tactical. I'm thinking stuff like city hall.

[*November 30, audio recording, driving to the CherryVale Mall*]

CS: All right, we gotta look at it this way, we want to disrupt Christmas.

SHAREEF: Oh, hell yeah, the mall is where it's at.

CS: You go in there and toss a grenade and no one's gonna know who did it.

SHAREEF: No one's gonna be expecting no shit like that. The last thing anybody's gonna be thinking about at the mall is a damn grenade. I swear by Allah, man, I'm down to live for the cause and die for the cause. We're gonna check out some places, see where you could possibly lob one. Do you toss it? Could you just sit it down and tip off, speed-walk away? [*Arriving at the CherryVale Mall*] I think, ah, if we do something like this, we gotta do it simultaneously, like you hit one spot and I'll do another one. Just meet back up, so it would create pandemonium, and nobody will really be looking for anyone suspicious 'cause it's 80 million people running.

CS: But if you ever want to back out, you gotta let me know before I make the phone call. I'm checking your heart now, 'cause I have to call my boy, man.

SHAREEF: I'm down.

CS: We ain't gonna get caught. Don't worry.

SHAREEF: I'm not worried about getting caught, not alive.

CS: If we die, then we die.

SHAREEF: I'm gonna fast for like three days before.

[*December 1, audio recording, driving to the CherryVale Mall*]

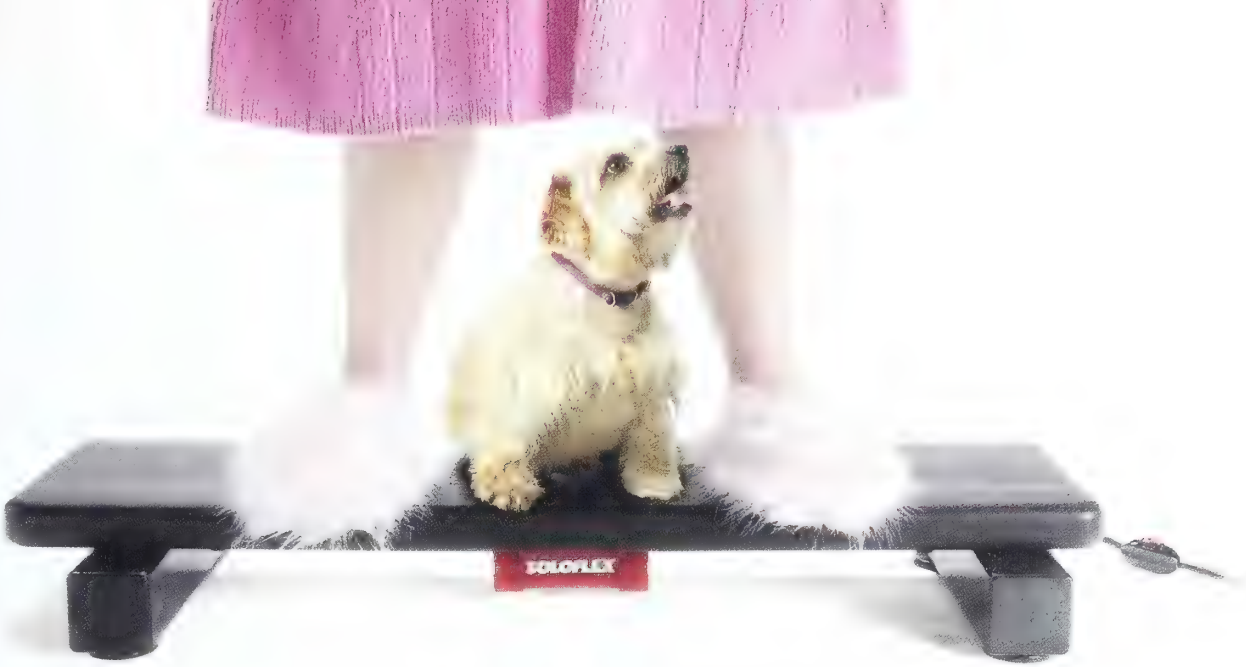
CS: He said he had an order for eleven pineapples.

SHAREEF: Shit, did he do that so he could give 'em to us wholesale?

CS: No, he said that he'd sell them to us for $50 a pop. You can change the time up to fifteen seconds.

SHAREEF: How do you do that?

CS: You crank it. There's a crank on it.

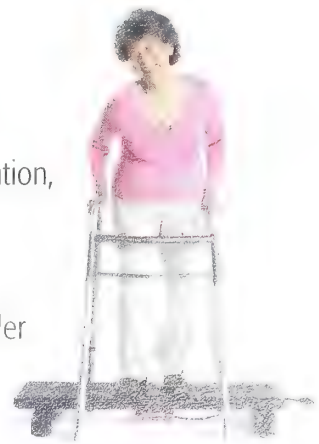


It works for doggies, too.

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was down the block from the mosque. I knew they did their thing on Saturdays, right? I was like, I'm gonna lay low out here, I'm gonna camp out overnight, be out there on Friday night after *huma*. And as soon as I see them fools going in the building, I was just going to go over there and shank one or two of them. They definitely gonna know that this shit ain't over and they not as safe as they thought.

[*Arriving at the CherryVale Mall*]

CS: This place is gonna be tore up in about two weeks.

SHAREEF: Damn, dude, niggers gonna be gloomy as hell out here. I don't know how the nationwide effect gonna be, but

CS: You don't think it's gonna be gloomy nationwide?

SHAREEF: I don't think it's gonna be gloomy nationwide like 9/11. Not this. This ain't big enough. It's big enough here locally.

CS: I'm glad, though, that you came up with the garbage can idea. That's sweet.

SHAREEF: That's pandemonium. The garbage going to be shrapnel.

CS: Don't forget, man, we should get the grenades sometime next week, so you should try to get as much *falous* as you can get, 'cause we need it.

SHAREEF: I got a little change in the bank.

CS: All you need is $100. That's two grenades.

SHAREEF: I'm pretty sure I can get more than that from my sister. If Allah wills it, a lot of people will be around that garbage can, that place is crowded.

CS: It's gonna be crowded, and that can is going to blow that whole area out. Upstairs and everything. And your favorite term is, Sprinkler systems coming on.

SHAREEF: Sprinklers coming on.

[*December 2, video recording*]

SHAREEF: This may be my last will and testament, the last words that I have spoken to those who know me, to those who do not know me. My name is Talib Abu Salam Ibn Shareef. I am twenty-two years of age. I am from America, and this tape is to let you guys know, who disbelieve in Allah, to let the enemies of Islam know, and to let Muslims alike know that the time for jihad is now. Be strong, O mujahedeen. Be strong, O brothers who want to fight for jihad. This is a warning to those who disbelieve, that we are here for you, and I am ready to give my life. May Allah protect me on this mission we conduct. Do not cry, do not mourn for me. Do not believe what the *kafir* will say when you read about me in the newspapers. Understand that your son is a strong man who believes and fears his Lord and will give his life.

[Gig]

AXIS OF EVIL: BOLD AS LOVE

From an announcement posted last fall on voiceofkorea.org, a website run out of Britain by Jean-Baptiste Kim, who claimed to represent North Korea's government. In January, Kim announced that he had cut ties with the government of North Korea and intended to start a business selling mobile phones in London.

If you are a band playing any kind of rock, including heavy metal, then you can participate in ROCK FOR PEACE in Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea. The concert will be held March 1 under the management of Voice of Korea. This is the first time in history that North Korea will allow Western musicians in the heart of Democratic People's Republic of Korea territory to play capitalist popular music. ROCK FOR PEACE will be the 2007 version of the Woodstock rock festival in 1969 but in a different location and with different goals. We welcome every musician as long as they are purely music-based without political intentions. There are a few restrictions and conditions, but any band will be considered even though you are from the U.S.A. The lyrics should not contain admirations of war, sex, violence, murder, drugs, rape, nongovernmental society, imperialism, colonialism, racism, anti-DPRK, or antisocialism.

[Lesson]

TRAGIC CARPET RIDE

From the screenplay for Chuchi Qhalin, or the Adventures of the Little Carpet Boy, *a puppet-based short film warning Afghan children about the dangers of land mines, produced by No Strings, a British nonprofit that uses puppets to educate children.*

STORYTELLER: Here in Afghanistan stories are more remembered than written, more spoken than read. They are passed from one storyteller to another, growing and changing like living things.

Chuchi Qhalin is alone on a mountain road at night, limping along a low wall on a twig crutch. He has already lost one leg from stepping on a land mine. He now sees a sign reading DANGER MINES, *stuck in the ground just behind a wall. He starts to climb over the wall. A skull on the sign suddenly comes to life.*

SKULL: Hey, you, Carpet Boy! Where do you think you are going?

CHUCHI QHALIN: To gather some firewood.

SKULL: Are you kidding! Don't you recognize me?

CHUCHI QHALIN: I guess so, but I'm cold. I want to make a fire.

SKULL: So you're going to collect firewood here?

CHUCHI QHALIN: Yeah, but don't worry. I'll be careful. I won't step on anything.

Chuchi Qhalin climbs the wall. There is a loud explosion. He flies through the air along with his twig crutch, his other leg, and much debris and smoke. He lands with a thud in front of the wall.

CHUCHI QHALIN: I lost my other leg! Now I'll never get home!

SKULL: I warned you!

CHUCHI QHALIN: I can't walk, and I'm so hungry and thirsty. I'll probably just die here.

Now with Jaladul, his camel, Chuchi Qhalin walks using a fork and a ladle he has found as legs. He continues walking on the mountain road until he is stopped by a goat and a toad who are standing near a UXO, *an undetonated bomb.*

GOAT & TOAD: Help us! We're starving!

CHUCHI QHALIN: I'm sorry. I can't help you. I don't have any food, and I don't know when I'm going to get back to my grandmother's home.

GOAT & TOAD: You're in luck. Right there is a nice metal thing. My friend and I are too weak to pull it from the ground. If you just pull it out for us, we'll take it to the market, sell it, and buy a nice big, delicious meal for all of us.

CHUCHI QHALIN: Okay!

Chuchi Qhalin starts to pull on the UXO. *He takes off his ladle leg and whacks the* UXO *with it. There is an explosion and he flies through the air, landing on the ground with his fork leg bent and an arm missing.*

CHUCHI QHALIN: I don't deserve to be a real boy. I have ignored my lessons about land-mine safety.

JALADUL: Maybe it's good that you're not a real boy, because your grandmother can fix you. She couldn't if you were a real boy.

STORYTELLER: We hope that you have learned to be brave and wise and always listen to the lessons about land-mine safety, because you can never be repaired as though you were a torn-up piece of old carpet.

[Promotion]

PARADISE BY THE DASHBOARD LIGHT

From the preview of a radio advertisement for Dennis Mitsubishi in Columbus, Ohio, leaked to the local media in September. After the Council on American-Islamic Relations issued a protest, the car dealership canceled its campaign. The ad was never broadcast.

Hi, this is Keith Dennis for Dennis Mitsubishi, and we want to keep you from joining the ranks of the nonbelievers. So we're launching a jihad on the automotive market in Columbus. No kidding. We've placed ISDs throughout our inventory. ISD stands for improvised sales devices, but you can call them salespeople if you want. They'll do whatever it takes to put you in an award-winning Mitsubishi SUV or truck for less than you ever thought possible. Like the Mitsubishi Raider pickup that can comfortably seat up to twelve jihadists in the back. Discounts five times a day. And to protect your private financial information, our salespeople will be wearing burkas all weekend long. It's only at Dennis Mitsubishi, where every Friday is Fatah Friday, with free rubber swords for all the children. Our prices are lower than the evildoers' every day—just ask the Pope.



"El canto despu[illegible] (Shortly after the meeting) 2004, by Luis González Palma, whose work was on view last year at Pan American Art Pro[illegible]

[Catalogue]

YOU HAVE TO SEE THIS

From a summary of responses to a survey by the FBI of bureau personnel, who were asked if they observed aggressive interrogation techniques at U.S. detention centers at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The survey was released in January by the FBI in response to a Freedom of Information Act suit by the American Civil Liberties Union.

On several occasions, witness (W) saw detainees (Ds) in interrogation rooms chained hand and foot in fetal position to the floor with no chair, food, or water; most urinated or defecated on themselves and were left there eighteen, twenty-four hours, or more. Once, the air-conditioning was so low that the barefoot D was shaking with cold. Another time, it was off, so the unventilated room was over 100 degrees; D was almost unconscious on floor with a pile of hair next to him (he had apparently been pulling it out throughout the night). Another time, it was sweltering hot and loud rap music played—D's hands and feet were chained, and he was in a fetal position on the floor. Upon inquiry, W was told that interrogators, military contractors, ordered [illegible]tment.

D was kept in darkened cell in Naval Brig at GTMO, then transferred to Camp Delta, where he gave no info. Then taken to Camp X-Ray and put in plywood hut. Interrogators yelled and screamed at him. One interrogator squatted over the Koran. Another day, a German shepherd was commanded to growl, bark, and show his teeth to the prisoner. Subsequently someone laughingly told the W, "You have to see this," and took him to an interrogation room where W saw a D with a full beard whose head was wrapped in duct tape.

D in darkened cell in Naval Brig where they planned to interrogate him for twenty-four hours straight; W was told Secretary Rumsfeld approved this technique. Saw interrogator straddle the Koran while D was handcuffed to chair, D held in chain-link cage with cover over top.

W observed sleep-deprivation interviews with strobe lights and loud music. Interrogator said it would take four days to break someone doing an interrogation in cycles of sixteen hours with lights and music on and four hours off.

Rumors that interrogator bragged about doing lap dance on D, another about making D listen to satanic black metal music for hours, then dressing as a priest and baptizing D to save him.

W walked into Camp Delta observation room and saw D rubbing his leg due possibly to being in

stress position. D was wearing leg irons and handcuffed with cuffs chained to waist. W was advised the chains were adjusted to force D to stand in "baseball catcher" position. D was being questioned by two military officers. D was previously held in brig and questioned for two months with no results. Permission had been granted to use "special interrogation techniques."

W saw D in interview room sitting on floor with an Israeli flag draped around him, loud music, and strobe lights.

Occasionally Ds complained of inappropriate behavior, i.e., incident in which D alleged female guard removed her blouse and, while pressing her body against a shackled and restrained D from behind, handled his genitalia and wiped menstrual blood on his head and face as punishment for lack of cooperation.

A detainee brought into interview shack at Camp X-Ray appeared to have broken fingers and facial injuries. W was told that D exhibited noncompliance with a prison guard and a rapid reaction team was brought in to bring D into compliance. He was in a plywood shack adjacent to "dog cages." D had black eye, facial cuts around nose, and taped fingers. He motioned to guards and said, "They."

[Tête-à-tête]

WHEN HENRY MET SADUN

From a December 17, 1975, memorandum of conversation recording a meeting in Paris between U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Sadun Hammadi. The meeting is believed to have been the first high-level diplomatic contact between the two nations since Iraq severed ties with Washington over the Six-Day War in 1967, one year before the Baath Party took power in a coup d'état. The document is part of a 28,000-page collection of Kissinger's memoranda of conversations released last May by the National Security Archive.

HENRY A. KISSINGER: Our two countries have not had much contact with each other in recent years, and I wanted to take this opportunity to establish contact. I know we won't solve all our problems in one meeting. It will take at least two. [*Laughter*]

SADUN HAMMADI: I am glad to see you, Your Excellency.

KISSINGER: Our attitude is that we do not think there is a basic clash of national interests between Iraq and the United States. Maybe you have a different view.

HAMMADI: We of course have different views, and I will tell you why. We believe the United States has been the major factor in building up Israel to what it is today.

KISSINGER: True.

HAMMADI: Israel is now a direct threat to Iraq's national security.

KISSINGER: How to Iraq?

HAMMADI: Whatever happens in the Arab world is interpreted as a threat to Israel.

KISSINGER: With all respect, what Israel does is less important than what the United States does.

HAMMADI: Even a change of government in Iraq would be interpreted as a threat to Israel.

KISSINGER: My impression is if you change your government in Iraq, they won't object. [*Laughter*]

HAMMADI: This is my painting of the picture now. You say the United States is using all its weight to bring about a settlement. But this is a settlement, not peace. A new wave of clashes will start.

[Note]

PARDON ME

From a June 28, 1993, letter written by Richard M. Nixon to Gerald R. Ford, after both attended funeral services for Nixon's wife, Pat. The letter was among several from Nixon to Ford released after the latter's death in December, by Bob Woodward of the Washington Post.

Dear Jerry,

I wanted you to know how much I appreciated Betty and your presence at the services for Pat.

As you undoubtedly noted, the emotion had caught up with me by the time we met after the services, and I did not adequately express my thanks to you then.

We go back a long time. One action of yours for which I will always be grateful was your going on a TV program when ABC had the bad manners to put Alger Hiss on to nail my coffin shut after my defeat for governor of California.

I have often said that when you win, you hear from everyone—when you lose, you hear from your friends. You have always measured up in that respect, and I shall always be grateful.



Notre '78, mixed media, 2005, by Sarah Nind, whose work is on exhibit this spring at Galerie de Bellefeuille, in Montreal

KISSINGER: I understand what you are saying. When I say we are willing to improve relations with Iraq, we can live without it. And we don't need Israel for influence in the Arab world. On the contrary, Israel does us more harm than good in the Arab world. I don't agree Israel is a permanent threat. How can a nation of 3 million be a permanent threat? If the issue is the existence of Israel, we can't cooperate. But if the issue is more normal borders, we can cooperate. We have moved toward normalization with the other Arab countries—except Libya.

HAMMADI: We are on the other side of the fence. We have the right to ask many questions.

KISSINGER: Please.

HAMMADI: Given the record, what can make us believe the United States won't continue the policy of the last twenty years of giving unlimited support?

KISSINGER: I think the balance in America is shifting, as long as the Arabs—if I can be frank—don't do anything stupid.

HAMMADI: What are the Israelis thinking?

KISSINGER: First, they want to get rid of me. Also, they hope the Arabs will again adopt an anti-American line so they can say they are the only American friend in the Middle East. What they want is what you predict—that they be the only friend. We want other friends.

HAMMADI: Do you think a Palestinian state is possible?

KISSINGER: You can't do it now. I have told friends that peace isn't a final end. Wars begin elsewhere between countries that are at peace. Only in the Middle East do wars begin between countries that are at war. But we support the existence of Israel. We draw the line at the destruction of Israel.

HAMMADI: Your Excellency, your and our points of view are different. You are for the existence of Israel; we are not. So on this point I don't think we can agree. Maybe we can talk of other aspects. For example, we read in the newspapers that the United States was providing weapons to the Kurdish movement in the north of Iraq.

KISSINGER: That goes too far. We were not the principal country involved there.

HAMMADI: But the United States contributed arms, in a way.

KISSINGER: In a way.

HAMMADI: And the Kurds wanted to cut Iraq to pieces.

KISSINGER: There is no purpose discussing the past. I can only tell you our intentions. I understand your suspicions.

HAMMADI: Our concern is any time any country exercises its sovereign right, the United States gets involved in an activity that goes to the heart of its integrity.

KISSINGER: All right. When you come to New York, we can meet. You will see. Our attitude is not unsympathetic to Iraq. Don't believe; watch it.

HAMMADI: We are a small state. We have to be more careful.

KISSINGER: Things will evolve. We can stay in touch through Washington or New York.

HAMMADI: Finally, I would like to say this Kurdish problem is of vital importance to us.

KISSINGER: I can assure you. There will be no concern. One can do nothing about the past.

HAMMADI: Not always.

[Conspiracy]

THE BAKING OF THE PRESIDENT, 1963

From a June 14, 1963, letter to Matthew McCloskey, then U.S. ambassador to Ireland. The letter was among several documents released in December by Ireland's Department of Justice relating to threats against President John F. Kennedy during his visit to Ireland that summer. An Garda Síochána is the name of Ireland's federal police.

On behalf of a group of Irishmen (belonging neither to the Old IRA nor to any of its modern counterparts, such as those recently engaged in cross-border skirmishes) united to protest (in what promises to be a spectacular episode) against the grossly insulting photographs and pen-pictures sent to American newspapers about Irish people in general and County Wexford people in particular, we wish to inform Your Excellency as follows:

Without causing any threat to the health or life of President Kennedy during his forthcoming visit to Ireland, we will carry out a foolproof (once Irishmen plan for Ireland's sake, they never fail) plan to have a sizable bag of white flour emptied over him at a place and at a point where the episode will make its greatest and most sensational impact. (Other similar but more involved techniques of embarrassment were dropped in favor of the one outlined above, mostly because they risked some remote danger to the president's well-being.) There will be no danger of an unopened heavy bag of flour being either deposited upon or thrown at the president.

But he will be covered in the best-milled Irish flour from head to foot in full view of the TV cameras unless Your Excellency a) issues a statement to Irish newspapers deprecating and apologizing for the insulting pictures "confirming" the opinions so widely held by the "Great Gullible American Public" that the Irish are a backward race, sunk in dirt, poverty, superstition, etc.; and b) issues a statement to the leading newspapers of the United States of America condemning the lengths to which certain American cameramen and reporters have gone in defaming the name and reputation of the Irish people in recent weeks.

Neither the Garda authorities (certain of whom are secretly in sympathy with us) nor the Ministry of Justice (at least two officials there would willingly aid us) are aware of the indignation which is seething beneath the surface in Ireland at this moment. It is earnestly to be hoped that our "bag-of-flour" protest will be the only one. It would be too bad if other groups, also fed up with American "pig-in-the-parlour" and "begorrah-an'-bejabers" attitudes toward Ireland (largely because it has remained so Catholic, and has so strongly resisted Masonic Anglo-Saxon tyranny in the past), were to throw bricks or bottles at the president!

We admire President J. Fitzgerald Kennedy, but unless Your Excellency apologizes in his name, he pays. Your Excellency may take it as an absolute certainty that by the time we will have put our plan into execution, President Kennedy will be rather aptly the "white" president from the White House.

[Dispatch]

ARMIES OF THE NET

By Wagner James Au, from "Fighting the Front," posted January 15, Martin Luther King Day, on New World Notes, a blog devoted to breaking news on events inside Second Life, an online "virtual world." Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the Front National and a candidate for president in France, advocates expelling the estimated 400,000 illegal immigrants in the country. First-round elections are scheduled for next month.

The first night I arrived at the protest against the Second Life headquarters of Front National, the far-right French political party of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the building was ringed on all sides by protesters with signs to wave and statements to distribute. By the second night, many Residents had armed themselves. Multicolored explosions and constant gunfire shredded the air of Porcupine, a shopping island that Front National had inexplicably picked for the site of their virtual world HQ.

It's unclear when the shooting started, or who fired the first shot. Several witnesses claim Front National security forces assaulted them with "push guns," weapons capable of flinging Residents across the island. In the final days of [illegible] flared from both sides.

Since Porcupine is [illegible] area, weapons there have about as much power as pointing a finger [illegible]

saying "bang." But get enough projectiles flying, and server lag is bound to grind anyone's use of the area to a halt.

One enterprising insurrectionist created pig grenades, fixed them to a flying saucer, and sent several whirling into Front National headquarters, where they'd explode in a starburst of porcine shrapnel.

A few native English speakers joined the fray, with at least one unhelpfully shouting, "The French stink!" and the like.

In slow motion, I wade up to TonTonCarton Yue, who is strafing the Front National building with a chaingun usually associated with an AC-130 gunship. I ask him, "If you use violence, doesn't that reduce you to their level?"

"I don't know," Yue answers, after a while. "I don't care. Front National equals violence." Having offered that axiom, he unleashes another barrage.

And so it raged, a ponderous and dreamlike conflict of machine guns, sirens, police cars, "rez cages" (which can trap an unsuspecting avatar), explosions, and flickering holograms of marijuana leaves and kids' TV characters. By California time, the battles often culminated at two or three in the morning, when Residents in Europe are most active. The chat log was choked over with pro– and anti–Le Pen curses, mostly in French, and when the lag was not too overwhelming to stream audio, the whole fracas was accompanied by bursts of European techno. Thus, while America slept, the battle against extremism wore on.

By last weekend, whole sections of the Front National office were gone, apparently lost to lag or sabotage, their banners and posters floating in midair. By this morning, the headquarters of Front National had entirely disappeared from Porcupine. In its place, a tiny casino has sprung up overnight and is already receiving customers. Although they're gone from the land of Porcupine, the Front National claim to be unfazed. "They're a bunch of losers," Front National Officer Wolfram Hayek tells me, grinning, when I ask about the protesters. "We're gonna tighten security and come back."

In honor of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., a special sun is made to arc across the grid of Second Life today. If you look closely enough, you'll see his face, shining down on an empty field where once the forces of division made a bid to establish themselves.

I wonder what King would make of the high-minded words and protest, and the decidedly violent uncivil disobedience. He was so untimely cut down, when far too much of his work remained, in his country, in the world beyond, and, perhaps, in worlds he never could have imagined.

[Abdication]

COMPLETELY LEGITIMATE

From transcripts of audio recordings quoted in a memorandum in support of John A. "Junior" Gotti's motion for bail pending trial, filed in 2004. Gotti, allegedly acting boss of the Gambino crime family during the 1990s, served six years in prison for racketeering, beginning in 1999. In October prosecutors dropped further racketeering charges against him after three mistrials. The recordings, made in secret by federal investigators during Gotti's incarceration when he was visited by his friends and attorneys, were used by the defense to argue that Gotti had retired from the Mafia in 1999.

The streets are somebody else's business. I don't want to hear about it anymore. I told these guys, Don't come back. I don't want to see you again. Don't bring messages from anybody. I don't want to know. Nobody cared about me four years ago or five years ago or three years ago, so now I don't care about them today. My daughter was born—not even a card. They showed me who they are. It's got nothing to do with me. The only thing we got in common is the same last name. Nothing else. I don't want no favors, I don't want no help. I don't want nothing. Don't ask me, just leave me be. If I'm fortunate enough to walk out of here when they open the gates, I'm leaving. I'm taking my sons, my daughters, I'm going away. That's it, I'm done. The bottom line is, whatever I was, I'm no longer. Parts of it were my choice, parts were my father's choice.

So much treachery. I never thought that my father couldn't have loved me to push me into this life. I had a good life. I had good guys around me. We did our own thing, we minded our own business. I know my father loved me, but I got to question how much to put me in with all these wolves. This is the world you put your kid in. Now you want me to recommend you for this world? Never. If that's what you want, then you have to get up and leave and you can't come back here again—you're not welcome anymore. When I come home, you sell whatever you got, we move someplace else. We'll go to Montreal. We'll be millionaires. I'm telling you to be legitimate. I'm telling you to stay away from these people. It's fake. There's nothing real about it anymore, believe me. Any honor and dignity died with my father. My father on the street made you want to be part of it because he was that kind of guy. You wanted to feel as close to him as possible. You wanted to be in it. When he left, the picture

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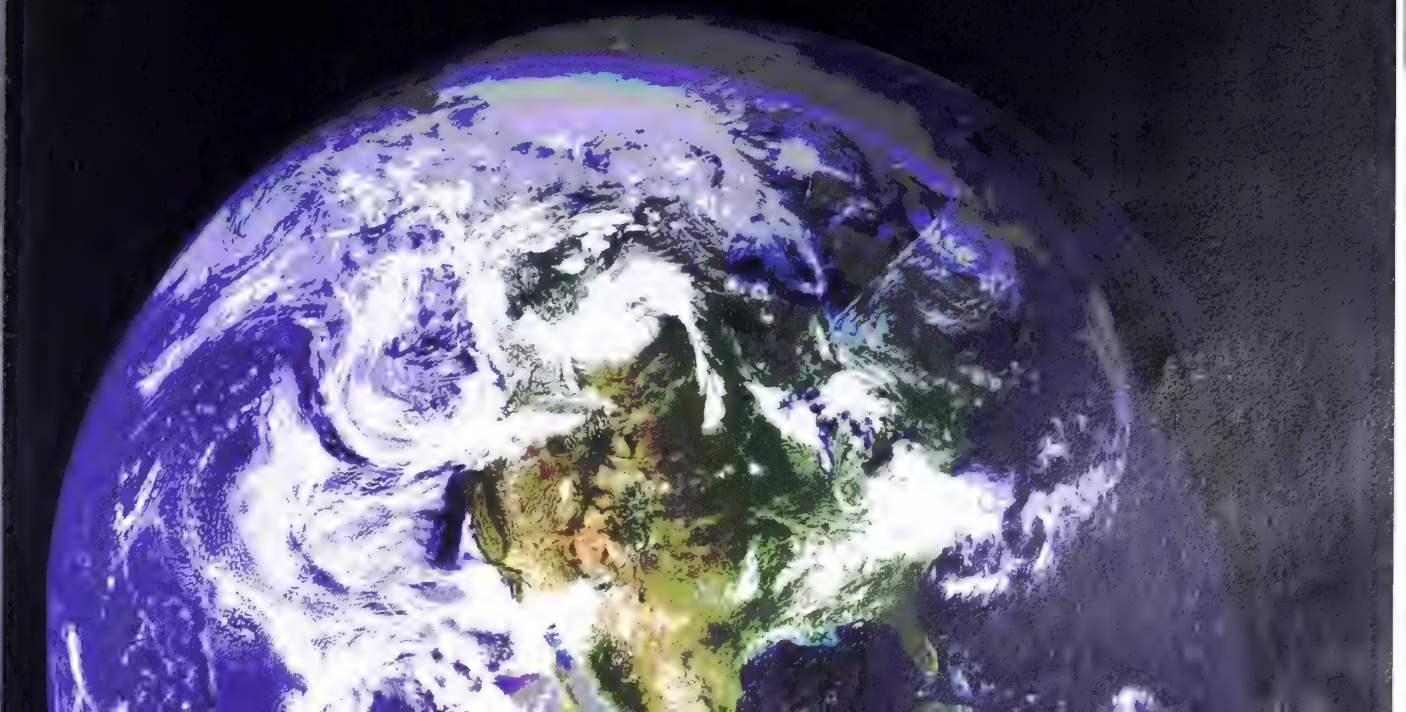
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changed. Smart—smart would have been running away a long time ago, smart would have been—I got trapped. All my father had in this world was me. I couldn't tell him, "Listen, Dad, I don't want to live in New York. I want to leave, I want to move to Carolina." He would have looked at me like "What do you mean?" I wanted to move to Florida at one time. How would I ever tell him that I want to pack up and leave? My father would have said, "Well, you enjoyed the beginning of the game. Now in the middle you want to walk away." I couldn't disappoint the guy, I had to stay. If we are stupid enough to raise our children near this, then we deserve to die in jail. If you told me my son is involved in the street, I'd hang myself, I couldn't do another day in jail. I'd be sick. If you told me my brother got involved in this life, I would disown him. On my father's grave, I swear to you I would never say hello to him again. Ever. Learn from me. Let me be the sacrificial lamb. Go on with your life. Learn to feed your family and be a responsible human being.

If you're doing something wrong, if anybody is, shame on them. They pay the piper, that's all you got to do, be a man, pay the piper. If someone out there's done something wrong, don't throw it back onto me. I didn't do it. Otherwise, if you are all being legitimate, you got nothing to worry about. When they give you their subpoenas, go there, answer their questions truthfully, answer everything they wanna know. Whatever records you got, give it to them. Don't hide nothing. Stay away from all these people. Go to work. If you love your kids, then enjoy them, because if you make the wrong move, you're not gonna have 'em anymore, you're gonna go to jail.

I would rather clean up shit in Central Park than be involved with this, these mutts. I won't break bread with these people. I don't have an ounce of loyalty to them. If they came to me, and they were on fire, I wouldn't even piss on them to put them out.

[Rebuke]

LEST YE BE JUDGED

From a September 25 censure decision by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct, in the matter of William A. Carter, a judge in Albany, who was the subject of a complaint filed in December 2005.

The ethical rules require every judge to be an exemplar of dignity and decorum. Respondent has acknowledged that on two incidents he violated those standards. In the first incident, after a defendant became agitated and said he did not want to participate in the proceeding because it was "unlawful," respondent angrily left the bench, threw off his glasses and judicial robes, and proceeded rapidly toward the defendant. Respondent said to the defendant, "You want a piece of me?" Although a police officer quickly removed the defendant from the courtroom and another officer physically blocked respondent from pursuing the defendant, this unseemly episode was an egregious breach of judicial decorum. Four months later, respondent appeared to encourage the use of physical violence by a police officer against a defendant, who had just made an offensive gesture. Respondent told the officer, who was upset that respondent was not going to do anything about the gesture, "If you are so upset about it, why don't you just thump the shit out of him outside the courthouse?" Respondent claims the comment was not intended literally but was a way of telling the officer to stop overreacting. Respondent, a former police officer, characterized the comment as "cop speak." Even if not meant literally, such a statement has no place in a judicial forum, where emotions should be tempered and issues resolved in a peaceful, orderly manner.

[Fiction]

CREPUSCULE WITH MICKEY

By Christopher Sorrentino, from a story published in Conjunctions: 47. *Sorrentino is the author of the novel* Trance.

I am inviting he and his wife to come down here on account of my own familiar feelings. Kids, as they say, is a pain in the tuchis by trade, and while those belonging to others is something I ordinarily do not care to become involved with, and generally speaking I am greatly opposed to guys who stick their nose into the business of other families, as I grow older I find it a pleasure to extend my authoritativeness on account of longevity into realms I might have avoided in my youth.

This is despairing people we're mentioning. They come for help as people in such straits oftentime have. I am meeting them at the airport



COURTESY SHAN FAN AND ALEXANDER OCHS GALLERIES BERLIN/BEIJING

Vibrations III, *oil on canvas, by Yang Shaobin, whose work was shown in January at Alexander Ochs Galleries, in Berlin.*

because struggling you shouldn't have to do when one gets off an airplane, and a car waiting is always nice. The bus and taxi transportation is a laugh and despairing people I feel should be as relaxed as possible when having a sit-down meeting in which a favor is to be asked. I have Victor drive me in the Fleetwood.

It is a charter flight and they come off of it. She is a fine-looking dame, taking dainty little steps with her little feet and ankles just so. This is what I am informed and do believe are *class cues*. This is a phrase obtained from the sociology-type people who have from time to time had occasion to speak with me. Anyway, they are a big tell, the tiny feet growing out of those sculptured ankles, and those little footsteps just ringing out with class and the sort of upbringing that used to be rare before it became widespread. Believe me, it was easier on the eyes to look at him. Don't mistake: according to me, she is gorgeous. In a way she reminds me of a girl, that use to work at the Half Moon, that was also a class act. But, regards him, just that he is a much more restful person to take a gander at, just set in his relaxed and sort of easy way. If I were a big dog type of person, which I am not, he would remind me of a golden Labrador, with his relaxed bearing, a guy that does not care if his breakfast gets all over his cardigan, or what.

"Come on," I says, "I got a car waiting. You must be tired after the plane ride."

You could say that a limousine is a very unsociable vehicle with the blacked-out windows and the driver that is big, uncommunicating, occasionally carrying small arms, and in sunglasses of that aviator type which is now widespread. But to me it is a matter of discretion and of course once inside the Fleetwood it's a different story. Inside the Fleetwood you're obliged to pass the time of day, if only to say, "Look, you mind if I sit facing forwards? Because I get a little feeling in my stomach from facing in the wrong way." You make a conversation, in other words. Now that I am putting my mind to it, it is a lot like the way it is with a cellmate in stir. Anyway, it is clearly up to me to break the ice of our conversation we haven't been having yet and I look across at him gazing in his easygoing but somewhat traumatic way out the window and her crossing one tiny ankle across the other, the woman who weighs a hundred pounds, net, and most of it the hairs on her head, which stand straight up and look hard, like a lemon meringue pie.

The popular press says what I am is the heir to the gambling empire of Bugsy, which nobody called him anything but Ben, Siegel, which I do not care to dispute because it would involve splitting hair. Anyway the thing which always has bothered me is the allegations which they're contending, "Mickey Cohen lives extravagantly" or "Mickey Cohen loves publicity." I live the way I always have outside of the prison walls, and I am the first or at least in the top three persons to admit that I don't see any good coming out of per-

sonal discomfort. On the other hand there is publicity, but let me point out two things which is first that nobody is mobbing me at the airport—which in the city of Los Angeles is the well-known place for celebrities to arrive and depart at and for their fans to greet them hollering and with autograph books and cameras flashing—so how much in other words publicity could there be? And also, so tell me what is so wrong with publicity? Danny Thomas receives publicity. Eartha Kitt receives publicity. Victor Borge receives publicity. Dean Martin receives publicity. I am a law-abiding citizen that has paid debts to society and if I am committing some big sin receiving publicity in the city of Los Angeles then let he who lives in a glass house cast the first stone.

I point things out on the drive, the civic improvements. Because what is a person if he isn't proud of the accomplishments of his city? Plus the quiet can get you in a car-sized space. The main thing, though, is impress them with the sense that they're with a real citizen. Don't ask me how but someone who can show a feeling for the finer things right off the bat has a shot at coming off like a real human being. She just shakes her head, though, then moves her hand out from under his.

He says, "We made our home here in Los Angeles for several years, Mr. Cohen."

"It's a big city," I says. And I'm thinking all of a sudden of this episode of a cop show I seen once, where a nice kid just goes haywire; drugs, hair, moving out from the house in Sherman Oaks to like Hollywood, like a total Fuck You. Not that they say this in the show, but the idea. And it makes me think: if I ever was thinking I didn't want to join out with them in finding their daughter, then my mind is changed. I definitely do want to lend them a hand. Because a child that looks in its father's face and goes, Well Go Fuck Yourself—that is a big heartache, and you rue the tongue biting, the cut-it-out-with-the-nagging you're always saying to their mother; you think of that little pile of cigarette butts, what you found under the hedge by the pool, you said nothing; the mileage on the car that mysteriously shoots up by forty, fifty miles a clip, you keep it to yourself; the short phone calls she's taking on the extension in the other room you're not in, seldom a word out of you; all those things where you say: Okay, a good head she's got on her. Okay, maybe it's just a little maze she is going through. So who could say no? *Rachmones*, in other words, is what I got.

Over at my house he sort of just flumps down into a chair but he is up on his feet again when I offer up the suggestion maybe you want to help yourself to a drink? People like to make their own drinks, I notice. She is walking around the room taking things in, trying to catch me at what she would think of as a mistake, though one of the first things I educated myself to purchase with hard-earned money is other people's good taste, and the place I can assure you is decorated with the snazz of one of the better hotels. He is standing at the bar examining all the manner of bottles and decanters I have lined up over there, snuffing a little which can happen when you get off of a plane because of what I read about, how the breaths of all the passengers mingle in the ventilation and could cause a cold to develop, so I suggest to him a shot of rye whiskey, neat, which is popular for its ability to assassinate germs at once.

He takes one of the decanters and lifts the stopper and takes a sniff. He says, "I've got to confess that I'm not at all sure of why we're here."

She says, "Oh, really?" She says, "That's quite an about-face. Before, you were so certain that we had to drop everything and come down here immediately." She says, "Just spit it out, Randy. This isn't the time to be polite." She says, "We're wasting Mr. Cohen's time."

"Mr. Cohen," he says, "one of our reporters at the *Examiner* suggested that you might be of assistance to us. As you may know, we've fallen out of touch with our daughter and—"

"Who got snatched."

"Yes," he says slow. "She was kidnapped from her apartment in Berkeley. And it's causing us some, that is, we're anxious to—"

"They carried her out of there *naked*," she says. "Can you imagine how embarrassed she must have—"

"Excuse me, but this is the *San Francisco Examiner*?"

"Yes, of course."

"The Monarch of the Dailies?"

"That's what we call it, yes." He is sounding a little doubtful. It is the sort of thing I throw in there from time to time to slow a person down in their speech, sometimes to a stop. I think he's understanding this. He does not look like a guy who is anxious to hear his wife talking about his daughter getting hauled naked into the street.

"Mr. Cohen. That's hardly pertinent. As I was trying to say, our daughter was carried, naked, from her apartment—"

"Hearst papers always had the best funnies. Nobody's actual father took the *Journal-American*, but you would try to find the *J-A*'s funny papers whenever you got the chance. Or was it the *Daily Mirror* we loved?"

"Now, how could you confuse the two?" He laughs, sits down across from me, and he is ready to talk about this for a while. I mean the discomfortude is gone because who's got the touch?

"The old papers," I says. "Everybody loves the old papers."

"The tatterdemalion newsies."

"The thunder of the presses."

"The whiskey-voiced old newspapermen."

But I lamp her out of the corner of my eye and see she is overdue to start in again, saying, you know—carried, naked, street.

At a certain point I was obligated to enroll in a course for recidivistic offenders so called. It was entitled Crisis Intervention and one such technique is the heading off of the lengthy yammering of excited yentas, which are certainly a crisis in my estimation. Our Group Leader, which was by way of calling him the teacher, instructed us to *defuse* and *anticipate*, and it is apparently obvious that the defusing thing has not worked so that I should lay out her beef for her and the theory is that she'll shut it up.

"So your daughter is carried away in the night and naked into the bargain. It must have been very embarrassing. And for you, too. And now she is schlepping guns all over the place and calling you bad names in addition."

It is certainly safe to say that I am sympathizing in all sincerity. It is my own sweet child which told me to shove off, though never were there guns carried, or statements of the seditious variety—but in the end these are just the trifling details for I am the type of guy who can spend happy hours crying and snuffling into his soup, toting up heartache, getting sick with it, hives and eczema, cold sweats and nausea, haunted by the impression of the hole they'd shove you in if they had half a chance—I mean, like, whoever—and so who is needing details to make you feel worse? So her specific case: naked, guns, nasty names. "Acknowledge their concerns," is what Group Leader said. "Repeat them back to them, acting as a verbal mirror."

"I got some daughter trouble, too," I says. "Trouble begins in dribs and drabs. One day she starts taking meals in her room. The room smells like tuna fish and sour milk and on everything there's cracker crumbs. One day you find the cerise chiffon gown you got her stuffed like an old shmatte into the bottom of her wastepaper basket. One day you find narcotics paraphernalia."

"*Our* daughter was *abducted*," she says.

He says, "Catherine. It's not a competition. I think Mr. Cohen is just trying to empathize."

"Let me put it to you, since my husband seems incapable of doing so. My husband is under the impression that your criminal connections—"

A wince from him here. "Not at all the way I would have characterized it."

"—put you in a better position to get information concerning our daughter's whereabouts and well-being."

A child becomes sick, a child misbehaves. A child invents strange games that involve having a conversation with themselves in a whisper. A child steals coinage you leave lying around just for the purpose. A child makes friends who you would rather they did not. A child breaks a toy from sheer carelessness and then hides the broken bits behind the furnace. All of it could smash your heart. What are you hiding the broken pieces for? Of your papa you're afraid? *Tsatskeleh*, who could care about broken toys? Toys are for breaking! And besides, who has the time? Papa's squaring everything away like some squirrel with nuts stuffed in his jowls. Back at the house, the wife, maybe she drinks. Or she is on a diet plan which is involving the gospel of the New Testament. Or she takes dancing lessons from a Brazilian homo. Nuts in your cheeks, your paws scrabbling on the herringbone floor. The maid going for the supplemental buck, and slipping to your kid ethnic foodstuffs into the bargain. Go ahead and try to establish a legacy. Go ahead, provide for the future. What a joke. And then what?

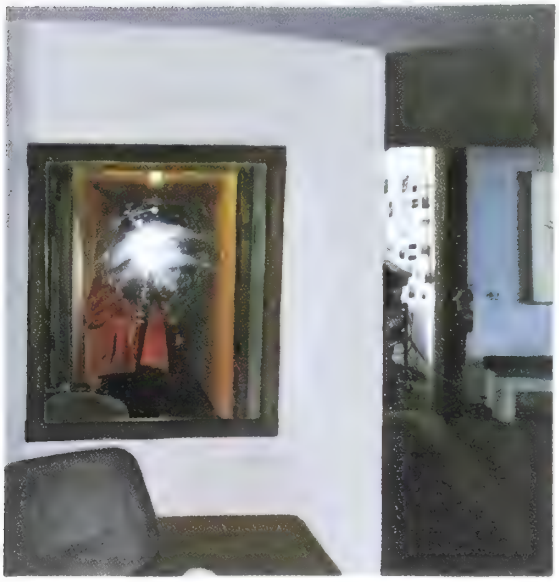
I am feeling a very disconsoling feeling, remembering and considering. I want to assist a couple in the locating of their daughter; what I get is a man and a wife and the usual bunch of difficulties. How not? Already they found out they are not so important as they wanted to think. Now they find out they aren't even so important to each other. And that is something which it takes a lot to bring out into the light. How long can you hide it and pretend? *Long* is how long. I says to myself, "*Fix it* for them, Mickey. You can *fix it*." What can I tell you? That is the way I'm built. For years people come up to me, "Help. Fix. Mend. Patch up." You get used to it. People thinking that you have all this excess confidence you can just lay off on them.

I says, "Well, here is what I know. From my criminal connections." This is a statement with the intent for him to laugh at it, but he makes a weird face. I select not to inform him because it can be an embarrassment to be advised what emotion you ought to have.

Now in my house I am alone again. I think of my girl, that face in the windshield as the car backed down the drive the last time, I am waving good-bye, everything will be okay. What I packed into that wave, like it was the most important message I was sending with my arm: everything will be okay, it will be you and me practicing walking together, me holding onto your hands; it will be a birthday cake for you to blow on all the candles of, wearing an imitation straw hat, a what do you call them, a boater; what happened to Santa? what happened to training wheels? We can go through picture albums and laugh at the haircuts if she wants. That arm was saying, Isn't it enough to know that I'm waiting for you, right here in this spot? Isn't it enough, the arm was saying, that you have a father's every confidence? And this was in spite of everything under the bridge so far, which was quite a bit. The car rolled down the drive and turned into the street and then it was gone.









Clockwise from top left: Invisible Self-Portrait (in my studio), Invisible Self-Portrait (in a bathroom in Philadelphia), Invisible Self-Portrait (in Tom's bedroom), *and* Invisible Self-Portrait (in the entrance to my home), *oil on wood panels, by Ellen Harvey, were on exhibit in October at magnus müller, in Berlin*

Artwork courtesy the artist and magnus müller, Berlin

PARTIES OF GOD

The Bush Doctrine and the rise of Islamic democracy

By Ken Silverstein

Among the precepts of the "Bush Doctrine"—as loyalists to the current president call the set of foreign-policy principles by which they, and no doubt he, hope his tenure will be remembered—by far the most widely admired has been his stance on democracy in the developing world. The clearest articulation of this stance can be found in a November 2003 speech at the Washington headquarters of the United States Chamber of Commerce, when Bush sharply denounced not just tyranny in the Arab states but the logic by which the West had abetted it. "Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty," he said. "As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export." Saying it would be "reckless to accept the status quo," Bush called for a new "forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East." At least in its rhetoric, this was nothing less than a blanket repudiation of six decades of American foreign policy.



Since the president's speech, democracy's cause has suffered a series of setbacks in the Middle East. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has been arresting government critics and has rejected calls to hold elections for even a toothless "consultative council." (The kingdom has no parliament.) In Egypt, which receives $2 billion per year in American aid, President Hosni Mubarak was "reelected" two years ago in a landslide, nine months after his regime jailed his primary challenger, Ayman Nour, on the spurious charge that he had forged signatures for his party's registration. Political repression has also increased in Jordan, another recipient of vast U.S. financial aid. The government has imposed new restrictions on free speech and public assembly, a crackdown designed to squelch overwhelming domestic opposition to the regime's close alliance with the Bush Administration.

Notwithstanding President Bush's new "forward strategy of freedom," the United States has marshaled nothing more than a few hollow demurrals against the antidemocratic abuses by its allies, and it maintains close partnerships with all of America's old authoritarian friends in the region. When reaching out to opposition figures, it has chosen pro-Western elites such as Nour in Egypt or Ahmed Chalabi in Iraq, both of whom are more admired in Washington and London than they are at home.

Above all, America has refused to engage with Islamic opposition movements, even those that flatly reject violence and participate in democratic politics. It is true that many Islamists long rejected the concept of elections, which the more radical of them still argue are an infringement on God's sovereignty; others rejected democracy because they believed, with good reason, that elections in their countries were so flagrantly rigged

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Illustrations by Daniel Zezelj

that they offered no realistic path to change. (Of course, Islamic groups that did seek to campaign in elections were frequently barred from doing so by dictatorial regimes.) But since the 1990s, growing numbers of Islamists have concluded that reform from within can be achieved gradually, through electoral politics.

Today, there are dozens of active Islamic political parties, both Shiite and Sunni, with diverse political and ideological agendas. Their leaders are certainly not liberal democrats, and some, like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon, maintain armed wings. But it is not entirely accurate to describe them, as is frequently done in the United States, as fundamentalist or backward or even necessarily conservative. The new Islamic movements are popularly based and endorse free elections, the rotation of power, freedom of speech, and other concepts that are scorned by the regimes that currently hold power. Islamist groups have peacefully accepted electoral defeat, even when it was obvious that their governments had engaged in gross fraud to assure their hold on power. In parliaments, Islamists have not focused on implementing theocracy or imposing shari'ah but have instead fought for political and social reforms, including government accountability.

GIVEN DEMOCRACY, ISLAMISTS WOULD CONTROL LARGE BLOCS, IF NOT MAJORITIES, IN ALMOST EVERY MIDEAST COUNTRY

And increasingly the Islamists have numbers on their side. Were democracy suddenly to blossom in the Middle East today, Islamist parties would control significant blocs, if not majorities, in almost every country. Hamas swept to victory in the Palestinian elections of 2006, in a vote among the freest ever seen in the Middle East.[1] The Shiite group Hezbollah, which, like Hamas, is designated by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization, picked up parliamentary seats in Lebanon's 2005 national balloting and entered the cabinet for the first time. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—despite being officially banned, and despite massive fraud and violence against supporters—won eighty-eight seats in parliament two years ago, making it by far the largest opposition bloc. The Islamic Action Front, Jordan's major Islamic party and a wing of the local Muslim Brotherhood, is generally considered to be the country's best-organized political movement and won 15 percent of the parliamentary seats in the most recent election.

[1] *In response to the vote, which was held with U.S. support, President Bush cut off aid to the new government and announced that the United States would not speak to its leaders.*

One need not endorse either the ideology or the tactics of these groups to wonder if the wholesale rejection of dialogue with them is truly in the long-term interests of the United States. Indeed, looking beyond the disastrous war in Iraq, perhaps the central questions facing American foreign policy are as follows: How is it possible to promote democracy and fight terrorism when movements deemed by the United States to be terrorist and extremist are the most politically popular in the region? And given this popularity, what would true democracy in these nations resemble? It is impossible to answer these questions without first listening to these movements, but the U.S. government and, frequently, the media have deemed them unworthy even of this; their public grievances—over America's seemingly unconditional support for Israel, its invasion of Iraq, its backing of dictatorial regimes that rule much of the Muslim world—are dismissed as illegitimate or insincere, their hostility explained away as a rejection of "Western freedoms." In fact, as I discovered during my own visits with Islamist leaders over the past year, these groups are busy forging their own notions of freedom, some of them Western and some of them decidedly not. If we want to envision a democratic future for the region, we need not embrace these ideas, but we most certainly need to understand them.

Last fall, on a sunny and unusually clear day in smog-choked Cairo, I walked across a footbridge over a narrow stretch of the Nile that separates the city's central district from a neighborhood called Manial. On a mat halfway across, a solitary man in a long robe and a green head scarf sat selling tissues, packaged sweets, gum, and candy. Down below, a fisherman, his wife, and two young children were eating lunch in a small wooden boat tied up at the water's edge. Like the rest of the city, Manial looks dirty and rundown, and its streets are in perpetual gridlock; but by Cairo standards the district is solidly middle-class, its storefronts hosting not only a variety of small shops but also the Fatin Hamama Cinema, named after one of the country's most famous actresses, as well as a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The neighborhood is also home to the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood, which occupies the second floor of a nondescript apartment building overlooking the river. At a desk just inside the office door, a young man was cutting up newspapers with a razor and pasting stories to notebook paper with a glue stick. He motioned me into the next room, where a half dozen Brotherhood members sat arrayed in identical green chairs, watching a TV newscaster discuss the death sentence that Saddam Hussein had just received from an Iraqi court. Similarly dressed in sober, inex-

pensive Western-style business suits, the men resembled nothing so much as a group of small-town insurance salesmen. After a few minutes' wait I was escorted down a hallway, where a long glass case held copies of the Koran and other religious texts, and into the office of Mohammed Habib, the Brotherhood's deputy general guide and chief political strategist, who sat at a small desk buried under piles of paper.

• The Muslim Brotherhood is an international Sunni movement with affiliates across the Arab world and beyond, including in the West, but its first and preeminent branch is in Egypt. Established in 1928, the party has periodically been implicated in antigovernment violence. In 1948, one of its activists assassinated Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi Nokrashi; the following year, government security agents murdered the Brotherhood's revered founder, Hassan al-Banna. Sayyid Qutb, an influential Sunni thinker and a hero to Al Qaeda, later became a leading member of the group, and in 1966 he and two others were executed for plotting against the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Qutb, though, was long ago repudiated, and while the Brotherhood maintains as its slogan "Islam Is the Solution," it has embraced and reinterpreted the more pragmatic ideas of al-Banna. It renounced violence in the 1970s, apparently in good faith, and it openly endorses democracy as well as full citizenship rights for the Copts, a Christian minority that constitutes nearly 10 percent of Egypt's population.

The Brotherhood long shunned electoral politics. Al-Banna, the group's founder, took a dim view of political parties—partly because he saw them as divisive and partly because the parties of his day were tied to the British government, which exercised significant influence well beyond Egypt's formal independence in 1922. But in a landmark decision in 1984, the movement's ruling Guidance Council decided to reverse that stance. "The Imam Hassan al-Banna disliked political parties because during his time they were corrupt and incompetent," Habib told me, in explaining the change. "That is why he emphasized building a movement, not a party. But we have proclaimed our acceptance of democracy that is based on the peaceful exchange of power, with the *umma*—the community—the basis of all authority." Because the Brotherhood is technically banned, its political candidates run as independents, but the group also operates in the open. Independent political observers I spoke with all believed that if a fair election were held today, the Brotherhood would win a plurality, if not a majority, of the vote.

Habib has a short white beard and thinning hair, and wore a light blue jacket; white curtains hung across the windows behind his desk and billowed in a breeze off the Nile. Ahmed Ezz Eldin, another Brotherhood official, worked at a desk on the opposite wall, surfing the Internet on a laptop computer. The Brotherhood has a strong following among the poor, but the movement's backbone is made up of doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other middle-class professionals. Habib

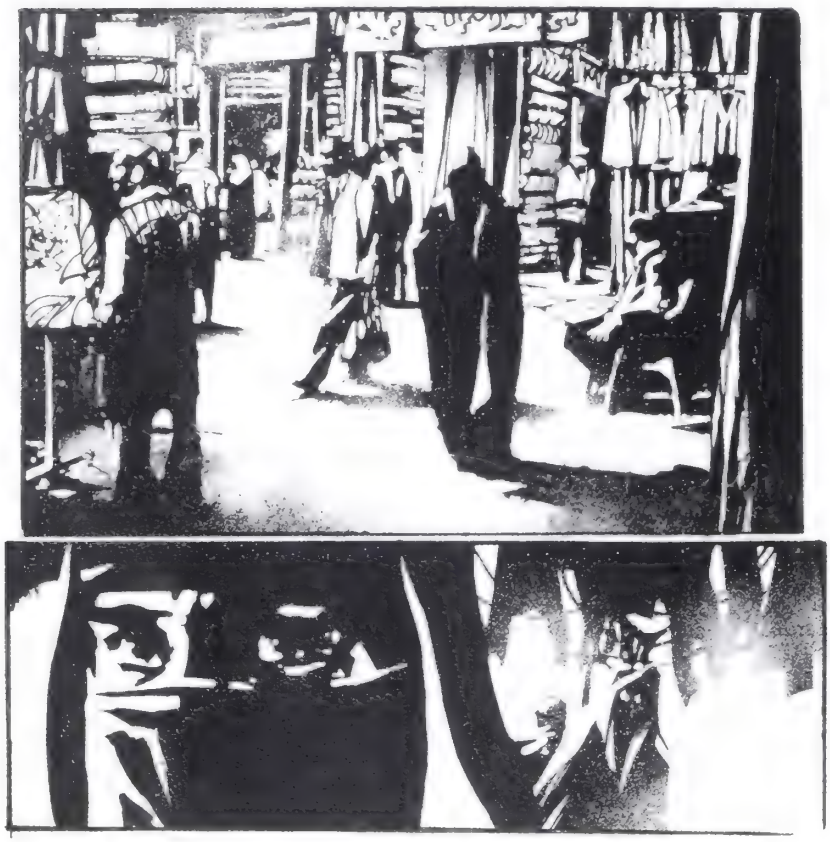


was a professor of geology until 1981, when he was arrested and fired from his job because of his Brotherhood activism. Arrested twice more since, he has spent a total of almost seven years in prison, most recently a fifteen-month term that ended in August of 2002. Habib has a relaxed, pleasant manner and still displays professorial airs, with a habit of counting off the points of his case on the fingers of one hand. "The Egyptian people have the absolute right to choose their own leaders and programs," he said. "We have a saying: the unjust state will vanish even if it is Islamic, but the just state will remain even if secular."

I asked Habib if participation in electoral politics had changed the Brotherhood, which is known locally as the Ikhwan. He waited to reply until an office worker set down a tray with small cups of thick Turkish coffee. "The government has no interest in political reform," he said. "In

such a situation, even a group as popular as the Brotherhood can't accomplish anything without allies. We've realized the importance of forming coalitions with other parties, even those with very different beliefs and ideologies."

Habib says concerns about the Ikhwan's religious rigidity are overblown. He laughed when I told him that one Cairo chain-smoker told me he worried that the Brotherhood would ban cigarettes, because some Islamic scholars consider



tobacco to be *haram*, or forbidden by the Koran. "There are certain issues everyone agrees upon because it is written in the Koran, and we can't ignore that, but on other issues there is no agreement," he said, while checking an incoming text message on his cell phone. "So, yes, we will take an attitude on matters forbidden by the Koran, but if someone wants to drink alcohol or smoke in their home, that's their right. We will not be spying on them. It's the same with the veil. We want to create an atmosphere where each and every woman *wants* to wear a veil, because we know from verses of the Koran that they should. But no woman will be forced to wear a veil. It will be a personal decision."

Egypt has been Muslim for more than a millennium, but by the early nineteenth century, the British proconsul there would report home that "for all purposes of broad generalisation the only difference between the Copt and the Moslem is that the former is an Egyptian who worships in a Christian church, whilst the latter is an Egyptian who worships in a Mohammedan mosque." Secularism dominated Egyptian political and cultural life through at least the 1960s, and even today the country does not remotely compare to, say, Saudi Arabia, where women are forbidden to drive and Christianity is essentially outlawed. But over the past quarter-century—mirroring trends elsewhere in the region—Egypt has become more and more "Islamized," as Muslims from all social classes have increasingly embraced (whether or not they strictly abide by) a conservative interpretation of Islam. In Cairo, especially in poor neighborhoods, it has become difficult to find small shops that sell cigarettes, due to the growing belief that smoking is un-Islamic. In the wealthy district of Zamalek, an island in the Nile, a single shop—forthrightly named Drinkie's—sells bottled liquor. The number of restaurants offering alcohol anywhere in the city has dropped sharply.

The turn to Islam has been fueled by scholars and televangelists, the latter of whom have been particularly successful in proselytizing to educated Egyptians. A TV preacher named Amr Khaled was deemed to be such a threat by the Mubarak regime that it banned him from his central Cairo mosque; for three years he lived in London, but his sermons continued to circulate in Egypt via satellite television, cassette tapes, and the Internet. Islamic ideas also have gained popularity because of the good works done by Islamists. The Brotherhood, for example, runs job-training programs and hospitals, and doctors affiliated with the group offer free treatment for poor patients. Students at overcrowded and underfunded public schools are tutored by Ikhwan volunteers, and the group distributes pens and paper at the start of the school year.

Young Egyptians, even those from solidly secular upper-class families, are increasingly devout. One person I met with in Cairo told me of her friend, a doctor whose university-educated son had become increasingly conservative and grown a long Islamic-style beard. Over the course of a recent Ramadan, the son spent hours daily at mosque and began lecturing his father about how he must live a simpler life or else risk going to hell. The daughter of another acquaintance, a man who holds a high position in government,

suddenly broke off her engagement to a wealthy businessman after deciding that he was not sufficiently religious. Up through the early 1970s, few female students at Cairo University displayed any sign of Islamic dress. I visited the university and found that virtually all women on campus wore at least a head scarf.

It is possible that Egyptian Islamists are insincere in their espousal of democracy; that the Muslim Brotherhood would, in the event it gained power, seek to impose a stifling brand of shari'ah-inspired rule on the nation. Occasionally, members of the group have heightened such concerns by making outrageous remarks. Last year, after the government approved the demolition of a mosque in downtown Cairo, a radical Brotherhood parliamentarian named Ali Laban said that "mosques are the exclusive possession of God, and the officials who approve their demolition should be executed." Brotherhood legislators also furiously demanded the resignation of Culture Minister Faruq Hosni last November after he described the wearing of Islamic veils as "regression."

Yet overall the Brotherhood has undergone a marked shift since it began competing for public office more than two decades ago. Perhaps because of its increasingly young and educated base, the group's religious politics seem to have become more moderate. During its early years of politicking, the Ikhwan was preoccupied with the proper interpretation of the Koran and shari'ah law, and called for closing down nightclubs and government distilleries. Today, though, while the Brotherhood still rails against social evils, it is more focused on political reform. The Ikhwan's parliamentary officials have led anti-corruption campaigns, shaped debate on a consumer-protection bill, pushed the government to combat bird flu, and fought to lift a draconian twenty-five-year-old "emergency law" that allows the government to severely restrict political activity.

The strange collision of Western liberalism with Islamic tradition is starkest in discussions of the role of women. One day, I paid a visit to an organization called the International Islamic Committee for Woman and Child, which is located in a neighborhood called Mohandiseen. The district stretches along the Nile on land that up until the early 1970s was still home to farms and villages. During the Sadat era, it was swallowed up by the city, and cinder-block apartment houses sprang up to accommodate the newly emerging professional and middle-class residents who poured in. Today, Mohandiseen is a fashionable district known for its trendy boutiques and nightclubs; the Committee occupies the second floor of a small office building just down the road from the popular Bull's Eye Pub.

The primary goal of the Committee, explained its president, Kamilia Helmy, is to protect the family, which she believes is threatened by feminists working through the United Nations. "Western feminists don't like the family," Helmy, an Ikhwan activist, told me. "They see it as an obstacle to modernization." Helmy has a university degree in engineering; a chunky woman, she wore an orange veil and a brown gown, and she doodled at her desk as she spoke. On the wall behind her was a framed tapestry with the word "Allah" at the center surrounded by the ninety-nine names of God. Feminists, she said, "call for liberating women from the family and any responsibilities toward husbands and children. They believe women should rule the world and men should be marginalized, which is rubbish in my opinion. I live my life in accordance with my religious beliefs and I resent . . . being pressured by a foreign agenda."

Helmy counts a number of American groups as allies, including the Utah chapter of an organization called United Families International, whose website says it is "dedicated to defending and promoting marriage," and describes homosexuality as "a behavior that it is possible to change with therapy." Indeed, quite a few of Helmy's views might be readily embraced by conservative-minded Americans. Another of Helmy's charitable pursuits is setting up small development projects, one of which distributed ovens to poor women so they could bake and sell bread; she talked about charity with the tough-love rhetoric of an ardent free marketeer. "A beggar once went to our prophet, Muhammad, and asked him for money," she told me. "He refused, and said, 'Take an axe, cut down trees, and sell the wood.' That is precious advice. We teach the poor not to ask for money but to earn money, for their own dignity. And that way they will also listen to our message—a hungry stomach doesn't allow for listening."

OVER THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, EGYPTIAN CULTURE HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE "ISLAMIZED"

Although women do not hold top positions in the Ikhwan's political hierarchy, they do play a notable role in the organization. In 1994 the Brotherhood issued a declaration supporting the right of women to vote and to run for public office. Makarim Eldery, a Brotherhood activist and the widow of the movement's former secretary-general, ran for parliament in 2005. She had a big lead in early returns, which would have made her the first female Islamist in the parliament, but the vote mysteriously shifted in favor of her opponent after Brotherhood officials were barred from

the counting stations. (During the 2000 vote, Jihan El-Halafawi, the wife of a powerful Brotherhood official, won a parliamentary seat, but the government blocked her from taking it.) "There's an image that the Brotherhood is patriarchal and doesn't want to give women space, to encourage them to be socially active," Helmy told me. "That is false. During the [parliamentary] elections, we sisters played a clear and prominent role. We voted, advocated for candidates, and guarded the ballot boxes to try to prevent fraud." She supports the idea of women running for office and says she would always vote for the most qualified candidate, whether male or female. The lone exception is the post of president, which Helmy believes should be held by a man—as mandated, she says, by Islamic law.

It is impossible to grasp Egyptians' contempt for the Mubarak regime without understanding the startling inequality this regime has bred. A majority of Cairo's 17 million residents live in trash-strewn slums, with open sewers running through the streets. Meanwhile, the richest Egyptians lead lifestyles so extravagant that they have become strangers in their own country. They vacation in Europe, spend weekends at summer homes on the Mediterranean coast, and escape the indignities of life in Cairo at private clubs—like the sprawling 150-acre Gezira Club, which was founded by the British colonial rulers and still boasts a golf course and manicured lawns for croquet and tennis. The military, a critical pillar of the regime, is also well looked after. Senior officers easily move into comfortable jobs after retirement, while those still on active duty are offered perks ranging from cheap beach houses to subsidized groceries.

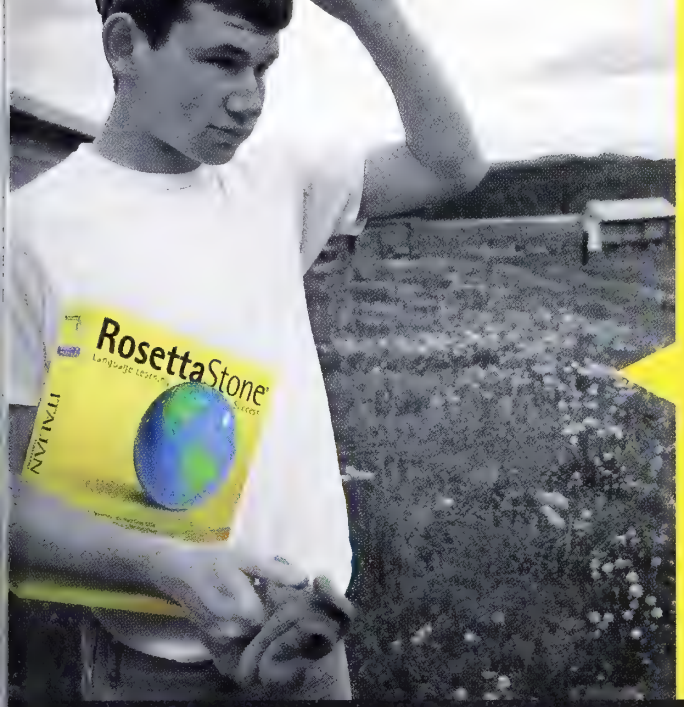
The lifestyle of Egypt's ruling class is underwritten by considerable government corruption. Alaa Mubarak, one of the president's sons, became notorious for pressuring private businessmen to cede him stakes in their companies. A popular joke about him had a tourist spotting three photographs on the wall of a restaurant: one of Nasser, another of Sadat, and the third of Hosni Mubarak. He asks the owner who the first man is, and the owner tells him it's the man who overthrew the Egyptian monarchy and served as the country's president. "Who's the second man?" the tourist wants to know. "That's Anwar Sadat, our next president," comes the reply. "He made peace with Israel but was assassinated in 1981." Next the tourist wants to know who the third man is. "Him?" says the restaurant owner. "That's my business partner's father."

For a time, the Mubarak regime actually seemed fearful that the Bush Administration was serious about its rhetorical calls for democracy in the Middle East. But following the Ikhwan's impressive showing in the parliamentary elections in late 2005, and particularly after Hamas's victory in the Palestinian elections in 2006 and as the situation in Iraq unraveled, it became apparent that the United States had no intention of pressing the matter of political reform. That became clear last May when, on the day after security forces in Cairo violently broke up an opposition protest, Gamal Mubarak, the president's son and would-be successor, met in Washington with Vice President Dick Cheney and other administration officials.

The State Department has periodically criticized Egypt when it has jailed pro-Western figures, such as the former presidential candidate Ayman Nour. But it has uttered barely a word about the arrests this year (reported by Human Rights Watch) of more than one thousand Brotherhood members, many of whom have been charged, under the dubious Article 86 of Egypt's penal code, with belonging to an organization that "impairs the national unity or social peace." When Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Cairo in June 2005, she gingerly pressed the Mubarak regime on the need for political reform and described democracy as "the ideal path for every nation." Yet she declined to meet with anyone from the Brotherhood, saying, "Egypt has its laws, it has its rule of law, and I'll respect that."

A former CIA officer told me that the United States had unofficial but regular contacts with the Ikhwan until the late 1990s, before breaking off communication when the Mubarak regime complained. Since the September 11 attacks, the Egyptian government has worked closely with the CIA in the "war on terror," serving as a favored destination for "extraordinary renditions," i.e., the covert transfer of suspected extremists from U.S. custody to foreign intelligence agencies for the purpose of interrogation. Ironically, then, despite the dictates of the "Bush Doctrine," it is precisely Egypt's lack of democracy—the regime's willingness to throw Muslim terrorism suspects into secret prisons and employ torture against them—that has made it such a valuable ally. At the same time, of course, the Mubarak government presents itself to the West as the only hope of preventing a radical Islamic takeover. "These regimes are not stupid," the former CIA officer said. "They know the language they need to speak to ensure our continued support, so they raise the Islamist threat and we fall for it, because we want their counterterrorism cooperation. That has trumped the idea of democracy."

Augustus Richard Norton, an adviser to the Iraq Study Group with whom I met in Cairo, told me that he admires a number of leading liberal opposition figures, who he said would eliminate corruption and establish a free press "if they could twitch their noses and do it." But, he added,



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"they have no significant base. They are nice people with nice ideas and they have impressive handouts in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese for Western reporters, but there's no grass roots. The only group that can turn out people is the Brotherhood."

Norton believes that the question of whether or not the Ikhwan is fully committed to democracy—a standard to which, it should be noted, the Mubarak regime is never held—is a red herring. "If I had my way, I'd drive as fast as I could, sleep until noon, and have all sorts of romantic dalliances with beautiful women," he said. "But life is constrained by practical realities. The question of the Brotherhood's intentions is interesting to discuss over coffee, but it's not a real question. There are structural constraints regarding what they could do, including what the army would allow and what the public would tolerate. There are 80 million Egyptians, and many of them, even devout Muslims who follow an Islamic lifestyle, are skeptical of the Ikhwan and would not tolerate anything like an Islamic takeover."

For American policymakers, Hezbollah—the Party of God—represents perhaps the biggest challenge posed by militant Islam. Initiated by Lebanese clerics and financed by Iran, Hezbollah has as a slogan "Death to America," and its yellow-and-green flag is emblazoned with a fist clenched around an assault rifle. The United States holds the group, which arose in response to Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon, responsible for the 1983 suicide bombing of a Marine barracks at Beirut Airport that killed 241 soldiers, as well as a number of other attacks during Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war that ended in 1990. Soon after the September 11 attacks, President Bush added Hezbollah to the U.S. "priority list" of terrorist organizations, and there was even talk of a possible military strike against its forces. In 2002, then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage described Hezbollah as "the A-Team of terrorists" and Al Qaeda as "the B-Team."

IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, THE HEZBOLLAH MINISTER NOTED, DEMOCRACY HAS FOLLOWED ITS OWN LOGIC AND COURSE

Yet the party has evolved dramatically from its

[illegible] in April 1992 and [illegible] which together killed 114 people. Hezbollah has always denied responsibility for those attacks, but Argentine in-

founding days, when it expressed fealty to Iran, urged the "pummeling" of Christians, and smashed bottles of liquor. A key turning point came in 1992, when Hezbollah decided to participate in electoral politics, a move that caused a deep internal split and ultimately contributed to the expulsion of its first secretary general. Today, the primary concern for many of its backers, especially the growing Shiite middle class, is not establishing an Islamic republic but ensuring that Shiite communities get their fair share from the government. Lebanon's political system, based on a National Pact that was negotiated in 1943 and allocated power on the basis of a census completed a decade earlier, limits Shiites to about 20 percent of parliamentary seats and mandates a Christian president and Sunni Muslim prime minister. At least a third of the Lebanese population is Shiite, forming the largest single sect, and their institutionalized political underrepresentation has left their communities badly served by the central government. (This is a central grievance in Lebanon's recent street demonstrations, which have been organized by Hezbollah and supported by the nation's largest Christian party.)

In a country where government corruption, patronage, and cronyism are endemic, Hezbollah has won support by running schools, hospitals, and health clinics, collecting garbage, and providing drinking water. In the southern suburbs, known as the Dahiyeh, a senior Shiite cleric runs a complex called Al-Saha, an ersatz castle that includes a restaurant, Internet café, hotel, and mosque. The profits support a Hezbollah-run orphanage; across the road from Al-Saha is the Martyrs Foundation, which receives funding from Iran and makes payments to the families of deceased Hezbollah fighters.

When I visited Lebanon last November, three months after the end of the war, bombs from Israeli warplanes had left the Dahiyeh pockmarked with ten-foot-deep craters; whole buildings had been reduced to tangles of concrete and cables. Damage was heaviest in the Haret Hreik, Hezbollah's political zone, where entire blocks lay in ruins. The six-story building that housed the party's TV station, Al-Manar, or The Beacon, had been completely obliterated. But the postwar cleanup began almost immediately: Hezbollah dispatched teams of engineers to evaluate damage and estimate the cost of repairs or rebuilding. Within days residents received cash payments of up to $12,000 for homes that had been destroyed or damaged. At the peak of the cleanup, hundreds of trucks a day were carrying rubble to dump sites along a seaside road leading out of the city. I drove by the area and saw three vast mountains of building ruins, a melancholy mix of concrete, furniture, appliances, and clothing.

On a previous trip earlier in the year I had met Nawaf Musawi, Hezbollah's foreign affairs chief, at an office that was later targeted and destroyed by the Israelis during the early days of the war. Musawi now was working out of a temporary office in a drab residential building, in front of which three young girls sat chatting. The elevator was out of service due to a blackout, so I climbed the steps to the fifth floor, where I was escorted into a room furnished only with a few small sofas and, on one wall, a large photograph of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader. I sat on one sofa and Musawi on another, and soon an aide brought in a tray of cookies and glasses of berry smoothies, which he placed on a table between us. Musawi, who has a neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard, was dressed in tan pants and a light jacket. He clearly understands English without difficulty—he is a keen fan of Comedy Central shows, which air in Lebanon on a satellite channel, and he has given strict orders to his family not to disturb him during *Malcolm in the Middle*—but he spoke through a translator.

• Probably the most common complaint heard about the United States in the Middle East is the political double standard, a theme Musawi returned to repeatedly. He was particularly scathing when discussing the Bush Administration's rhetoric about spreading democracy to the Middle East and its attacks on Islamic groups. "It's funny," he said as he fiddled with a string of black prayer beads, "how the United States is so strongly in favor of democracy, but it just so happens that all of its friends in the region are despotic regimes. Those regimes remain in power with American support. We also rely on support, but our support is internal, from our people, not external."

Musawi, who had forthrightly condemned the September 11 attacks when I saw him during my first visit to Lebanon, again spoke scornfully of bin Laden and his followers. "Al Qaeda and the Taliban and the Salafist movements in Algeria and Iraq are movements outside the framework of Islam," he said. "Their relationship with Islam resembles George Bush's relationship to democracy." As for Hezbollah, Musawi noted that democracy followed its own logic and course in different countries. "Swedish democracy is different from German, which is different from French, but they all have the same philosophical foundation," he said. "We have our own view, which is in keeping with the Islamic tradition and with a special emphasis on the Shia character. But we value democracy. Shias were kept out of power and persecuted for fourteen centuries; we know the danger of despotic authority."



Talking about political Islam, or Islam at all, is difficult for Americans because our stereotypes are so strongly held. Islamists are imagined as poor, uneducated fanatics who, having turned to God for comfort and sustenance, are particularly prone to irrationality and violence. They do not allow their women to drive (when in fact women drive in every Muslim country except Saudi Arabia); indeed, every woman in a veil is seen as a victim of male oppression. When Islamists in Indonesia attack *Playboy* or Muslim Brothers in Egypt denounce racy Lebanese dancers, it is a sign not only of backwardness but of sexual repression, which is smugly asserted to be a root of Islamic terrorism. (It is doubtful that Osama bin Laden, who has at least three wives, turned to terrorism out of sexual frustration.) Fear of appearing sympathetic to movements that are frankly hostile to the U.S. government is, I suspect, another barrier to frank discussion of Islamic movements, as is the media's clear bias in favor of Israel.

To write with any nuance about Islamists for an American audience is to invite controversy. I experienced this firsthand a year ago when, as a staff reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, I visited

Lebanon for a story that discussed Hezbollah's evolution from its origins during the country's civil war and the basis for its popularity. My trip fell during Muharram, a ten-day religious holiday for Shiites; during the holiday, Nasrallah was speaking in the southern suburbs every other night, and I went to see Hussein Nabulsi, head of Hezbollah's media relations center, to ask if it would be a problem to me [illegible] Nabulsi initially balked, but after looking me up and down he quickly relented: given my dark features, thin beard, and blue jeans, he concluded that I would be indistinguishable from most party militants. He insisted, though, that I speak no English while in the crowd and that I find a local Shiite to accompany me to the event. This latter role was filled by Mostafa Naser, an industrious, neatly groomed man in his mid-twenties who had been recommended by my rent-a-car agency when I had asked for a driver well acquainted with the southern suburbs.



That night we parked on a main road in the Dahiyeh and joined a stream of thousands of people [illegible] Haret Hreik, the district where Hezbollah's political offices are located and where Nasrallah was to speak. After passing through three checkpoints, where we were patted down for weapons, we reached an auditorium decorated with green, blue, and red flags commemorating Muhammad. (The green signifies the Islam of the second caliph, Omar; the blue, the faith of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, the Imam Hussein, who was killed along with his followers at Karbala in 680 A.D.; and the last signifies Hussein's blood.) We dropped our shoes near the entrance and then tiptoed through the packed crowd, which was divided between men on the left and women on the right.

Nasrallah took the stage with such little fanfare or applause that I first mistook the man at the podium for a political warm-up act. Even to a non-Arabic speaker, Nasrallah's charisma was readily apparent. He spoke for an hour, seeming never to refer to notes, and kept the crowd alternately applauding and pumping fists throughout. Naser periodically whispered a few translated snatches from the speech, which mixed religious and political messages. Heavy anti-Israeli commentary drew a particularly noisy response; the crowd erupted in laughter when Nasrallah derided the United Nations as an American toady and heaped scorn on its call for Hezbollah to disband its militia.

As unsettling as Nasrallah's cult of personality may be, much of what I saw in the Dahiyeh surprised me. Although the area is often referred to as "Hezbollahland," it hardly has the feel of a so-called Islamofascist state. At corner cafés, men and women sip small cups of thick, black coffee or "cocktails" made with fresh fruit topped with whipped cream. In a small Christian section, bars serve alcohol—cloudy, anise-flavored arak is particularly popular—and attract a fair number of Shiite clients. Many women wear a long gown and hijab, the traditional Islamic head scarf, but Western-style clothing is not uncommon, and there were no Hezbollah Revolutionary Guards to enforce dress codes. On the street one day I saw a Shiite woman decked out in a short blue-jean skirt, low-cut top, and black boots—unusual dress for the area, to be sure, but she drew hardly a glance. Beyond such matters, it was obvious that Hezbollah was organically rooted in Lebanese political, social, and cultural life and that reducing it to the standard caricature—"terrorist group"—would be grossly misleading.[3]

I also saw how important it was to lay out Hezbollah's own political narrative, which is frequently given short shrift, at best, in American accounts. For example, virtually any news story about the group will recite the litany of civil war–era attacks on American targets in

[illegible] ception that sometimes comes from American journalism is the impression, conveyed deliberately, [illegible] of unflinching perseverance and steely [illegible] are flattering to the writer but enor- [illegible] help West-

Lebanon, especially the bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks. But at the time, many Lebanese Muslims saw the United States as a hostile force that had intervened in the civil war on behalf of Israel and its Lebanese Christian allies in the government; the attack on the Marine barracks came after American warships battered antigovernment positions with shells. And although Hezbollah's control of its own militia is clearly untenable in a democratic Lebanon, the party's explanation for why it has thus far refused to disarm—that is, to defend against Israel—is hardly without merit from a Shiite point of view. Since 1982, some 20,000 people in Lebanon, many of them Shiite civilians, have been killed by Israeli attacks, and Hezbollah's militia is the only entity in the country that represents any type of credible deterrent force.

After submitting my story, though, I ran up against insurmountable editorial obstacles. It was clear that I was deemed to have written a story that was too favorable to Hezbollah, even though any article seeking to examine its popularity would, by necessity, require some focus on the group's more attractive aspects. After the story was near completion, a new editor was called in to review it because, I was told, Hezbollah had a history of inviting reporters to Lebanon and controlling their agenda. The obvious implication was that this had happened in my case—despite the fact that, outside of my interviews with Hezbollah officials, I had had no contact with the party. I had hired my own driver (who turned out to be sympathetic to Hezbollah, like most Shiites, but not connected to the movement) and translators (all Christians), with no restrictions placed on where I went or who I met with; and in fact I had spent significant time with the group's critics.

The primary problem, it soon became clear, was fear of offending supporters of Israel. At one point I was told that editorial changes were needed to "inoculate" the newspaper from criticism, and although who the critics might be was never spelled out, the answer seemed fairly obvious. I was also told in one memo that "we should avoid taking sides," which apparently meant omitting inconvenient historical facts. Over my repeated objections, editors cut a line that referred to "Israel's creation following World War II in an area overwhelmingly populated at the time by Arabs." That, I was told in an email from one editor, David Lauter, was

> the Arab view of things. Israelis would say, with some justification, that much of the area wasn't overwhelmingly populated by anyone at the time the first Zionist pioneers arrived in the first part of the 20th century and that the population rose in the mid-decades of the century in large part because of people migrating into Palestine in response to the economic development they brought about.

But that argument, which in any case doesn't refute what I wrote, was long ago rejected by serious Mideast scholars, including many in Israel. It also avoids confronting a root cause of the conflict. According to the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the original Zionist governing body in what was to become Israel, there were roughly 1.1 million Arab Muslims living in Palestine at the time of partition—twice the number of Jews. "Perspective is everything," I replied in an email to the editors. "If my name was Mostafa Naser and I grew up in the southern suburbs of Beirut, I seriously doubt I would be an ardent Zionist. If we can't even acknowledge that Arabs have a legitimate point of view—and acknowledge what the numbers show—we caricature them as nothing more than a bunch of irrational Jew haters." As I noted in a conversation with one editor, religious hatred, on both sides, is an element in the conflict, but it is fundamentally a struggle over land and national identity. If an Eskimo state had been created in Palestine in 1948, one suspects that anti-Eskimo feeling would have increased markedly in the Arab world.[4] After days of unfruitful negotiations, and a final edit that in my view gutted the story, I decided to pull the piece rather than "inoculate" it to the point of dishonesty.

While the West debates whether the Islamic world is ready for democracy, an equally appropriate question is whether the West is ready for Islamic democracy. A rare dissenting voice on engagement with the Islamist parties has come from Conflicts Forum, a small group of retired Western diplomats and intelligence officials. "People say that talking to them [Islamists] gives them legitimacy, but they already have legitimacy," says Alastair Crooke, formerly of MI6 and the head of Conflicts Forum. "They say you are empowering them, but they already have power. These are the people that run the streets." In his view, American and British analysts see a "clash of civilizations" between the West and Islam while missing a fundamental struggle within Is-

[4] *When I asked Musawi about the Holocaust denial that has been espoused by some Arab leaders, and suggested it reflected an unwillingness to acknowledge Jewish suffering, he replied, "We are not denying that European racists persecuted an entire people or belittling the suffering of the Jewish people, and we say this with utter frankness and without compliment. But Europeans committed those crimes, and then we were made to pay for them with our land."*

lam itself, between "revivalists" who see elec toral politics as a path to gain a stake in society, and "revolutionaries" like Al Qaeda who reject that path. Political dialogue with the revivalists is urgent, since anti-Western sentiment, inflamed by the Iraq war, is pushing the pendulum toward Osama bin Laden, Crooke believes.[5]

Heretical views also are held by Efraim Halevy, former head of the Israeli Mossad, and by Milt Bearden, a retired senior CIA official, both of whom I interviewed last spring over breakfast at the Watergate Hotel. (In 1985 the pair held a quiet middle-of-the-night meeting at the Watergate's bar, where they helped plan a rescue for 8,000 of Ethiopia's Falasha Jews.) Halevy is unrelenting in his hostility toward Hamas and Hezbollah, but he considers Al Qaeda's brand of terrorism to be sui generis. "Al Qaeda's ambitions are universal and unattached to territory, and it seeks to destroy the whole system of nations," he says. "[The revivalists] aspire to be part of the system. They have constituencies, property, social programs, and other assets that they are interested in protecting." Bearden draws a parallel with the post–World War II period, when Communist parties were gaining strength in Western Europe. "The choice was to counter that extreme with another extreme—the far-right wing—or to nurture the Social Democrats," he says. "There were a lot of people who didn't trust the Social Democrats, who saw them as being almost as bad as the Communists, but in the end working with them was the most effective way to achieve our goals."

Those favoring some sort of engagement, or at least accommodation, with political Islam argue that political exclusion breeds radicalism whereas participation requires negotiation, compromise, and moderation. Hence, the West should encourage political participation by Islamist movements—in the same manner that other groups from recent history, for years rejected as "terrorists," in fact eventually became mainstream political forces, among them the Palestine Liberation Organization, the African National Congress, and the Irish Republican Army.

This last example is instructive. For years the IRA was considered to be Europe's most dangerous terrorist organization. In the extremity of its rhetoric, it painted itself as incapable of reason or compromise. "This war is to the end," it stated in 1984. "There will be no interval. . . . When we put away our guns, Britain will be out of Ireland." But after twenty-five years of bloody attacks on civilians and soldiers aimed at ending British control of Northern Ireland, the IRA called a cease-fire in 1994 and began negotiations with the British government. The Clinton Administration strongly backed those talks and engaged with the IRA; the following year, the movement's political wing, Sinn Féin, was allowed to open a Washington office, and Gerry Adams, its leader, attended a St. Patrick's Day party at the White House.

Negotiations with the IRA took years and were not always smooth. For many years the group refused to dismantle its paramilitary wing, leading at times to the suspension of the cease-fire and to renewed bombings and violence. It was only last October, fifteen months after the IRA declared an end to its armed campaign and pledged to seek to achieve its goals "through exclusively peaceful means," that a government commission declared that the group had undergone a "transformation" and fully renounced terrorism. Meanwhile, Sinn Féin became a leftist, grassroots political party that in 2002, during Ireland's last parliamentary elections, won 6.5 percent of the vote, and it also holds 24 of the 108 seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

No perfect political parallel can be drawn between Islamic groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and the IRA, but Augustus Norton, the adviser to the Iraq Study Group, believes there are enough similarities to merit study. "It's imagined that Islamic groups are esoteric and exotic, and don't conform to the behavior of other groups in other settings," he said. "But that assumption skews the debate and should be turned on its head. Unlike the millenarian aims of Osama bin Laden, [political Islamists] have goals that are in many ways pragmatic and even prosaic, and they are amenable to reasonable solutions and compromise."

In fact, by scorning politically active Islamic movements and denying their legitimacy, the United States is essentially signaling to the Middle Eastern public that electoral politics are a meaningless dead end—precisely the same message that this public hears from Al Qaeda. Last year, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's top deputy, issued a video that attacked the Muslim Brotherhood for participating in elections, saying it played into America's "political game" of "exploit[ing] the masses and their love for Islam"; in another video he criticized Hamas, saying that armed jihad, not elections, was the only way to liberate Palestine. If America refuses to engage with Islamist movements, however foreign or flawed their ideas may seem, al-Zawahiri's antidemocratic rhetoric may be increasingly well received. ■

[5] *The Arab press commonly draws a similar distinction: It labels Crooke's revivalists as "national Islamists" and the revolutionaries as "international jihadists."*

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THE LORD OF NO MAN'S LAND

A guided tour through Lebanon's ceaseless war

By Charles Glass

Israel should have known better. Even before abandoning their bases inside Lebanon in 2000, the Israelis had been unable to rout Hezbollah; now they planned to cross the border into territory where they had neither facilities nor allies in order to defeat the Shiite Muslims of the Party of God. Indeed, no foreign army—whether Israeli, Syrian, Egyptian, American, British, French, or any other over the past two centuries—has invaded Lebanon without suffering for it. The Old Testament Book of Habakkuk warned all who dared try: "For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein." "There is only one way to win a war in Lebanon," the octogenarian Israeli gadfly Uri Avnery recently observed, "and that is to avoid it."



RESCUERS SEARCH THE WRECKAGE OF A BOMBED APARTMENT BUILDING IN A BEIRUT SUBURB

So it should not be surprising that after thirty-four days of fighting in Lebanon last summer, Israel's vaunted military achieved none of its objectives: it did not turn the majority of Lebanese against Hezbollah, did not destroy the militia's infrastructure, and did not rescue the two Israeli soldiers Hezbollah guerrillas had abducted on July 12, the event that triggered the month-long war. Israeli intelligence also failed to find or kill Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader; Israeli commandos did manage to kidnap another Hassan Nasrallah, a bemused grocer from the Bekaa Valley, but released him three weeks later after realizing their error. During the invasion, 120 Israeli soldiers were killed, 50 Israeli tanks were disabled, and an Israeli warship suffered a direct hit from a Hezbollah-fired cruise missile.

In August, a few days after Israel agreed to a cease-fire, I traveled the coastal highway between Beirut and the Israeli border. Billboards proclaiming Hezbollah's "triumph over Israel" already lined the seashore road, many playing on Hassan Nasrallah's name—"Nasr," meaning victory, and "Allah," God—to read, NASR MIN ALLAH, "Victory from God." Shops were selling everything from Hezbollah clocks and pens to postcards of Nasrallah's beaming, bearded face, and Lebanese beauties, in tight jeans and with midriffs exposed, waved the party's yellow flags. Even the country's Christians, normally unenthusiastic about the Shiite militia, could be seen wearing Hezbollah T-shirts.

"I seem to see Beirut with its soul and guts hanging out," Hanan al-Shaykh wrote in her 1992 novel, *Beirut Blues*. "Then I see it strong and unyielding and am filled with affection for it. Life appears normal, despite the collapse of its outer trappings." It was like

Charles Glass lived in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s and is the author of several books on the Middle East, including The Tribes Triumphant. *His article "The Last of England" appeared in the November 2005 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Photographs by Andrew Stern/Redux

[illegible] reached the outskirts of [illegible] Israel's aerial campaign [illegible] Shiite Muslim suburbs. When I first traveled to Lebanon in 1972, these suburbs, called the Dahiyeh, existed only as a motley collection of breeze-block shanties, populated mostly by Shiite peasants who had fled the combat zone that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization had made of their villages and farms in the south. By the time Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war ended, in 1990, the "misery belt" surrounding the capital had been transformed into a full-fledged modern city, with its own high-rise apartments, businesses, mosques, churches, schools, and restaurants. Thirty-four days of Israeli bombardment reduced much of the achievement to wasteland.

All afternoon until sunset, I wandered the Dahiyeh with a Lebanese friend, Jamil Mroue, the owner and editor of Beirut's English-language newspaper, the *Daily Star*. We moved eerily from collapse to normality—an unscathed apartment block beside its vanished twin, old men taking coffee amid smoking ruins, and traffic snaking around craters in the palm-shaded boulevards. Jamil photographed the more spectacular examples of destruction: twenty stories of concrete twisted into an abandoned accordion, a gaping hole where a house had been. On the ground baby carriages, family photographs in cracked frames, burning sofas, and other frail relics of domesticity jutted haphazardly from the rubble.

In 1987, when I was in Lebanon researching a book, members of Hezbollah kidnapped me and held me captive for sixty-two days in the Dahiyeh. The night I escaped, I kept out of sight of local residents, fearing they might return me to my captors. But now, even in the aftermath of an Israeli onslaught that used weapons supplied by the United States, no one threatened American-looking me. Unarmed Hezbollah guards politely cautioned me to look out for unexploded bombs and lifted yellow-tape barriers so that Jamil and I could get a closer look at the devastation. Beside us on the sidewalks were crowds of what I can only call strollers. Theirs was an evening *passeggiata*—whole families gazing at the damage to their or their friends' houses as insouciantly as spectators at a county fair. Most of the young women we saw wore T-shirts and jeans, some had on skirts, and only a few female heads were wrapped in scarves. One of these covered women stepped just ahead of us toward a crushed mass of cement and wood. "That's my house," she said. I waited for wailing and tears that didn't come. She shrugged. "We can rebuild."

Outside the confines of Shiite Lebanon, however, many of the country's Sunni, Christians, and Druze believed that Hezbollah's Syrian and Iranian backers had callously used Lebanon as a battlefield for their own conflicts. They counted a thousand dead civilians, 15,000 homes reduced to rubble, factories and dairies ruined, much of the civil infrastructure eliminated, the summer tourist season, which accounts for nearly a quarter of the country's GDP, lost, and a million active cluster bomblets scattered across the south. Hezbollah, using Iranian money, was paying for much of the country's reconstruction. But the greater challenge would be restoring the consensus that had allowed Lebanon to emerge from its long civil war. "Yes, yes, we will rebuild," Walid Jumblatt, Lebanon's Druze Muslim leader and of late one of the country's most outspoken critics of Hezbollah and Syria, pronounced at a press conference. "But something has been destroyed that cannot be rebuilt, and that is trust. Trusting that the Lebanese people will not be dragged into yet another war."

> WALID JUMBLATT SEEMED A PROPER CASE STUDY TO HELP DIAGNOSE WHATEVER PATHOLOGY KEPT LEBANON IN NEAR CONSTANT CRISIS

I had come to Lebanon, in fact, to meet with Walid Jumblatt. The last of the old feudal lords to remain prominent in Lebanese politics, he seemed to me a proper case study to help diagnose whatever pathology kept the nation in near constant crisis. Over the past thirty years, Jumblatt had looked out for the welfare of his Druze minority by expediently maneuvering amid Lebanon's tangle of sects, factions, blood feuds, and competing foreign interests. Only a couple of years ago, the "Druze warlord," as the press called him, was Damascus's most valued ally in Lebanon. He was now declaring that "the decision of war and peace is that of the Lebanese state" and not Hezbollah's or any other militia's. But when the PLO operated from within Lebanon, he adamantly backed Yassir Arafat's right to make this very decision.

Lebanon contends that it is the most modern of Arab states, pointing to its beaches, ski resorts, free press, and universities. Yet a close look at the career of Walid Jumblatt alone reveals how little the country has changed since Ottoman times, when local beys, pashas, and sheikhs delivered their communities like Chicago ward heelers to some dominant outside power in order to gain an advantage over a shifting field of local rivals. Consequently, Lebanon's political system is one of the Arab world's most inefficient and convoluted. Certainly any country that was, say, devising its foreign policy toward Lebanon, would do well to examine a figure long at the center of this political morass.

I have known Walid Jumblatt, though not well, for thirty years. When I was beginning graduate study in philosophy at the American University of Beirut, in 1972, he had just completed his B.A. in political science and public administration. Student politics were at their most leftist and pro-Palestinian at the time, and Jumblatt's reputation as a bon vivant and rebel against the country's conservative social mores still lingered on campus. Everyone knew him as the son of Kamal Jumblatt, who was, improbably, both the Druze's feudal leader and the country's leading progressive politician. Walid was working then as a reporter at the Arabic daily *An Nahar*, Lebanon's equivalent of the *New York Times*; his lanky frame, in blue jeans and bomber jacket, could be seen in restaurants and the occasional nightclub, or cruising around town on a motorcycle. He was friends with Christians, Muslims, Palestinians, and foreigners. When his father was assas-

sinated, in 1977, Walid Jumblatt, without shedding his *enfant terrible* persona, was thrust into power.

Not long after arriving in Lebanon last summer, I was invited to dinner with Jumblatt at his Beirut home, which is protected by armed guards at a fortified checkpoint. In a concrete yard behind the house, I sat with him and his wife, Noura, while servants brought us platters of fresh tabbouleh and lamb from the kitchen and poured me arak with water and ice. Walid, who had been an ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, drank chilled vodka. Naturally, I wanted to ask about the recent war and Jumblatt's challenge to Hezbollah, but he was preoccupied with Washington. Was Condoleezza Rice more influential than Dick Cheney? How could he persuade the Bush Administration to help depose Lebanon's pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud, weed out Syrian moles in Lebanon's army and intelligence services, and overthrow the regime in Syria? Having abandoned his Syrian partnership in 2004, Jumblatt was without an outside backer to match Hezbollah's friends in Damascus and Tehran. Israel was obviously not an option. The only viable counterweight, then, was the United States. He didn't seem to mind that Washington had supported the Israeli invasion or that most Lebanese were opposed to its war in Iraq. When I asked how he could turn to a power that, in 1983, had shelled Druze villages in the Chouf Mountains from the battleship *New Jersey*, all he did was shrug, as if to say, "This is Lebanon. What do you expect?"

Noura told me they never stayed the night in Beirut. Prominent critics of Syria and Hezbollah recently had been blown up in their cars; another would soon be gunned down in the street. So after dinner she and Walid drove with their bodyguards to the Jumblatt ancestral seat, the magnificent Ottoman palace in the mixed Druze-Maronite mountain village of Mukhtara. The Jumblatts felt safer from assassins in the Chouf, surrounded by their loyal Druze.

I went to the palace in Mukhtara a few mornings later, taking a detour around a bridge Israel had bombed at the town of Damour, just south of Beirut, and following a road up to the mountains. Here, where Shiite Lebanon ended and Druze Lebanon began, there were no posters of Hassan Nasrallah and also no destruction. Israel had spared the Chouf in its attack on the rest of Lebanon.

Walid's father wrote in his memoir, *I Speak for Lebanon*, that the ancestral seat "had been built in stages over two and a half centuries," on stone foundations left by the Crusaders. The first Jumblatts migrated to Lebanon from Syria in the seventeenth century, according to the 1853 account of Colonel Charles Churchill, a retired British officer who lived in the Ottoman Em-



DESTRUCTION IN THE DAHIYEH

Damascus in 1613. "Shortly after-
fell by treachery." Ali's sons, Jumblatt
and Yesbeck, fled to the Chouf. Ac-
eleventh-century Cairo, that mixes Is-
maili Shiism, Christian Gnosticism,
and classical Greek philosophy with a
belief in reincarnation—long before
this move. The Druze, under centuries
war," writes Claude Boueiz Kanaan in
Lebanon 1860–1960. "Their social hi-
erarchy centered on military service,
with consequent implications for the
community's modern self-image."

Now in Mukhtara, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion, Walid told me more about his past. He had had a troubled childhood, living with a father who was famously reserved and ascetic. Just before his ninth birthday, Walid recalled, the civil war of 1958 broke out. Lebanon's president at the time, a Maronite named Camille Chamoun, had embraced the Eisenhower Doctrine guaranteeing protection to governments that opposed Communism. Thus Chamoun situated Lebanon in the Western camp; the country's Muslim establishment, however, demanded alignment with the Arab world. President Eisenhower sent in the Marines to calm things down, lest Lebanon fall to an Arab nationalist revolution, as Iraq had that July. "I remember the Marines landing in Lebanon," Jumblatt said. "I remember the fighters who were sent by [Egyptian President Gamal Abdel] Nasser to help us, the Druze fighters—beautiful guys, physically speaking." The Druze of Syria rallied to Kamal Jumblatt, holding him up as the new anti-imperialist Druze chief.

During the fighting, Walid, for his safety, was lodged with a Christian family in Beirut. When the war ended, Camille Chamoun stepped down as president, but Washington allowed the Egyptians to assume control of Lebanon, just as it would let Syria do in 1976. "I was brought back here," Walid told me, referring to the Chouf. "It was my birthday, and one of the guards fired in the air. My father was furious." Kamal Jumblatt threatened to jail the man, telling him, "You have to respect the people who died in the civil war. It's not the time to have a birthday for my son." For Kamal Jumblatt, tribal leadership superseded familial obligations.

When Walid was twenty, he married, against his father's wishes, an Iranian actress, ten years his senior, who drank too much. The marriage, he said, led to estrangement between father and son. After a divorce and his father's death, Walid married a blonde Circassian from Jordan named, coincidentally, Gervette Jumblatt. Everyone called her Gigi, and I remember her dancing uninhibitedly with friends



A MASS FUNERAL IN THE SOUTHERN VILLAGE OF QANA



WALID JUMBLATT AT HIS PALACE IN MUKHTARA

in the Roman ruins at Baalbek late at night during the civil war. She and Walid had their first child, a son, in 1982. They named him Taimur—Tamerlaine, as the name is known in the West—the man who conquered and destroyed Damascus in 1400. Walid divorced again, finally marrying Noura, whom he met and courted when she was married to one of his cousins.

One of the few Lebanese to have seen the enormity of the country's conflict as it began to unfold in 1975 was Ghassan Tueini, the editor and proprietor of *An Nahar*, the paper where Walid once worked. I had listened to Tueini in early 1975 at the American University Hospital as he warned physicians there to prepare for the worst. After Nasser's death, Egypt lost interest in Lebanon, and the PLO, Israel, and Syria all moved to take advantage of the resulting vacuum. Palestinian commandos took control of parts of south Lebanon; Israel bombed the south and, occasionally, Beirut; and Syria supplied arms to the Palestinians and the Lebanese Muslim factions to shore up its influence. Lebanon's Maronite Christians insisted that the Palestinians be disarmed, Sunni Muslims demanded that the state support the Palestinian struggle against Israel, Shiites joined militias on both sides. Kamal Jumblatt backed the Palestinians and the Sunnis, while his Maronite opponents armed their militias to confront the Palestinians. In April 1975, the Lebanese civil war officially began when Palestinians aboard a bus were massacred by Christians. Tueini became a member of a six-man emergency cabinet appointed by President Suleiman Frangieh to find a way out of the war. A newspaperman and a Greek Orthodox Christian, Tueini was well placed to arbitrate among factions. He was also close to Kamal Jumblatt, who, alone among Druze notables, stood by him when he crossed religious lines and married a Druze poet.

Last August, as Israeli planes still flew missions over Beirut and its warships were preventing aid ships from reaching the city's port, I went to the village of Beit Mary, a few miles up Mount Lebanon from east Beirut, to see Ghassan Tueini. His house had changed since my visit a year before, when it was open to all comers. Now even Tueini, an independent politician who had never been involved in the country's sectarian and feudal violence, had protection. Under tall umbrella pines, a guard rolled a mirror to search for bombs under my taxi before swinging open a reinforced iron security gate.

We sat down for an al fresco lunch on his shaded patio, which overlooked Beirut, the Mediterranean Sea, and, just below, a backyard pool. Two tiny girls were swimming with their mother and a Filipina nanny. The twin girls, Tueini said, were thirteen months old, born just after their father—his son Gibran, who had also opposed Syria's presence in Lebanon—was killed by a car bomb.

During lunch, Ghassan gave me a long oral tour of modern Lebanese his-



A WOMAN GATHERS BELONGINGS FROM THE RUINS OF HER HOME, IN THE DAHIYEH

tory, most of which he had lived through as journalist, diplomat, and politician. A personal crisis, he told me, almost brought the country's factional leaders together about six months into the civil war. Tueini was in a cabinet meeting, at the presidential palace in Baabda, when Kamal Jumblatt called. "Ghassan," he said, his voice quavering, "Walid has been kidnapped." Camille Chamoun, the former president who had become minister of the interior, grabbed the telephone. Although the two men had not spoken since the previous civil war, in 1958, Chamoun promised to help. A few hours later, Chamoun's son, Dany, discovered that members of his own Maronite militia, bent on avenging the death of one of their relatives, were about to execute Walid. Dany delivered Walid Jumblatt to the presidential palace, where Tueini, Chamoun, and the other ministers treated him as if he were their own son.

Walid's rescue led to a momentary rapprochement between Kamal Jumblatt and the Christian leaders, but the conflict proved too large. The tragedies that befell each leader who welcomed Walid that night indicate the extent to which the Lebanese, by repeatedly calling in outsiders to back their various rival factions, traded away control over their own fate. President Suleiman Frangieh's son, Tony, Tony's wife, and their three-year-old daughter were murdered at their home by rival Maronites allied to Israel. The Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Rashid Karami would be assassinated by a bomb planted in his army helicopter, probably by the same Maronites who killed Tony Frangieh. Camille Chamoun's son, Dany, his wife, Ingrid, and their two small sons would be gunned down in their east Beirut apartment. Adil Bey Osseiran had already lost his older son, Abdallah, to assassins from his own Shiite sect; his next son, Ali, would be kidnapped in 1987. Ghassan Tueini lived to see his only surviving child murdered for standing up to Syria.

Tueini said Walid still visited him from time to time, occasionally pretending to seek advice. "'You are the only survivor,'" he said Walid will begin. "I say, 'Yes, I know the story. What do you want to know?'" And Walid will ask, "'How do you think Kamal Bey would have acted in this or that situation?'" Both Walid and Ghassan are said to be on Syrian "death lists" currently circulating in Lebanon.

I was invited to another meal at Mukhtara, a dinner with Walid, his wife, and his mother, Mai Jumblatt. When Mai came outside to the terrace where we were having drinks, we all rose to greet her. She asked Walid about his recent trip to France, where he had just met the interior minister and presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy. "He's just as nervous as me," Walid said, as he motioned to his leg, which, as usual, bounced up and down. His mother asked why there weren't any real men left in France or anywhere else. "Men like Richelieu," she said. Cardinal Richelieu, she went on,

had destroyed the Huguenots at La Rochelle in 1627, starving the city in a siege in order to save France. I was about to ask whether she wanted someone to do the same in Lebanon, when Walid shook his head and we went to the dinner table.

Kamal Jumblatt and Mai Arslan were married in Geneva in 1948. He had studied at a Catholic boarding school in Lebanon and at the Sorbonne; she was a princess of the Jumblatts' traditional Yazbecki Druze rivals and a society beauty distantly related to Kamal's mother. Just as the couple returned to Lebanon from their honeymoon, Israel declared its independence. Lebanon joined the futile Arab invasion, losing in the process nine border villages and receiving more than 100,000 Palestinian Arab refugees. In 1949, Kamal Jumblatt founded the Progressive Socialist Party. His critics called him "Comrade Kamal Bey," a term that was later uttered with affection. Walid was born that same year and was three when his parents separated. Although Walid lived with Kamal, he said he used to "smuggle" himself out to visit his mother.

In the spring of 1976, Kamal Jumblatt's coalition of Palestinians, Muslims, and left-wing militias seemed to be winning the civil war. The Christians, fearing annihilation, turned to Syria for help. Kamal Jumblatt went to Damascus to ask Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, an air force general from the dissident Alawite sect of Shiite Muslims who took power in 1970, to stay out of the fighting. A leftist victory, Kamal argued, would be good for both Lebanon and Syria, as Lebanon would be able to write a new, secular constitution and end the war for good. The two leaders met for hours. Assad presented his version of the meeting on Syrian television on August 20, 1976:

> [Kamal Jumblatt] said, "Let us discipline [the Maronites]. There should be a military settlement. They have ruled us for 140 years, and we want to get rid of them." Here, I saw all the masks falling. . . . The issue is not between the Right and the Left, not between progressive and reactionary, and not between Christian and Muslim. The issue is that of vengeance and revenge, which goes back 140 years. Kamal Jumblatt left this meeting leaving the impression he insists on fighting. I told him, "Don't count on my help."

Other Arab countries, on learning that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger approved of Syria's intervention in Lebanon, refused to help Kamal Jumblatt fend off the Syrians. Jumblatt wrote to Assad, "I beg you to withdraw the troops you have sent into Lebanon. We do not want to be a satellite state. We want to be independent. . . . We do not want the great Syrian prison."

Less than a year later, Kamal Jumblatt and his bodyguards had cleared a Syrian military checkpoint near the village of Baakline when, at a turn in the road, four assassins shot him dead. Walid had just finished lunch at a seaside Italian restaurant in west Beirut when he heard the news. As he now told me about that moment, some thirty years later, Walid still appeared stunned. He tapped his foot nervously and looked around his study, which was dominated by memorabilia from his father's time—pictures, awards, books. On his way to Mukhtara, he recalled, Syrian soldiers stopped him. One Syrian officer, who clearly recognized Walid, demanded to know who he was, making his contempt known.

At the palace, his father's lacerated body lay in the Mercedes-Benz in which he'd been shot. "I think it was my first act of command," Walid said. "I told them to take him to where the library now is. I told them, 'Take him there, and we'll see later on.' Because at that time, we heard news that Christians were being killed in the villages around us." Walid said he and the Druze spiritual leader, Mohammed Abu Shakra, drove out to stop Druze from exacting revenge on their innocent Maronite neighbors. "We managed in two villages to cool down people. In the third village, they told us nobody's left." The entire Maronite village of Deir Dourit, with some 270 people, was wiped out. An estimated 1,000 Maronites died that day. Others fled, but Walid was able to convince the majority that they would be safe if they remained.

Walid ordered his father's funeral and burial that night. They wrapped his father's head in white cloth, because a large part of it had been shot away, and the pallbearers carried the body on foot from the house to the grave. The day af-



The assassination, a Syrian Baath Party official named Abdallah al-Ahmad came to Mukhtara to deliver the official message: Israel had killed Walid's father. (Like so many others in this mountain tale, Abdallah al-Ahmad was later killed when a car ran him over in Syria, in what was officially declared an accident.) Walid remembered going along with the lie. "Of course I told him politely it was Israel. Of course everyone knew it was the Syrians. But we had to say it was the Israelis."

I asked Walid who really killed his father. "One guy called Hafez Assad," he said. "Within the apparatus, who did it, it's minor for me. In such a totalitarian regime, there is no possibility it was an accident." Walid did not conceal the lingering anguish. In a garage beside us sat his father's Mercedes, scarred with rifle fire and untouched since 1977. Walid still had his father's identity card with the bullet holes in it. "The Druze are known for their vendettas," Samir Frangieh, a Maronite political ally of Jumblatt's, told me. "The Druze never forget."

At age twenty-seven, Walid, whose political experience was limited to a stint as a journalist, found himself supreme leader of the Druze, chief of the Progressive Socialist Party, and nominal head of the combined forces of Lebanon's leftist and Muslim militias. The Druze called him the "son of the pillar of the sky." His first political choice was between vengeance, the feudal lord's prerogative, and pragmatism, the duty of the modern politician. Walid sacrificed revenge. In June 1977, he made a pilgrimage to Damascus to meet President Assad. Assad said to him, "It's strange how you look like your father." "I still had my hair," Walid told me, laughing a little as he patted his bare head. "I looked at him," Walid continued, "and I felt, to tell you the truth, I knew that he killed my father, and he knew that I knew that he killed my father. And it was quite a strange feeling. And we sat. I didn't feel hatred."

How could he do it? He believed he had no other choice. "I knew that the war was not over," Walid said. The right-wing Maronite militias were still powerful, so he had to find a way to strengthen his own forces. "In Damascus we had a good friend, Hikmet Shihabi, the chief of staff," he explained. "And I convinced Hikmet slowly to convey messages to Hafez al-Assad that I need weapons, that I need to be trained." Syria provided Jumblatt with arms and trained his militia. Through the Soviet Union's ambassador in Beirut, Druze fighters also went to Russia for military instruction. Walid estimated that the Russians supplied him, over the years, with some $500 million worth of weapons, ammunition, and training. They even let Walid open a restaurant in Moscow. And thus Walid found himself becoming an enemy not only of the Maronites but of Israel and the United States as well.

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 to expel Yassir Arafat and the PLO, the Druze fought alongside the Palestinians in Beirut. Israeli bombs rained down on west Beirut for three months. Rather than allow Beirut's complete destruction, the United States negotiated a withdrawal of PLO commandos by sea. "When Arafat decided to leave," Walid told me, "we went together to the port of Beirut and said farewell." Walid fired his Kalashnikov into the air in salute. "It was emotional, very emotional for me." For all of Walid Jumblatt's life, his politics had been defined by his father's and his own commitment to justice for the Palestinians. Suddenly, the cause had moved elsewhere.

Surrounded by Israeli tanks, the Lebanese parliament, in September 1982, anointed Ariel Sharon's choice, Bashir Gemayel, as president. Just before the inauguration, a pro-Syrian Lebanese Christian assassinated Gemayel; Bashir's older brother, Amin, was then chosen to serve in his stead. Amin Gemayel arrested and tortured suspected enemies, and his late brother's Lebanese Forces militia went into the Chouf with the Israelis to exact revenge for the massacres of Maronites that had followed Kamal Jumblatt's assassination. Walid had just held a secret meeting at a friend's house in west Beirut, to discuss peace with a representative of Lebanese Forces, when a car bomb was detonated alongside his armored car. I happened to be a few blocks away and heard the blast. Walid, at the wheel, was wounded. Beside him and also injured was Gervette, pregnant with their second son. Six bystanders and Walid's bodyguard died. At the American University Hospital, Walid hurried to show his followers he was alive, in order to avert another bloodbath in the Chouf. Later, a second bomb exploded in a restaurant, the Smugglers' Inn, where Jumblatt and his closest political adviser often met for dinner.

Because Beirut was no longer safe for critics of the Israeli occupation or Gemayel's government, Walid moved to Syria. "Jumblatt was never a Syrian man," novelist Elias Khoury told me. "After they assassinated his father and after the Israeli invasion and the Christian fascists took over, he had no choice but to go to Syria." In Damascus, Walid joined other anti-Israeli Lebanese in exile—everyone from Muslim fundamentalists to Communists. ABC News had sent me there to cover the Syrian side of the Lebanese war, and I saw a lot of him then. Walid spent his time mainly in cafés and bars with Lebanese friends and allies. Once I accompanied him and a Soviet delegation to a floor show at the Meridien Hotel, where the Russians drank vodka straight and howled with abandon at the nude dancers. Walid seemed bored.

Back in Lebanon, the American Embassy, the U.S. Marine headquarters, and a French army barracks all were destroyed by suicide bombers. The Israeli occupiers suffered daily attacks. A new, more militant Shiite militia—Hezbollah—was formed by radical members of the Shiite Amal militia, clerics allied to Iran, and disaffected young men dedicated to expelling the Israelis. Israel had radicalized many of them in the prison camps of southern Lebanon and incited others by assassinating their religious leaders.

In September 1983, I was in the back seat of Walid's white Range Rover as he drove at ninety miles an hour up the highway from Damascus back to the Chouf. His military commander, Sharif Fayad, sat beside him in front. To the north of the highway was the Syrian army, to the south the Israelis. "Sometimes Lebanon seems to be just an artificial creation," Walid said at one point. "Maybe it should be divided between Syria and Israel." I asked which

half he would live in. He paused and answered, "The No Man's Land."

The Lebanese army disintegrated when Druze and Shiite soldiers defected to Jumblatt and the Shiite Amal militia. West Beirut fell to Druze and Amal forces in February 1984, and the Marines soon "redeployed to the ships," in the contorted vocabulary Washington used to conceal defeat and its abandonment of Lebanon. Syria, which Israel had expelled from Lebanon along with the PLO in 1982, successfully reimposed itself through its Amal and Druze proxies. The Lebanon it acquired, however, was in chaos. The militias battled one another over territory, illegal ports, smuggling, and the ubiquitous extortion rackets.

With the presidency, what was left of the army, and essentially all that remained of the Lebanese state now in Maronite hands, Jumblatt turned his back on the country and retreated into his Druze canton. He dispensed justice from the family seat at Mukhtara, just as his eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ancestors had done, by resolving family disputes and issuing the death sentence for murder. He forbade the singing of Lebanon's national anthem in Chouf schools, and he banned Lebanon's cedar-tree flag. By the fall of 1986, Jumblatt's militia controlled west Beirut jointly with the Shiite Muslim Amal militia of Nabih Berri. When Jumblatt ordered all Lebanese flags there removed, the Amal militia refused. Of all the wars within the war that is Lebanon, none has been more pointless than the "War of the Two Flags" that then erupted in November 1986. Much of the fighting, conveniently for the international press, took place close to its favorite bar in the Commodore Hotel.

I was visiting Beirut on the day the flag war broke out, having borrowed my old flat opposite the Commodore. I watched the shooting from a balcony. A rifleman somewhere on another rooftop was firing down upon the street, while gunmen on the ground were firing up. Bullets shattered the windshield of a passing car, hitting a man inside. From the Commodore came a posse of photographers, all of them clicking away as the driver, under fire, tried to pull his bleeding passenger to safety. "What are you doing?" he screamed. "Why don't you help?" They told me the passenger later died, one of a hundred or so victims of the flag war.

The Lebanese flag—the one Jumblatt detested a few years ago—now flutters in the skies above the Chouf. Jumblatt has embraced the Christians, more or less. The man he said once tried to kill him, former President Amin Gemayel, is at present his ally. Gemayel's son, Pierre, was murdered in Beirut in November, the latest anti-Syrian to lose his life in the undeclared war of nerves that is again pushing Lebanon toward civil war. Jumblatt remains up in Mukhtara, rarely venturing out, believing that he will be the next victim.

On my final visit to Mukhtara, Jumblatt led me outside and up a winding stone staircase to the room he currently uses as his study. On the desk was a pot of sugarless Turkish coffee, fuel for another session of questions. Near it was a collection of pistols, modern and ancient, along with uniforms from the old Soviet army. The Soviets, after all, had armed his militia when he and the other Lebanese leftists had fought for Palestine. Now Jumblatt was condemning Hezbollah for doing what he had done: challenging Israel. Why did he apply one standard to the PLO and another to Hezbollah? "Well, maybe we felt more secure with the PLO," he said. "Arafat was a man you could speak with, not that fundamentalist approach like Nasrallah."

Israel finally left southern Lebanon, after twenty-two years, on May 22, 2000. Hezbollah's new leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, ordered his fighters not to harm those who had collaborated with the occupier—a show of restraint that gave the Shiite militia credibility among the country's Christians. The war could have ended then, but Syria found a pretext for prolonging Hezbollah's usefulness as a lever against Israel. The excuse was Sheba'a Farms, a sliver of Lebanese land that Syria had seized in 1954 and Israel had taken from Syria in 1967. Most Lebanese had not heard of it before 2000. With Syria's blessing, Hezbollah launched occasional raids and grabbed Israeli soldiers along the border to trade for Lebanese abducted by Israel.

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At this time Jumblatt praised suicide bombings, which Hezbollah and Hamas had been carrying out against Israeli targets. In March 2004, he had this exchange with a journalist on Al Arabiyya television:

> Journalist: Your message to the youth tonight is to die a martyr's death?
> Jumblatt: Do you have another option?
> Journalist: That they live.
> Jumblatt: There is no other option. That they live? No one can live under humiliation.

Yet American foreign policy was changing. The mandate that James Baker had given Syria over Lebanon in 1990, in exchange for its help against Saddam Hussein in Kuwait, became obsolete; the overthrow of the Baathist regime in Iraq in 2003 left Washington's neoconservatives with ambitions to depose the Baath government in Syria. Driving Syria out of Lebanon would chip away at its power. Jumblatt, always a politician first, seized the opportunity to do what he had long wanted: to turn against the regime that had killed his father. He called not only for the expulsion of the Syrian army from Lebanon but also for the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, who became president after his father's death in 2000. Walid recanted his harsh criticism of America's Iraq invasion, cultivating Washington's neo-cons as allies in his feud with the al-Assad family. And he ended a twenty-eight-year public silence by declaring openly that the Syrians had murdered his father. His personal and political objectives were finally in accord: opposing Syria satisfied his desire for vengeance and allowed him to protect his Druze minority from Syrian-backed Shiite domination.

On February 14, 2005, a little over a year after former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri helped to pass U.N. Resolution 1559, which demanded full Syrian withdrawal and the disarmament of Hezbollah, Hariri was killed by a massive car bomb in west Beirut. Misjudging the public mood, Hezbollah took a half million supporters onto the streets to support Syria; in response, on March 14, well over a million Lebanese gathered in the heart of Beirut's downtown to demand an immediate Syrian departure and *al haqiqa*, the truth, about Hariri's murder. A month later, the Syrians left. The U.N. appointed a commission to investigate Hariri's death, and much of its evidence pointed at Syria. Without Hariri, whose sons lacked political experience, the Sunni Muslims were leaderless. Jumblatt filled the void, speaking for Druze and Sunnis against Syria. Christians who had always hated Syria rallied to him as well.

Unexplained explosions in Christian areas followed Syria's withdrawal. Car bombs killed prominent anti-Syrians—Ghassan Tueini's son, Gibran; the journalist Samir Kassir; former Communist Party chief Georges Hawi. Other anti-Syrians spoke out but lived in fear, barricaded in their houses and traveling only with bodyguards. On one side stood Hassan Nasrallah and his formidable Hezbollah fighters, supported by Syria and Iran. On the other were most Christians, the Sunnis, and Jumblatt's Druze. Jumblatt urged the crowds in central Beirut to wave the Lebanese flag and no other. Then came Hezbollah's sudden capture of two Israeli soldiers just over the border, prompting Israel's thirty-four-day retaliation.

In this current crisis, the combination of sects and groups and countries that are allied or opposed may be new, but these configurations seem mostly another incarnation of Lebanon's centuries-old story. Ottoman Turks once guarded Sunni interests in Lebanon, while the French gave protection to the Maronites, the Russians helped the Greek Orthodox, and the British had a loose partnership with the Druze; later Muslims turned to Egypt and Syria to replace the Ottomans. The Shiites have always looked to Iran or to the Shiite clerics of Iraq. Walid's ancestors very likely would recognize—and approve of—their descendant's manipulation of local and outside powers. And they would not be surprised to see that the latest and probably most modern Lebanese politician, Hassan Nasrallah, is a mullah who wears a black turban denoting his descent from the Prophet Muhammad. In Lebanon, things change so that they can remain the same.

Once outside of Mukhtara, I drove down the mountain toward Beirut. Lebanese flags dangled from telephone wires and electrical poles, and fading posters of the Jumblatts—Walid, his father, and Walid's older son, Taimur—were tacked to walls and pasted in windows. "Somebody has to inherit this house, be able to continue this tradition, this political family tradition," Walid had said just before I left his palace. "But I don't see the future bright. I see it bleak. So I don't envy the future of my son." At the bottom of the last foothill, I reached the chasm where the Damour bridge had been demolished by the Israeli air force. On the road beside the sea loomed a possible future – bombed-out roads and houses as well as images of Hassan Nasrallah and his glorious martyrs.

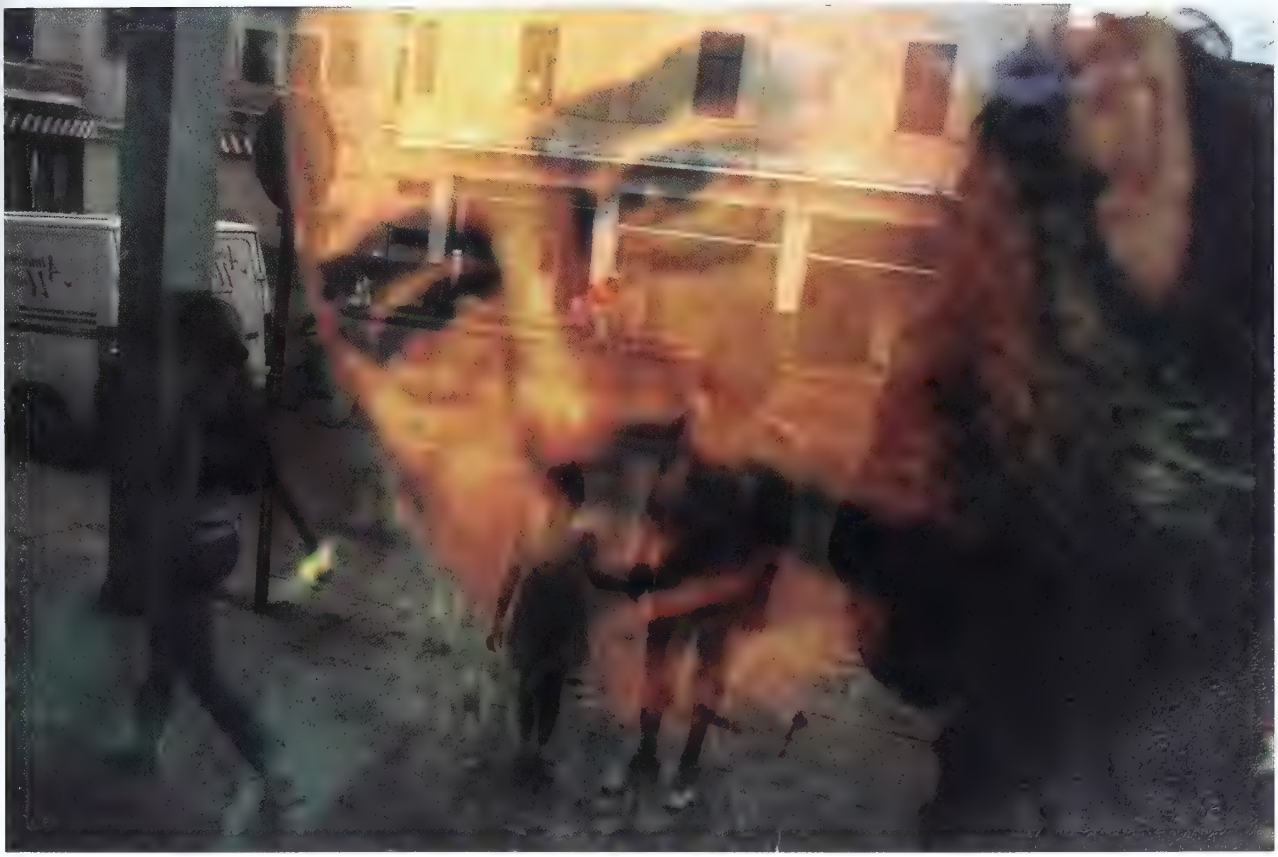
The lie that sustained most Lebanese, including the thousands who returned from diaspora in the 1990s, was that the long civil war ended when the shooting stopped. But Syria did not want it to end, Hezbollah could not let it end, and Israel would not agree to terms that would allow it to end. Iran, too, had a use for Lebanon: if the United States or Israel bombed Iran's nuclear facilities, Iran could ask Hezbollah to shell Israel, something the militia proved in July it could do effectively. The latest Israeli invasion has convinced many Lebanese that they face perpetual war as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict persists.

Driving again past collapsed buildings in the Dahiyeh, I thought of the flag war, the "Two Years War" of 1975 and 1976, the "Mountain War" of 1983, and the "War of Elimination" between two Christian factions that in 1990 compelled 100,000 to emigrate. The Christian General Michel Aoun's other futile war, against Syria and financed by Saddam Hussein, nearly destroyed east Beirut. Aoun, the Christians' former anti-Syrian champion, had just returned from exile to declare an alliance with Hezbollah and Damascus. I headed north into Beirut and then beyond the Palestinian refugee camps, whose devastated shacks the Amal Shiite militia had assailed for more than a year at Syria's behest in the "Camps War." The camps had been attacked before and since by Israel, which invaded Lebanon in 1978, 1982, 1996, 2002, and 2006. They called them all wars, but each was an episode, or phase, in the unfolding madness that was—and remains—the Lebanese war. Lebanon's long, long war. ■

THE SPECTRE OF CASTRO

Photographs from Cuba

By Peter Turnley



Fidel Castro's image reflected in the window of a Havana bar

Harper's Magazine *Contributing Editor Peter Turnley is a photographer based in Paris and New York City. He has published four books of photographs, including* Moments of Revolution, Parisians, *and* In Times of War and Peace.

Photographs © Peter Turnley/CORBIS



A celebration of Castro's eightieth birthday in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución on December 2, 2006



Worshippers at the Iglesia de Santa Bárbara in Párraga, outside of Havana





Watching players warm up at a game between Guantánamo and Industriales at the Estadio Latinoamericano in Havana
Schoolchildren with their teacher in Old Havana





Waiting for the bus in Santiago de las Vegas
A family sits in their car along the Malecón in Havana



Passengers on a bus after work, near the Capitolio Nacional in Old Havana



Hoeing a bean field in the tobacco region of Pinar del Río

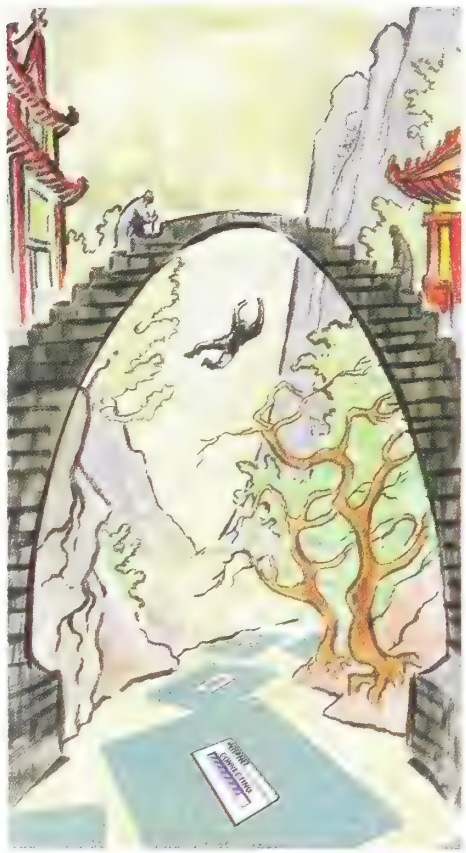


Two medical students on the Malecón in Havana

I WAS A CHINESE INTERNET ADDICT

A tale of modern medicine

By McKenzie Funk



I had read online about the Chinese Internet-addiction clinic, but I didn't know if it would accept me until I was actually there. The clinic was run by Chinese doctors and soldiers in a two-story block of concrete on the heavily congested grounds of the Beijing Military Region Central Hospital. Its entrance was a sloped hallway lined with inspirational posters: images of winding highways, palm-fringed swimming pools, empty beaches lapped by tropical waves. Flora, a film student who'd agreed to be my translator, read the captions as we walked in. "Overprotection will make your children disabled," she whispered. "Courage has unbelievable power."

A squat woman with blackened front teeth and a lab coat was standing expectantly in the waiting room. She wore white running shoes with Velcro fasteners, and her hair was cut into a tight bob that faded into a mullet. She smiled warmly and introduced herself as Dr. Yao. I thanked her for seeing me.

"How long do you go on the Internet each day?" she asked. I stared into space. "That would be, average, uh, eight to twelve hours," I said. "Sometimes less."

"What do you do on the Internet?"

"I read the news a lot. The *New York Times* online—every story. All of Google News, at least everything that's interesting. The *Washington Post*. Sometimes I send messages to friends and other people. Sometimes, when I have to buy an airline ticket . . ."

"Do you play Internet games?"

"No. I just talk to friends and read. But I've watched cartoons on cartoon sites, and I look at things I could buy online."

"Do you have anxiety when you can't get on the Internet?"

"I do wonder if I'm missing messages from friends—emails I really should be reading—and I wonder about the news. Maybe there's a story, American politics or something, and every hour I want to know what's changed. When I have the opportunity, I check those things, and it feels better."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-nine."

I explained that my girlfriend, Jenny, was half Chinese, and let Dr. Yao assume that this had something to do with my being here. I said that Flora was a friend of Jenny's cousin and was helping me on behalf of the worried family. This was a lie.

A nurse in a pink cap walked by, then a soldier in camouflage fatigues. A girl of twelve or thirteen passed next, waving an exuberant good-bye to Dr. Yao while her father toted her suitcase. On the wall of the waiting room, I noticed, was an illustrated poster explaining the inner workings of computers: the Windows operating system, a Web browser set to Google, the interface of the popular Chinese chat program QQ.

"Do you have the ability to take yourself away from the Internet?" Dr. Yao asked. If I had to go to dinner with someone, I could go, I said. But I was often late.

She asked if I had other compulsive behaviors. I admitted that I sometimes read magazines all the way through

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Illustration by Christopher Sena

from the front page to the back page, and that I felt compelled to watch movies, even bad movies, to the very end. If I asked if "small things" got stuck in my head, if I often stayed up all night, and if I thought about the Internet while doing other activities. "It's not the Internet itself that I think about but the things inside it," I said.

I was led to a small room furnished with a pullout futon and a gray computer. The hallways were empty; the director and most of the patients, Dr. Yao explained, were at the set of *Tell It Like It Is!* one of the oldest and most famous of China's talk shows. She seated Flora and me in front of the computer. Its desktop image was a field of blooming flowers with characters that read, "I really want my psychological health."

On the computer was a diagnostic test. Dr. Yao said there were ninety statements, and I was to rate their truth on a scale from A (not at all true) to E (very true). She helped me fill in my biographical details—level of education, date of birth, profession (I said I had none)—then left Flora and me in private.

"You have headaches," the computer offered. I chose "B." "You get agitated." I chose "C." "When you have headaches, your head is filled with unnecessary thoughts and words." I pondered the necessity of my thoughts. "C" again. "You feel dizzy or faint," the computer continued. "You have less desire for the opposite sex. You have no desire for food. You check things again and again. You hear things others cannot. You feel that others control your mind. You can't control your temper. You blame your troubles on others. You blame yourself. You are forgetful. You feel lonely. You feel scared. You feel bored. You feel sick. You feel irritable. You cry easily. You worry about your appearance. You worry too much. You can't fall asleep. You have a hard time breathing. You feel your brain is empty. Your heart beats too quickly. You have chest pain. You are afraid of open spaces. You want to smash things. You think about death. You want to end your life. There is something blocking your throat."

I lied outright only a few times: claims of lethargy, lack of appetite, indifference to sex, and isolation from others. I managed a sort of exaggerated honesty, sticking at least to the contours of the truth. If a statement merited a "B," I might give it a "C." But an "A" was always an "A," an "E" always an "E." None of the ninety questions mentioned the Internet, and after an hour the test was done.

A new doctor, younger and much taller than Yao, with fine features on a narrow face, came in with a printout of the instantaneous results. I received decent marks for anxiety, depression, interpersonal communication, and hostility—nothing over what the doctor said was the threshold, 1.50. But my level of paranoia was worrisome: 2.00. Worse was my obsessive-compulsive rating, 2.20. "This is bad," the doctor said. Toward the bottom of the page was a number that seemed out of place: 60. I asked what it signified. She didn't hesitate: "That means you're an Internet addict."

That afternoon, I sat in Dr. Yao's office, looking at translations of Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, and Sigmund Freud as she asked about my successful father and mother and my history of small colleges and good grades. Two doctors, both men, strolled by carrying a pirated DVD of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,* which they started watching in the room where I'd taken the ninety-question test. I signed a release authorizing the treatment and paid Dr. Yao 2,100 yuan, enough for the first four of the twenty days I was asked to stay.

I retreated into my new room, #27, and listened to the clatter of feet in the hall: my fellow patients, back from their television appearance. At 9:00 P.M. there was a rap on the door. A nurse came in, handed me seven pills, and waited. One was a red gelcap, another a chalky white half-capsule. Four were small white tablets, and a fifth tablet was red. I put the pills in my mouth, hid them in my cheek, and pretended to cough. She kept staring, so I filled a paper cup with hot water from a thermos and drank. When I realized I'd accidentally grabbed two cups that were stuck together, I used my tongue to make a space between them and spit out the rapidly dissolving pills. I crumpled the cups and tossed them into the trash. The nurse didn't seem to notice. She flashed a proud smile and returned to the hall. I was left with the sinking feeling that I'd swallowed the chalky half-capsule and spent the rest of the evening trying to figure out if I felt dizzy, if something was wrong in my head.

It was a dark season for the Internet users of China. Just weeks before I checked in, during the holiday marking the fifty-sixth birthday of the People's Republic, one of their own was killed. Her screen name was "Snowly," and she'd been playing the online game World of Warcraft nonstop for days on end, preparing to join her guild of fighters against the black dragon Nefarian. She collapsed from exhaustion and died in real life before the virtual mission could succeed. Two dozen warriors held her virtual funeral a week later. They kneeled in the digital grass and bowed their heads as words of remembrance floated off toward a range of jagged virtual peaks.

In Shanghai, a court sentenced forty-one-year-old online gamer Qiu Chengwei to life in prison for the murder of a fellow player. It was a complicated case: Qiu had lent his cyber-weapon, a "dragon saber" that he'd won in Legend of Mir II, to a younger player named Zhu Caoyuan, who in turn had sold it for $870 and kept the money. Enraged, Qiu went to the police, but they couldn't help him; China had no laws protecting virtual property. So Qiu broke into Zhu's one-room apartment while he and his girlfriend slept, and Zhu barely had time to put his pants on before Qiu stabbed him in the heart with a real knife.

The number of Chinese Netizens (the preferred translation of the term *wangmin,* literally "network citizens") recently surpassed 130 million: the world's second-largest online population, after America's, and growing at 30 percent a year. Broadband is cheap, fast, everywhere; Internet cafés number in the tens of thousands; all-night passes cost as little as 5 yuan, or about 60 cents. At any given moment, more than 2 million Chinese are battling one another in virtual worlds, and at one record-breaking moment 22 million users logged on to the chat and social-networking portal QQ. Last year China's online gaming industry posted revenues of $670 million—up 45 percent from 2005, when Netizens spent more than $12 billion on Web access.

Chen Tianqiao, the thirty-two-year-old CEO of Shanda, distributor of Legend of Mir II and other multiplayer games, had recently become a billionaire—one of only ten in the country. Another billionaire was William Ding Lei, who founded NetEase.com. Yahoo! injected a billion dollars in cash into the e-commerce site Alibaba.com, and China Mobile announced that it had spent more than a billion dollars in two years to bring Internet and phone service to 25,862 rural villages.

Cracks appeared everywhere. Bloggers such as Sister Hibiscus, Rascal Swallow, and Stainless Steel Mouse were vaulted to awkward, inappropriate levels of celebrity. A server crashed after 50,000 people simultaneously tried to download twenty-five minutes of lovemaking sounds from online sex diarist Muzi Mei. A new kind of sweatshop appeared in cities up and down the coast: warehouses packed with young Chinese who played Mir II or World of Warcraft in twelve-hour shifts, winning virtual gold and weapons that rich foreign gamers would buy with real money. A song called "Mice Love Rice," which had been posted online by an unknown lounge singer and music teacher named Yang Chengang, became a national mantra: "I love you, loving you/As the mice love the rice."

Fueled by QQ, a culture of one-night stands infested urban centers. Girls logging on after midnight were barraged by instant messages. "ONS?" they asked. "ONS?" Meanwhile, role-playing Netizens began registering for *wanghun* (cyber-weddings) and raising digital children together. Hundreds of thousands of strangers engaged in the fantasy at sites such as Virtual Family, and real-life courts granted divorces to real-life spouses as the online bigamists were exposed. Some 30 percent of marital troubles in Guangzhou were said to be caused by virtual affairs and marriages.

In November 2005, a 22,500-person, thirty-city study by the China Youth Association for Network Development confirmed what everybody in China already knew: one out of every eight Chinese young people was an Internet addict. This was followed by the even darker news from the Chinese Academy of Sciences that 80 percent of college and university dropouts had failed due to Internet addiction. A respected Beijing judge, Shan Xiuyun, reported that 90 percent of the city's juvenile crime was Internet-related. In Hunan Province, Internet-related crimes were said to be increasing by 10 percent every year.

In Jiangxi Province, a computer-science major rendered penniless by his addiction killed a homeowner in a burglary gone awry. In Chongqing, a train crushed two middle-school students who'd fallen asleep on the tracks after forty-eight hours online. In Lanzhou, the story was told of a fourteen-year-old who killed his great-grandmother with a brick to the head, took 390 yuan from her body, and went to spend it at an Internet café.

Also in Shanghai, it was reported that a young man who'd played online games for six years would be stuck forever in a sitting position. His back was fused at a 90-degree angle; doctors said there was nothing they could do. In Tianjin, a thirteen-year-old played World of Warcraft for thirty-six hours in a row, then rode the elevator to the top of his twenty-four-story building and jumped. He left behind an 80,000-character diary about the virtual world and a suicide note saying he was off to meet the game's characters. His parents sued World of Warcraft's distributor for 100,000 yuan.

Perhaps more remarkable than China's crisis was the response: mass shutdowns of illegal Net cafés, regulations that now kept them 200 meters from any primary or high school, national addiction help lines and "safe surfing" programs, and a thirty-eight-episode anti-Internet addiction sitcom, *The Story of Shan Dian Mao*. The clinic was part of an all-out counterattack by a people who were certain they saw a danger that the West, in its more incremental steps to modernity, largely hadn't. It is normal for humans to become lost, to drop out of society, and perhaps just as normal for them to lose themselves but tell themselves they're fine. It is rarer, I thought, when we dare name the culprit.

The next morning, I awoke in the fetal position in my hospital bed, shivering underneath a Winnie-the-Pooh comforter. It was 6:40 A.M. My room

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dark, and I could barely make out the Pooh poetry on my matching beanbag pillow: "When the/twinkly stars/fill the pretty/night sky,/they all wave/good-bye/with a smile/and a sigh." Another patient, a mustachioed fifteen-year-old, was standing over me. "Time get up," he said. "Hurry, hurry." I stepped into the hallway, where eight bleary-eyed teenagers were lined up against the wall, standing rigid, as a young man in military camouflage examined them. I was the last in the lineup; they'd already been waiting ten minutes.

The soldier was known as Xiaohei, or "Little Black," a nickname that distinguished him from our other minder, the older but shorter "Big Black." His skin was dark, his uniform perfectly starched. Little Black was over six feet tall, lean and muscular, with spiky hair and a face oddly reminiscent of the action hero The Rock. He was the perfect role model.

Little Black led us through a wing where adult alcoholics were packed three to a room, wearing wifebeaters and tattoos while chain-smoking in bed with the television blaring. Once outside, we began to jog. We ran counterclockwise around an enormous new outpatient building, passing hedges trimmed in the shape of a small intestine and a crowd of old people practicing tai chi in a courtyard. One patriotic red banner after another stretched across the road: "We have no weekends so we can create a harmonious society," the first said. After the last banner—"Concentrate on work, speak the truth, try real things ... and you'll achieve"—we raced each other for 200 yards to our workout zone, a basketball court. I came in fifth.

Our first exercise was a stretch that started with fists together and ended with one arm raised in a triumphant, Travolta-like pose. We repeated it eight times, first with the left arm up, then the right, counting in English for my benefit. We then approximated a circa-1996 raver's invisible-ball dance, in order to loosen our wrists. We did twenty pushups in unison. We spread our arms like wings, seemingly for balance, and did twenty squats. Off to the side, a minuscule seventeen-year-old patient worked on his own program. His name was Qin Xiangcong, and he was here in part because he had tried to stab a fellow cadet at his officers' academy. The boy soldier put his hands on his waist and kept his feet planted in one spot, then gyrated wildly as if swinging an imaginary hula hoop. He stared intently at the ground, unable to make eye contact with anyone, his face fixed in a demented grin.

Basketball, when it got going, was not a team sport. No one passed; everyone charged toward the goal alone. There were two air balls and six shots off the rim before any went in. My teammate Hu Yimao, a fifteen-year-old with spiky Rod Stewart hair, double-dribbled every time he got the ball. If he pulled down a defensive rebound, he threw up a shot immediately, never mind whose basket he was under. But the game was more unpracticed than unathletic, and the boys took it seriously. My team, aided by a slightly older patient named Su Xu—who dressed in black pants, a black shirt, and black, Japanimation-style cut-off gloves—and a tall, thin boy from Xian, He Cong, won 26 to 7. Our opponents dropped to the ground and did another twenty pushups.

I ate breakfast—bread and a watery rice sludge—alone in my room, and at 9:00 A.M. a beaming Dr. Yao came in to give me my medicine. I used the same double-cup trick. Ten minutes later, the door opened and a man wheeled in a cart. Atop the cart was a device the size and shape of an old dot-matrix printer but with wires connecting it to three jumper cable–like calipers and six small, color-coded suction cups. He had me lie down on the bed, lift up my shirt, and stretch my arms above my head. He swabbed an area abutting my right nipple with alcohol and affixed the red suction cup. The other five cups—purple, yellow, green, blue, and brown—were placed around my heart after further swabbing. He clamped the calipers around both wrists and my left ankle, and after that I wasn't allowed to move. He leaned over the machine. I had no idea what he was doing. I gritted my teeth and genuinely expected a jolt of electricity—I had heard that the doctors would send 30-volt shocks to pressure points on the most recalc
trant patients—but I ne
er felt a thing.

Barely eight months old, th
clinic was already famous—the sul
ject of glowing coverage by CCTV
the *China Daily*, and the state-ru
Xinhua News Agency. Since
opened in March 2005 on th
grounds of the military hospital, it
all-army staff had helped hundreds
patients. It claimed a cure rate of 8
percent, a phenomenal degree of suc
cess that was attributed to the exper
tise of the clinic's founder, Tao Ran
who'd been treating various addic
tions for twenty years. The clinic wa
often full, and plans were under wa
to expand it from 20 beds to 150.

It was not cheap. At 410 yuan
day, about $50, a typical twenty-da
stay was equivalent to the average
city dweller's annual salary. Food
was an extra 30 to 50 yuan a day i
you ordered Chinese takeout rather
than suffer hospital fare—which we
all did—and gym access was 15 yuan
a day. Every patient left a 200-yuan
deposit in case he decided to break
something. But the steep price
bought a comprehensive program: a
cocktail of abstinence, forced bas-
ketball, weight lifting, daily sessions
with a therapist, oral and intra-
venous drugs, and, for extreme cas-
es, the aforementioned 30-volt elec-
tric charges.

The condition being treated at the clinic did not, according to Western medicine, officially exist. But it was not without advocates back home. The first paper on Internet addiction was presented in 1996—soon after the birth of the Web itself—at the American Psychological Association's 104th annual meeting, in Toronto. Its author, Dr. Kimberly S. Young, proposed that the disorder be diagnosed using modified criteria for pathological gambling. Addicts were those who answered "yes" to five of eight questions:

1. Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet?

2. Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?

3. Have you repeatedly made unsuc-

cessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?

4. Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?

5. Do you stay online longer than originally intended?

6. Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?

7. Have you lied to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?

8. Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood?

Young, who runs the website www.netaddiction.com and a practice in Pennsylvania, was bolstered in her controversial work by Connecticut psychologist David Greenfield and Harvard's Maressa Hecht Orzack, who run www.virtual-addiction.com and www.computeraddiction.com, respectively. In his 1999 book, *Virtual Addiction*, Greenfield underscored the hidden danger of the Internet's "endless boundaries and unending opportunity." He described the satisfying sensation of a process without close, "the principle of incomplete Gestalts." The Internet was an echo chamber, Young believed. Like drugs or alcohol, it could magnify existing problems—"as the alcoholic's marriage gets worse, drinking increases to escape the nagging spouse, and as the spouse's nagging increases more, the alcoholic drinks more."

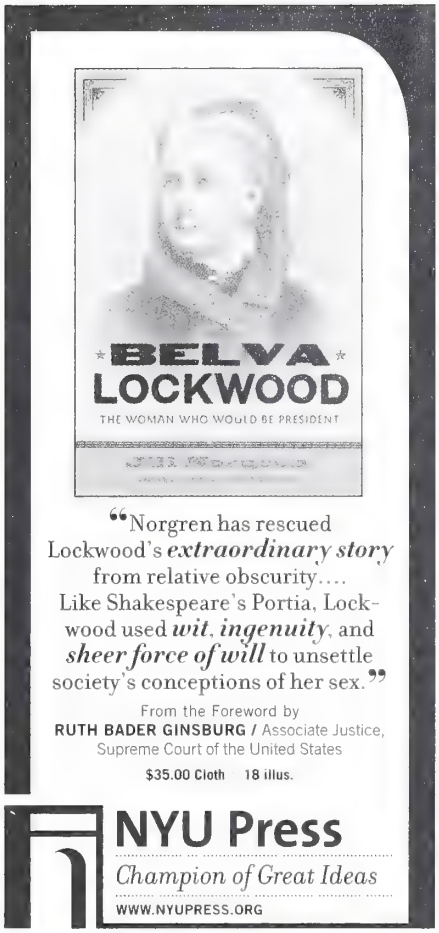
One of the most rigorous investigations into Net abuse was led by Dr. Nathan Shapira of the University of Florida and published in 2000 in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*. He tentatively classified it as an impulse-control disorder, like kleptomania or trichotillomania (the irresistible urge to pull out one's own hair): an increasing feeling of tension or arousal before logging on, nearly impossible to fight, followed by a pleasurable release.

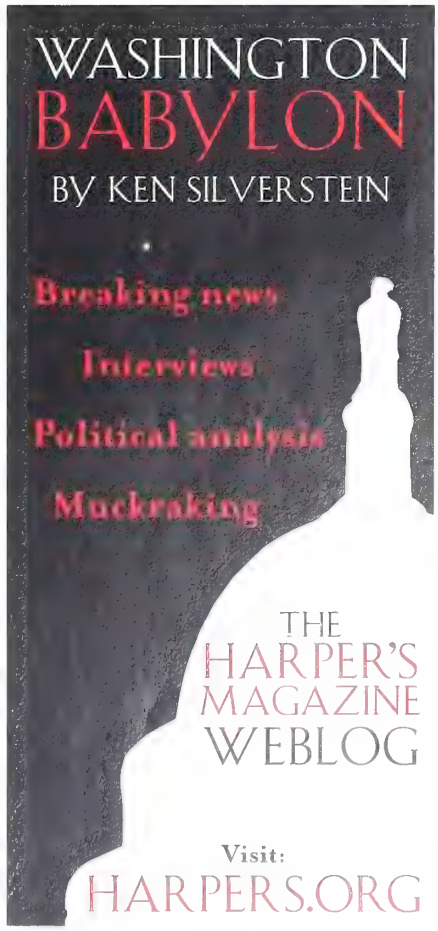
But whether it was called Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD), Pathological Internet Use (PIU), Impulsive-Compulsive Internet Usage Disorder (ICIUD), Maladaptive Internet Use, Excessive Internet Use, or Netomania, the condition was denied an entry in *DSM-IV*, the West's gold-standard manual of mental illnesses. The case for a new classification was muddy. By treating the vast Internet as a monolith—something to be addicted to rather than through—researchers ran into definitional hurdles. Was someone with an online-porn problem an Internet addict or just a pornography addict who indulged via the Web?

Skeptics argued that people lost themselves in socially acceptable diversions (books, television, jogging) all the time. The major difference, they claimed, was bias against the Web. And Shapira's research, consisting of face-to-face psychometric evaluations of twenty subjects, found that so-called addicts had a raft of other mental problems: More than half of the people in his study were determined to be manic-depressive; 60 percent had anxiety disorders. Fifteen of twenty had been treated with psychotropic medications; nineteen had a history of mental illness in the family. On average, each subject had five major psychiatric issues.

Before arriving in Beijing, I'd had my own theory about China's addicts. I hadn't been to Beijing in nine years. I'd pictured a peasant nation susceptible to the dazzle of technology, suddenly come from the fields and into the Internet cafés, and figured that the addicted Netizens were attracted to the Internet's novelty—taken in by newness itself. As a Westerner steeped in modernity, I was largely immune. By this logic, China's crisis was a *Gods Must Be Crazy* parable, with the Netizens playing the role of the Bushmen, the Internet the role of the Coke bottle. But the longer I spent in the clinic, the less this explanation made sense to me.

My companions were Netizens, but more precisely, I found, most were *jiaozhu* (kung fu masters)—people who played Internet games all night and slept all day. The best gamers among them were *zhanshen*: giant heroes in war. For





them, the first hurdle here was simply to adjust to the 10:00 P.M. lights-out. Each night a doctor's hand would reach through their door and flick off the switch. New arrivals were often sedated with a clear IV fluid and left for twenty-four hours until their sleep cycles normalized.

The business of "calming the brain and correcting hormonal imbalances," as Dr. Yao put it, was done by a different IV fluid, a maple syrup–colored sedative of unknown provenance. I was the only patient who didn't receive the sedative daily, because upon check-in I'd pleaded with Dr. Yao to keep the needles out of me. I had an honest phobia. "Once I had a knee problem," I'd told her, "so they took a blood test and they stuck a needle in me and I watched all the blood drain into a bag."

The boys told me that the sacks of sedative took half an hour to drain—longer if one was better hydrated—and left them feeling lethargic, dizzy, and extremely thirsty. One showed me the eight needle holes clustered near the wrist on the top of his hand. My new friend Zhang Dong—the mustachioed boy who'd woken me up and spoke the most English of any of them—had eleven holes. It was like counting rings in a tree: he'd been at the clinic eleven days.

Dong told me I was lucky because I'd been assigned to his psychologist, Dr. Xu, the best the clinic had. "He has a Ph.D.," Dong said. "He will ask you lots of questions about private, very, very personal things." I replied that I was ready—but this was only partly true. I'd never seen a therapist before, and I've never been one for much introspection.

I soon learned that I was the only patient who used email, who didn't play online games, and who didn't have a chat account. But this was unremarkable: While I was in China, Guo Liang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published a study showing that only two thirds of Net users had email accounts, and only a third of them checked their email on a daily basis. Forty-two percent of Netizens did not use a search engine. Seventy-five percent had never made an online purchase.

Instead of replacing encyclopedias, newspapers, storefronts, travel agencies, and the U.S. Postal Service, Chinese people—both addicts and non addicts—seemed to be replacing the television with a more interactive way to entertain themselves. This was not the business-oriented Web of the West. Guo's study explained that Chinese people overwhelmingly used the Internet to chat, play games, download music, and read about celebrities. The Web lives of the Netizens—whose QQ profiles featured not photos, as on MySpace, but personalized avatars wearing clothing and jewelry bought in a digital store—had very little in common with their real lives; they went online to escape.

The question of how Netizens became kung fu masters had lately taken a surprising turn: instead of looking at what they were escaping *to*, researchers dared ask what they were escaping *from*. The man asking the toughest questions was Professor Tao Hongkai, an historian who'd returned to China from the United States in 2002 in order to retire. In May 2004, he'd decided to invite high schooler Qu Qian, a top student turned addict whom he'd read about in his local newspaper, to his house for ad-hoc therapy. He'd cured her in a miraculous nine hours. Word got out. He began receiving phone calls day and night. Mothers sent letters, some written in their own blood, begging for help. Soon he was treating other teenagers, hundreds of them, for free; he packed thousand-seat lecture halls in seventy cities in twenty provinces in sixteen months. His method: actually talk with—not to—the child, and actually listen.

The professor's explanation of Chinese Internet addiction amounted to an indictment of Chinese society. He railed against the one-child policy and the *xiao huangdi* (little emperors) it had created: children whose every material need was met even as spiritual needs were ignored. Instead of having hopes of their own, spoiled teenagers carried those of six other people—their parents and two sets of grandparents. They were overprotected but underdeveloped, without discipline or a sense of meaning. "They have nothing to hold on to," he said. "They are empty inside."

He believed an even bigger problem lay with China's intensely test-based academics: a child's entire scholastic path—in some ways his or her life—could depend on one exam, the *gaokao*, the sole criterion for college entrance. The pressure was crushing; peers became competitors; teachers became slave drivers. Students had time only for rote memorization—not for singing or volleyball or after-school fun or otherwise defined.

Professor Tao noticed that Mir II and World of Warcraft were games not of gore but of wits and team-building and winnable battles. He ventured that they gave teenagers something society, and especially schools, did not: freedom. "If they want to fight, they can fight. If they want to curse, they can curse. If they want to marry, they can marry." Back in real life, he said, "every child is like a little donkey. The teacher grabs his two long ears and pulls and pulls. The parents get behind him and push and push." I thought about my life in America. A little push didn't sound so bad.

I had my psychotherapy sessions in the afternoons. Dr. Xu was soft-spoken but direct, and he had a habit of pausing dramatically before every question. When I gave an answer, he'd raise his eyebrows and say, "Hmmm," then scribble notes on his clipboard. I tried to be honest. Dr. Xu asked about my parents—did I love them, did I respect them, did I live up to their hopes?—and about problems with Jenny, which I said had contributed to my addiction. "Is there such a thing as true love?" he wondered. "Do you think true love must have two sides? Can you truly love someone who doesn't love you back?" I said it was possible. You could fall in love with someone's potential.

Dr. Xu discovered I'd been a philosophy major in college, and he asked me abruptly what the meaning of life was. I didn't know. It was something more important than be-

ng happy, I said. "If you had just seven days left to live, what would you do?" he asked. I threw out an awkward answer about going home to my parents in Oregon and writing letters of farewell—not because I was trying to keep in character but because I didn't want to think honestly about death and had no idea what I'd do. "Why don't you and your father talk about feelings?" he asked.

He had me draw a picture of a house, a picture of myself, and a picture of a tree. My house had a chimney and a window and a mailbox; my tree had pinecones like the evergreens in my parents' back yard. But it was ungrounded, I later noticed—no base and no roots, just a trunk floating in space. Dr. Xu didn't believe me when I said I rarely remembered dreams after waking up, but it was true; I rarely do.

The boys always filled my room once he left. The grungy, ten- by twenty-foot space, with its three mismatched chairs, TCL brand television, ceiling hook for an IV drip, and yellow fake flowers, was becoming the clinic's social nexus. Dong, who one winter had protested being cut off from the Internet by hanging himself upside down from his parents' balcony, shivering violently with spittle dripping from his mouth, was my most frequent visitor. He told me he'd once stayed online for seven days in a row. A lanky, easygoing boy I called Sam (he reminded me of a friend's brother), whose online record was four days, often joined him.

The first time the pair came over, Dong immediately stared at the television as if something was amiss, then leaned over and turned it on for me. "Okay?" he asked. A boy with a blue-striped sweater and slicked-down hair that made him look like a drowned cat, Song Zhixuan, also appeared. He leaned against the doorjamb because he was too shy to enter, and a few others came all the way in. They took over the bed and chairs and began discussing the relative merits of Beijing and Shanghai. "Beijing is bigger," Dong said. "Shanghai is," said Sam. "Beijing." "Shanghai." "Beijing." "Shanghai." "Beijing!" "Shanghai!" "Beijing!" "Shanghai!" I was the first foreigner any of the boys had met.

Another time, when we were alone, Dong told Flora and me about the *Tell It Like It Is!* television appearance with Director Tao. It had not gone well. With the boys at his side, Tao had been arguing against Shanda CEO Chen Tianqiao about Internet addiction. At one point, Tao invoked one school of Confucian philosophy: that human nature is essentially good. Something odd happened. The boy soldier, the would-be stabber, ran to the middle of the stage and began to argue against Tao, point by point.

"There's nothing unhealthy about playing Internet games!" he squeaked, standing as tall as he could in his cadet uniform. Due to his small size, he said, classmates in the real world had done violence to him for the last seven years—they'd tortured him, laughed at him. He spoke for ten minutes, telling the crowd that the only true philosophy was that of Xunzi, a Confucius disciple who came to believe that man was essentially evil: "One is born with feelings of envy and hate, and, by indulging these, one is led into banditry and theft." After the boy soldier was done, the *Tell It Like It Is!* host said he had an urge to hug him. He did so. Director Tao didn't get to finish, and the crowd had seemed to side with the Shanda CEO, who'd employed an argument some have made to keep Internet misuse out of *DSM-IV*: today's "addicted" Netizens were like the people transfixed by television in its early days—this was nothing more than a honeymoon period—and their obsessions would subside.

Dong tapped his feet and crossed and recrossed his legs as he told us about the boy soldier's outburst. He rubbed his hands together and rolled his head back and forth, blinking constantly. "He is very extreme, very extreme," he said. "When he attacked his classmate with a knife, it took six soldiers to restrain him." I asked if he believed what the boy soldier said about human nature. "I agree with Director Tao," Dong said, "but sometimes people do evil things for no reason—like in 1999, when America bombed our embassy in Belgrade for no reason."

He told us he had prepared a speech of his own for *Tell It Like It Is!* but never had a chance to share it. During the Qing dynasty, he said, there was a famous official named Lin Zexu who had stood up to British opium importers. Lin confiscated 20,000 chests of opium and destroyed them; he barred British ships from trading in the ports of Canton. He also sent a letter to Queen Victoria:

> We find that your country is sixty or seventy thousand *li* from China. Yet there are barbarian ships that strive to come here for trade for the purpose of making a great profit. The wealth of China is used to profit the barbarians. . . . By what right do they then in return use the poisonous drug to injure the Chinese people? Even though the barbarians may not necessarily intend to do us harm, yet in coveting profit to an extreme, they have no regard for injuring others. Let us ask, where is your conscience?

Lin's patriotic acts precipitated the disastrous first Opium War, in 1839, but earned him an honorable place in history. Now Chen Tianqiao and his company, who had profited greatly by importing Legend of Mir II from South Korea and were soon to bring an online Dungeons & Dragons from America, were the barbarians. "They are criminals," Dong had planned to say, "and Director Tao and his comrades are like Lin Zexu—the heroes of the nation."

As the days passed, I came to understand the essence of the doctors' fight. It was to make our actual lives more real than our virtual lives—to show that it was most fulfilling to be engaged in a world, however imperfect, that had a physical existence. It was a constant struggle. One afternoon, Little Black and Big Black took us to the nearby Power-House Gym, five stories up an office tower of blue glass and polished marble, where Dong and I galloped side by side on walking machines at 13 kilometers an hour. The other boys played Ping-Pong. The soldiers themselves ignored us; they were im-

mediately engrossed in the computers at the gym's four-PC Net café. After an hour, Little Black stood up and began rubbing his eyes and slapping himself in the face. We got ready to leave, but Big Black stayed glued to his computer. We walked back without him.

But we were learning the lesson even if they were forgetting it. We learned to face the challenge of standing like real soldiers, keeping our knees perfectly straight and our heads perfectly straight and our shoulders back and our hands flat at our sides. We felt the real pain of sets of thirty, then forty push-ups. We practiced folding our Pooh blankets in the military's "bean curd" style—the ideal was a perfect, tofu-shaped block—until each of us mastered the art. We hung out in the hall sometimes, the wonderful Dr. Yao watching over us like a mother hen, laughing, asking us questions. We got used to conversation, used to caring about what others had to say, used to having others care about what we had to say.

We learned about consequences. The Rod Stewart wannabe and his thin friend from Xian sneaked off to a store during one morning's run and filled their pockets with 10 yuan packs of Beijing Cigarette Factory filter lights. Little Black patted them down, found the contraband, and made them do a hundred push-ups—then forced them to stand perfectly still for five minutes in the middle of the basketball court. The same day, Dong wandered into my room with a plastic soda bottle, shook it vigorously, and idly opened it. It exploded. He learned to mop.

"Everyone has psychological barriers," Dong declared after one of his injections. "For the people here, the barriers are just bigger." He sat in the blue chair that had become his usual perch. The shy boy in the blue-striped sweater, who'd finally gotten up the courage to come inside and discuss Internet games, sat on the bed. He smiled awkwardly and draped his arm over Sam in a show of camaraderie. Dong admitted that he'd [illegible] know

"Mice Love Rice"? he asked me. "Mice love cheese," I said. He and Sam played a version of "paddy cake": "One, two, three, four, we'll play Internet games no more."

The boys were half my age, but I began to feel like one of them. One morning, Dong got a text message from a friend at the prestigious Qinsai Province high school he'd dropped out of. The friend was in the midst of an English test; I was a native speaker. We rushed out an essay for him—the topic was "rules of the library"—and texted it back, experiencing the thrill of sticking it to the bigger world. We laughed like idiots. "My classmates study fifteen hours a day," Dong said.

"School is corrupted," said Sam.

I wanted to go home, so after four days at the clinic, I set an alarm on my cell phone, and when it began ringing, I pretended to answer a call. I told Dr. Yao that it had been Jenny—that she'd found a treatment center for me in Pennsylvania and booked me a flight departing the next morning. I could be closer to her but still receive help. Dr. Yao seemed sad for a moment, but she understood. "We will support whatever is good for you," she said. I began to feel guilty. Dr. Yao was a kind woman, and I'd stopped believing that her cure was so far out of proportion to China's crisis. When she tried to return the money I'd overpaid—a few hundred yuan—I donated it to the clinic.

The boys were shocked at my departure. We posed for photos: me with Dong, me with the boy soldier, me with black-clad Xu, me with the shy boy in the blue sweater, me with Rod Stewart, me with Sam and bunny ears, me with Sam and no bunny ears. I went into the hall and took more photos with Little Black and Dr. Yao and the nurses. I met Director Tao for the first time, and he sat with me as his staff's cameras flashed. "You studied philosophy," he said. "Chairman Mao was our greatest philosopher, so I'll give you this." It was a gold Mao pin in a red box.

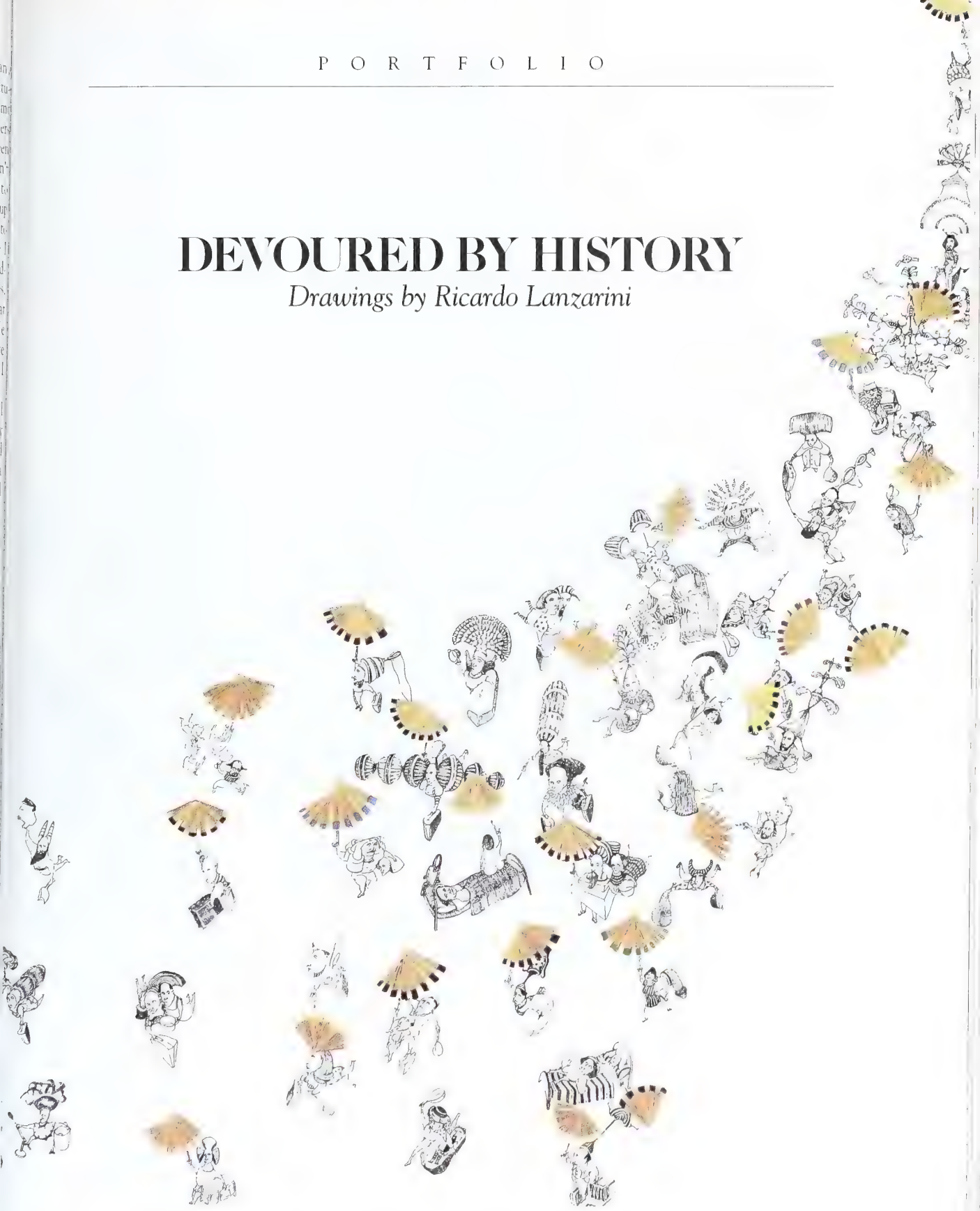
I was allowed a final meeting with Dr. Xu. "Did you have any dreams last night?" he asked. I actually remembered one: I'd dreamt that I'd lied to Dong and the others about my real age, and that I'd been caught; they'd realized that I wasn't one of them just as I'd begun to think that I was. Dr. Xu brought up Heidegger and Sartre, and I had to reveal how embarrassingly little I remembered from my college studies. He flipped through his notes, which had become so thick that they fell off the clipboard. He looked me in the eye. "You are looking for some advice, I think." It was. "Read *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*." I still haven't. He asked me to do a story stem: he'd start the story, and I'd finish it. "Imagine that you're a small tiger walking alone in a tall forest," he said. For a moment, however fleeting, I truly did. ■

March Index Sources

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DEVOURED BY HISTORY

Drawings by Ricardo Lanzarini



Ricardo Lanzarini lives and works in Montevideo, Uruguay. His work can be seen at Josée Bienvenu Gallery in New York City.

Flotando con Paraguas (detail), ink on paper with color pencil shavings





Desplazamiento con Espacio (detail), ink on paper



Mushrooms (detail), ink on paper
Artwork courtesy the artist and Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York City
Photographed by Leonardo Ferreto

THE REQUIREMENT

By Wendell Berry



Well, you get older and you begin to lose people, kinfolks and friends. Or it *seems* to start when you're getting older. You wonder who was looking after such things when you were young. The people who died when I was young were about all old. Their deaths didn't interrupt me much, even when I missed them. Then it got to be people younger than me and people my own age that were leaving this world, and then it was different. I began to feel it changing me.

When people who mattered to me died I began to feel that something was required of me. Sometimes something would be required that I could do, and I did it. Sometimes when I didn't know what was required, I still felt the requirement. Whatever I did never felt like enough. Something I knew was large and great would have happened. I would be aware of the great world that is always nearby, ever at hand, even within you, as the good book says. It's something you would maybe just as soon not know about, but finally you learn about it because you have to.

That was the way it was when Big Ellis took sick in the fall of 1970. He was getting old and dwindling as everybody does, as I was myself. But then all of a sudden he wasn't dwindling anymore but going down. First thing you know, he was staying mostly in bed. And then he had to have help to get out of bed.

Heart, the doctor said, and I suppose it was. But it wasn't just that, in my opinion. I think pretty well all of Big's working parts were giving out. He was seventy-six years old.

I'd walk over there through the fields every day, early or late, depending on the weather and the work. I was feeling that requirement, you see.

I would say, "Big, is there anything you need? Is there anything you want me to do?" hoping there would be something.

And he would say, "Burley, there ain't one thing I need in this world. But thank you."

But he didn't mean yet that he was giving up on this world. I would sit by the bed, and he would bring up things we would do when he got well, and we would talk about them and make plans. And in fact he really didn't need anything. Annie May, who loved him better than some people thought he deserved, was still healthy then. As far as I could tell, she was taking perfect care of him.

We called Big "Big" of course because he was big. He was stout too. His strength sometimes would surprise you, even as big as he was. He sort of made a rule of not putting out more effort than the least he could get away with. He wouldn't pull his britchies up until they were absolutely falling off. But if he thought he needed to, or ought to, he could pick up a two-bushel sack of wheat and toss it onto a load like it wasn't more than a basketball. Once I saw him pick up an anvil by its horn with one hand and carry it to where he needed it and set it down gently as you would set down an egg.

Big was a year or so older than me, and for a while that made a difference and I had to give him the lead. But as we got older we got closer to the same

Wendell Berry's most recent work of fiction is Andy Catlett: Early Travels.

"Anonymous Snapshot, c. 1940" © Collection of John and Teenuh Foster, www.accidentalmysteries.com

[illegible] good partners. We didn't settle down when we were supposed to, we were having too good a time. For a long time we stayed unattached, unworried, and unweary. We shined up to the ladies together, and fished and hunted together, and were as wild nearly as varmints ourselves. We ran many a Saturday night right on into Sunday morning. I expect we set records around here for some of our achievements, which I don't enjoy talking about now as much as I once did. But some of the stories about Big himself I will always love to tell.

One time we heard about a dance they were giving at the schoolhouse in a little place named Shagbark over on the far side of the river. We went to it in one of Big's old cars that never got anywhere except by luck. But we did get there, after a stop in Hargrave to get a lady to sell us some liquor. It was good stuff, Canadian whiskey, the real article.

It was a good dance too, good musicianers. They had this fellow playing the piano. He had twelve fingers and he was making music with every one of them. I never saw such a thing before. I haven't since. And they had a more than adequate number of good-looking girls. We got to where we were just letting it happen, we didn't mind what. We didn't know a soul over there and nobody knew us. We didn't have a thing to worry about, and we were cutting up like a new pair of scissors. And then all at once it went kaflooey.

Big was wearing his suit. We'd had to buy our whiskey in half-pints, it was all the lady had, and he had stuck one of those into the inside pocket of his jacket. He got to dancing with this girl, a good-looking girl, a big girl, a fair match for him. She had on a lot of bracelets and things. She was jingling like a two-year-old mule in a chain harness. He got to feeling fond of her, and he pulled her up close to him, to where she could feel that bottle. And that was what changed things. Maybe she wasn't too smart, maybe she was a little bit loony, as some girls are, but she thought that bottle was a handgun.

Well, John Dillinger was on the loose at that time, and nobody knew for sure where he was. That gave this event a sort of framework, you see. First thing you know, everybody was glancing toward us and whispering. We got the story later. That big girl hadn't much more than told what she thought Big had in his pocket before they figured out that he was John Dillinger and I was his driver.

Everybody began to leave. They weren't long about it. They made use of both doors and every window, all of them being wide open, for it was a hot night. It wasn't long until Big and I were the only ones left. We were puzzled until, as I say, we heard the story. And then we enjoyed it. Especially Big enjoyed it. For a good while after that if you wanted to make him giggle all you had to do was call him "John."

To know how funny it was you have to picture Big the way he looked that night, all rumpled up in his suit and sweating, hot too on the track of that big girl, smiling like sugar wouldn't melt in his mouth, his feet stepping and prancing all on their own, for he had forgotten about them, and if you'd asked him to tell you right quick where he was, he wouldn't have known.

He was a wonderfully humored man. Things that would make most people mad just slid off of him. He would forgive anything at all that he could get the least bit of amusement out of. And any amusement he got he paid back with interest. He was full of things to say that didn't have anything to do with anything else. You'd be talking to him maybe about getting his hay up or fixing a fence, and he would say, "You know, I wish I'd a been born rich in place of pretty."

One time when we were hardly more than grown boys, I got sent word of a dance they were giving on Saturday night down at Goforth. Well, it was a girl who sent the word, and I sent word back I couldn't come. The reason was I didn't have any good shoes, though I didn't tell her. I didn't have shoes nor money either. It was a time when money was scarce.

But the day of the dance I happened to go by Big's house and there his good shoes were, shined, sitting out on the well top. Wasn't anybody around, so I just borrowed the shoes and went my way and wore them to the dance that night. They were too big of course, and sometimes I had to dance a while to get all the way into the toes. I must say I danced the shine off of them too and nicked them up here and there. I left them on the well top at Big's house just before daylight.

Since he hadn't had any shoes to wear to the dance, Big got a full night's sleep. Next morning he left the house with the milk bucket on his way to the barn just after daylight, and there his shoes were, right where he'd left them the day before, but now they were all scuffed up.

"Well, shoes!" Big said. "I don't know where you been, but look like you had a good time."

You almost couldn't make him mad. But if you didn't watch yourself he could make you mad, just by being so much himself he couldn't imagine that anybody could be different. He didn't go in much for second opinions. He stayed single until his mother and daddy both were dead, and then he married Annie May pretty soon, which maybe was predictable. He liked company. He didn't like to be by himself.

Being married to Big, after the long head start he'd had, was not dependably an uplifting experience. Though Annie May was a good deal younger than he was, she was made pretty much on his pattern, ample and cheerful. But she could be fortified. I've seen her mad enough at Big, it looked like, to kill him, and maybe he'd be off on another subject entirely and not even notice, which didn't help her patience. One time when she got mad and threw an apple at him—it would have hurt; she had a good arm—he just caught it and ate it. I didn't see that. It was told.

But she never stayed mad long. One time when I went over there she was just furious at him, mainly because he wouldn't bother to argue with her over whatever she was upset about in the first place. She was crying and hollering, "I'm a-leaving you, Big! You've played hell this time! I'm a-leaving here just as soon as I get this kitchen cleaned up!" That was like her. You wouldn't have minded eating dinner off of her kitchen floor. And of course by the time she got the kitchen cleaned up she had forgiven him. I think she loved him *because* he was the way he was. They never had any children, and he was her boy.

Maybe because they didn't have hildren Big and Annie May let their ttle farm sag around them as they got lder, the way a lot of such couples lo. Big's daddy had the place in fair hape when he died, but he died dur- ng the Depression, and so Big could- n't have made a fast start even if he had vanted to. He and Annie May lived vell enough, but that was mainly An- nie May's doing. She made a wonder- ul big garden every year, and kept a lock of chickens and some turkeys. They always had three or four milk cows, milked mainly by Annie May, nd they sold the extra cream and fed he extra milk to their meat hogs. So hey always had plenty to eat. Annie May was as fine a cook as ever I ate af- er. When they had company or a unch of us were there working, she would put on a mighty feed. Both of hem loved to eat, and they loved to see other people eat.

But Big never tried for much or did much for his place. He wasn't, to tell the truth, much of a farmer. When he went to help his neighbors he'd work as hard as anybody, but put him by himself on his own place and getting by was good enough. He was a great one then for "a lick and a promise" or "good enough for who it's for."

I don't know that he ever owned a new piece of equipment, except for a little red tractor that he bought just to be shed of the bother of a team of horses. When he got the tractor he stubbed off the tongues of his old horse-drawn equipment and went puttering about even more slipshod than before. My brother Jarrat and I swapped work with him all our lives, you might as well say, but when we went to his place we always took our own equipment. Jarrat's main idea was to get work done, and he didn't have enough patience to enjoy Big the way I did. "If he gets in my way with one of them cobbled-up rigs of his, damned if I won't run over him." That was Jarrat's limit on Big, and Big did keep out of his way.

His final sickness was pretty much like the rest of his life. He didn't seem to be in a hurry to get well, or to die either. He didn't make much of it. The doctor had said a while back that he had a bad heart and gave him some pills. Big more or less believed the doctor, but he also let himself believe he would sooner or later get over it. I don't think he felt like doing much about it.

Annie May said, "Big, for goodness sake, let's take you to a heart doctor or *something*. You can't just lie there. We can't just do nothing."

"I ain't going anywhere," he said. "I'm just feeling a little dauncy is all."

She knew better than to push him. Easygoing as he was, when he took a stand you couldn't shake him. He *could* just lie there. They *could* just do nothing.

If he had been suffering, if something had hurt him or he had been uncomfortable, maybe he would have done something. Maybe he would be living yet. But the only thing the matter was he was getting weaker. His strength was just slowly leaking out of him. He didn't have much appetite, and he was losing flesh. But he was comfortable enough. He wasn't complaining.

So nothing was what they did. That was the way Big had solved most of his problems. He would work hard to help his neighbors, because he liked them and liked to be with them and wanted them to get their problems solved. He would wear people out talking to them and fishing for their opinions on anything whatsoever. He would go to no limit of trouble to have a good time, and he'd had a lot of good times. But when it came to doing some actual work for himself, he often simplified it by not doing anything.

That was why, when Big took sick, the old Ellis place, as some of us still call it, was pretty well run down. There wasn't a chicken or a hog or a cow. Another neighbor, a young fellow, was growing the crop and making a little hay on the shares, but that was all. Social Security, I reckon, was taking up the slack.

I got used to making some time every day to go to see how Big was doing and to sit with him a while. What was harder to get used to was the place. The fences all gone down. The barns and other outbuildings all paintless, and the roofs leaking. The lots grown up in weeds and bushes so you couldn't open the doors that were shut, or shut the doors that had been left open. And every building was fairly stuffed with old farm tools, most of them going back to Big's daddy's time or before. Big always figured they might come in handy.

What they did, it turned out, was come to be antiques. When the farm was sold to a Louisville businessman after Big died, and the tools and a lot of the household plunder was auctioned off, about everything was bought at a good price by collectors. After she was too old to use it, or even want it, Annie May had more money than she ever imagined.

Walking across the fields, the way I usually went when I went to see Big, I would have to appraise every time what had become of the place, a good little farm dwindled down almost to nothing. Nobody going out to milk anymore. Nobody going out to feed the chickens or the hogs. You really couldn't see that anybody still lived there until you got to the yard. The yard was still Annie May's territory—her last stand, you might say—and it was kept neat. The house itself, the cellar and smokehouse out back, they still showed care. And well off to the side, out of the way, the rusty dinner bell that hadn't been rung in years was still perched on its leaning pole. A man on a tractor couldn't hear it. The bell was going to turn out to be an antique too. At the sale two ladies bid for it until you'd have thought it was made out of gold.

The day that was going to be the day Big died I went over there first thing in the morning, as soon as we finished up at the barn and ate breakfast. It was a fine morning, cold and bright, the sky blue and endless right down to the horizon, and everything below shining with frost. We had finished with the hog-killing the day before, and I was bringing some fresh spareribs and tenderloin, thinking they might tempt Big to eat. Until then Big and Annie May both were talking like he was going to get well.

But that morning things had changed. I could feel it as soon as I stepped in through the kitchen door. Annie May was busy setting the kitchen to rights. She didn't try to keep me from seeing that she was crying. Two of her friends, neighbor wom-

en, had come to be with her and help her, as the women do when there's trouble. What had happened was they had figured out—Big first, I think, and then Annie May—that Big wasn't going to get well. The whole feeling of the house had changed. My old granny would have said the Angel of Death had passed over and marked the house. Call it superstition if you want to, but that was what it felt like.

"I brought some meat," I said. "Lyda thought maybe Big would like something fresh."

"Well, God love her heart!" Annie May said, taking the packages from me, as if she was mourning over them.

And then she said, "Go on in, Burley. He's awake."

I went in. Big was lying in the clean bed in the clean room, looking no different really, but that feeling of being in a marked house was there too. The counterpane was white as snow, and white as it was his hands lying on it looked pale. They looked useless. When I came in and shut the door, he raised a hand to me and gave me a grin as usual. But now he seemed to be grinning to apologize for the feeling that was in the room. He would always get uneasy when things got serious, let alone solemn. He disliked by nature the feeling that was there, but he didn't refuse it either.

He said, "Well, Burley, it come over me that I ain't going to come out of this."

I went over to the bed and gave his hand a shake. I took my jacket off and sat down by him. His hand and his voice were weak, but they weren't noticeably weaker than the day before.

He said, "I'm about to be long gone from here."

"Oh, sho'ly not," I said.

"It's so," he said.

I said, "If it's so, old bud, it'll make a mighty difference around here. We'll look for you and we'll miss you."

He had been stronger than me all his life, and now he was weak. And I was sitting there by his bed, still strong. What could you do? What could you do that would be anyways near enough? I could feel the greatness of life and death, and the great world endless as the sky swelling out beyond this little one. And I began again to hear from that requirement that seems to come from the larger world. The requirement was telling me, "Do something for him. Do more than you've ever done. Do more than you *can* do."

As if he had read my mind, he said, "I appreciate you coming, Burley. You've stuck by me. I imagine I'll remember it as long as I live." And then he giggled, for in fact it was a fine joke.

"Well, I wish I could do more. Ain't there anything at all you want?"

"Not a thing. Not a thing in this world."

We talked then, or mostly I did, for a while, about things that were going on round about. And finally I had to leave. They were busy at home, and they'd be looking for me. Big had said he wasn't long for this world, but he looked about the same as yesterday. For all I knew, he might live a long time yet. When somebody tells you he's going to die, you can't say, "Well, go ahead. I'll just sit here till you do." I was going to be surprised when I got word that afternoon that old Big had sure enough left us.

"Well," I said, "I got to be getting on home." And I stood up.

He raised his hand to stop me. "Wait, Burley. There *is* something I want you to do."

"Sure," I said. "Name it."

"Go yonder to the press"—he used the old word—"and open the door."

I went to the closet and opened the door. It was where they kept their good clothes, Annie May's Sunday dresses, not many, and Big's suit, all put away there together.

"Ain't my pistol there, just inside?"

The pistol was in its shoulder holster, hanging on a nail in the doorjamb. It was a .22 revolver, heavy-built and uncommonly accurate for a pistol. It was the only really good thing Big had ever owned, and he had taken care of it like a king's crown. He bought it new when times were good back there in the Forties, and the bluing was still perfect except for a spot or two where the holster had worn it. I had always thought highly of it, and he knew I had.

"It's right here," I said.

"I want you to take it. I'd like to know where it'll be after I'm gone."

It flew into me then just how far toward the edge of things we'd come, two old men who'd been neighbors and friends since they were boys, and if I'd thought of anything to say couldn't have said it. For a while couldn't even turn around.

"Put it on," Big said. "Button yo jacket over it. I don't want Annie Ma to see it when you leave."

I did as he told me. I said, "Thank Big."

"Sure," he said.

"Well," I said, "I'll be seeing you."

He said, "Yeah. See yo later."

So I had come to do something f Big, if I could, and instead Big ha done something for me, and I was mor in debt to the requirement than ever

I went out through the kitchen speaking a few pleasantries with th women, and let myself out. I sat dow on the porch step to put my overshoe back on, and started home. And all th time the requirement was staying with me. "Can't you, for God's sake, think o *something* to do?" When I got to abou the middle of the barn lot, I just stopped I stood there and looked all around.

Oh, it was a splendid morning, stil frozen, not much changed at all. The ground was still shining white under the blue sky. I thought of a rhyme that Elton Penn was always saying in such weather: "Clear as a bell, cold as hell, and smells like old cheese." Maybe that was what put me in mind to do what I did.

When I looked back toward the house, the only thing between me and the sky was that old dinner bell leaning on its post like it was about to fall.

Big's pistol, when I pulled it out, felt heavy and familiar, comfortable. It was still warm from the house. There were five cartridges in the cylinder, leaving an empty chamber to rest the hammer on. I cocked it and used my left hand to steady my right. What I wanted was a grazing hit that would send the bullet flying out free into the air.

Even as the bullet glanced and whined away, the old bell summed up all the dongs it had ever rung. It filled the day and the whole sky and brought the worlds together, the little and the great. I knew that, lying in his bed in the house, Big heard it and was pleased. Standing in the lot, I heard it and I was pleased. It wasn't enough, but it was something. It was a grand sound. It was a good shot. ■

NEW BOOKS

By John Leonard



If you have been to Four Corners, that delirium of mustard-colored cliffs, wind-sculpted stones, tumbleweeds, and raptors where Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico rub up against one another, you know exactly what Craig Childs means when he says that "time seems very thin in this landscape." Out of his tent at dawn, the restless author of HOUSE OF RAIN: TRACKING A VANISHED CIVILIZATION ACROSS THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST (Little, Brown, $24.99) will go back seven hundred years before putting on the coffee—into rock-art petroglyphs, cliff dwellings like the high monasteries of Qing Dynasty China, and prehistoric mind-sets of "ritual abandonment" and human sacrifice. I only wish I'd had his marvelous book two summers ago when I made my own dumbstruck pilgrimage to Chaco, Aztec, de Chelly, Mesa Verde, and Monument Valley.

So what did become of those pueblo people, one morning in the middle of a thirteenth-century drought, after they rolled out of bed, into myth, without ever hitting the canyon floor? To explain "the famous Anasazi disappearing act," Childs follows their matrilineal culture south, kiva by kiva, from the Colorado Plateau all the way to Mexico. A naturalist and an ecologist who has never lived anywhere other than the Southwest, "a desert animal in need of the sky" whose books include *The Secret Knowledge of Water* and *Soul of Nowhere*, he is sometimes accompanied by the random archaeologist, geologist, ethnohistorian, or even his wife, Regan Choi, who took most of the photographs in *House of Rain*, and their baby boy, Jasper, who likes to dig. Mostly, though, he's on his own and on foot, "looking for shrines that tell of people passing through carrying their cosmology with them, a religion founded on water, clouds, caves, and mountains."



Yes, "Anasazi" is a pejorative coined in the 1800s by late-arriving Navajos to characterize the long-gone pueblo dwellers as "enemy ancestors": aliens. But "pueblo" itself is Spanish. No substitute meets with everyone's approval, nor does any other word communicate as well a "people of ceremony," "conspicuous elegance," and "excess consideration"; a wayfaring culture of astronomers, mathematicians, corn growers, monument builders, merchants, weavers, and "multiple ethnicities," with "a smell of empire" about it after a thousand years of wars and migrations; and "a place in time when a civilization danced across this desert like rain," leaving behind turquoise and turkey feathers, finger rings and foot drums, watchtowers and relay stations, wooden buttons the silvery blue of a night moth and pouches woven out of dogbane.

And yet, as Childs reminds us, "The archaeological record from the thirteenth century around the Four Corners reads like a war crimes indictment: infants and children burned alive, skeletons marked by butchery, entire villages left with bodies unburied." Besides evidence of massacres and human sacrifice, there are also signs of cannibalism. It is both dumb and dangerous to dream a past where men were better than they are now. (A Golden Age, a Lost Eden, a Noble Savage.) Or to flatter ourselves that they were worse. (Than Adolf Hitler or Pol Pot?) From what the experts tell Childs—about corn diets and dementia, about "spirit lines" and "ritual landscape," about "mass exodus" and the Zuni tradition of Lost Others—not only drought chased the Anasazi up into "gated communities" and then off the Colorado Plateau entirely but civil war as well. Nor did they vanish. They merely moved. As Childs, the desert animal, explains: "When the cities burn you go to the mountains. You climb back into the earth, into places dark with water."

Would that the poor had someplace similar to hide, not least from the feverish attentions of William T. Vollmann, who will find them wherever they may flee and insist on knowing, for the pur-

Grand Canyon of the Colorado, by James Swinnerton. Courtesy Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe; Photograph of Newspaper Rock in Utah © Craig Aurness/CORBIS

s of POOR PEOPLE (HarperCollins $29.95), why they think they aren't rich. Is it luck, fate, brains, genes, capitalism, conspiracy, or karma? Vollmann, of course, amazes—novels, histories, biographies, science, the seven volumes and 3,000 pages of *Violence*, and the splendid, prize-winning *Europe Central*. To what other literary figure in our time would it occur to go to Thailand, Colombia, Yemen, China, Vietnam, Japan, Russia, Burma, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Hungary, the Philippines, Ireland, England, Serbia, Congo, Syria, Kenya, Bosnia, Mexico, and Kazakhstan to chat up and even sometimes to subsidize beggars, cleaning women, *campesinos*, prostitutes, tuna fishermen, the homeless, and the feckless?

He has not much use for the noble-noodle United Nations list of "dimensions of poverty" that includes "short life," "illiteracy," "exclusion," and "lack of material means." He has his own moodier descriptive categories—Invisibility, Deformity, Unwantedness, Dependence, Accident-Prone-ness, Pain, Numbness, and Estrangement. He will explore each of these while hanging in bad neighborhoods, rummaging among dire statistics, slipping in snapshots as if he were a Sebald, and citing a bewildering range of writers, from Seneca and Aristotle to Montaigne and Rousseau to Turgenev and Thoreau to Marx and Gandhi to Céline and Fanon to Adam Smith and I. A. Richards. Meanwhile, he's looking over his shoulder at James Agee, whose excruciating self-consciousness in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* Vollmann seems to have taken less as a warning than as a model. Better he should have read Studs Terkel.

There is real reporting here, from both China and Kazakhstan, between the vapors about privilege and relativism. There is also a scary account of his living arrangements, behind a steel door next to a parking lot on the wrong side of the Sacramento tracks, with a rising tide of anger and resentment lapping at the tinfoil on his windows. Still, he's less surprised and less discouraged than I am to discover that practically nowhere in the world do the poor want to rise up and slash the radial tires and smash the smoky windows of the stretch limos that chance to slum among them.

For that kind of rage we need Mike Davis, the radical urbanologist who knows everything, forgives nothing, and shows up periodically to terrify the bourgeoisie, less like a MacArthur Fellow than a Chupacabra, the goat-sucking vampire of Latin American folklore. (See *City of Quartz*, *Ecology of Fear*, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, and *Planet of Slums*.)

[redacted] CAR BOMB (Verso, $19.95) escorts us with a savage sarcasm from the first known instance of the art, the 1920 Wall Street explosion of a horse-drawn wagon full of blasting gelatin and iron slugs that managed to miss J. P. Morgan by the width of the Atlantic Ocean, to present-day Gaza and Iraq, where most people reside outside a Green Zone. Along the way, we spend bloody-minded time with the Stern Gang in proto-Israel, the Viet Cong in Saigon, the OAS in Algiers and Paris, the IRA in Belfast and London, the Cosa Nostra in Palermo, the SDS in Madison, Wisconsin, Catalan anarcho-syndicalists in Barcelona, Hezbollah in Beirut, Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, narcotraffickers in Colombia, Shining Path in Peru, bombheads on the loose in Chechnya, Oklahoma City, Bombay, and Buenos Aires, all the way to 9/11, which Davis calls "car bombs with wings."

As usual with Davis, this brilliant little book tells us things we'd rather not hear. On the one hand, the use of the car bomb, with its collateral damage to civilians, invariably corrupts the cause for which it has been enlisted; nothing excuses the death of children. On the other hand, add suicide to fertilizer and it's a tactic we can't beat, an equalizer for the deracinated and deranged alike.

What a cool relief it is, then, to turn to bridal gowns and violins, rabbits and candlesticks, peddlers and onion domes, acrobats and roses, Marc Chagall and "Jewish kitsch." Well, kitsch is unfair. Precisely to acquit the painter of su a charge, Jonathan Wilson has wr ten the latest provocative volume Nextbook's "Jewish Encounters" seri MARC CHAGALL (Schocken, $19.9 To be sure, says Wilson, Chagall pai ed in Yiddish. And his subject matt might be said to collect "around bea tiful losers in a dying culture." And h own "floating anxiety" is up on th roof with the levitating fiddler. B how to explain so many other paintin in which Christian martyrdom ove whelms the canvas and Chagall seen to see himself as Jesus? And why shoul he have preferred the company d poets like Apollinaire and Blaise Cen drars to painters like Picasso? An whatever possessed him to sign on as cultural commissar in the early days a Russian Revolution that was sure t harm him? Indeed, Wilson comes clos at several points to insinuating tha Chagall's complications included se cret homoerotic desires, although there is so little evidence to support such speculation that every time he brings i up he promptly skitters away.

All this is in the service of reclaim ing Chagall, from sentimentality, fo modernism—still Jewish, but suffering for it. So we revisit old haunts in St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin, and Palestine. We drop in on the Yiddish theater. And, most compellingly, we look at his huge 1937 painting, *The Revolution*, which "features Lenin as its central figure, performing a one-armed handstand on a table where a meditative rabbinical figure is seated with Torah in hand and tefillin in place. The rabbi and the revolutionary leader are depicted praying and performing outdoors on snowy ground, with a samovar and a seated anthropomorphic goat for nearby company. The French tricolor flies behind Lenin's right leg, while his free hand appears to have lost hold of a red flag whose hammer and sickle have been transformed into an aleph." And so on for another long paragraph on a painting that many assumed was an "elegy for the peaceable kingdom of the shtetl"—but Wilson doesn't think so, neither do I, and neither will you. ■



Acrobat, by Marc Chagall © Allbright-Knox Art Gallery/CORBIS/ARS, New York City/ADAGP, Paris

ARMS AND THE POET

The resurrection of Vergil

By *Rafil Kroll-Zaidi*

Discussed in this essay:

The Aeneid, by Publius Vergilius Maro. Translated by Robert Fagles. Viking. 486 pages. $40.



"No, Virgil, no," scolded W. H. Auden, shaking his head in dismay at both the man and his epic. To read Vergil—really, to read the *Aeneid*—is to inherit this lament, and we may come to ask how the loftiest achievement of a writer so central to Western literature—heir to Homer, grandfather to Dante and Milton—sank below the horizon of popular literary taste, and why it has remained there. We may also come to suspect Vergil of perhaps the gravest offense a poet can commit: enlisting his art in the service of power. Auden's "Secondary Epic," written in 1959, signals such disapproval: "Not even the first of the Romans can learn/His Roman history in the future tense,/Not even to serve your political turn."

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This rebuke speaks to the heart of the *Aeneid*, the Sixth Book, in which the Trojan prince Aeneas, having seen the destruction of his people and having led the remnant through seven years of harried wanderings, travels to the underworld. There he meets the shade of his father, Anchises, who takes him on a guided tour and reveals to him the great Roman race that will spring from his blood. All that Rome shall possess—martial glory, empire unbounded by time or space, magnanimous rulers—is laid out in vast and vivid relief. When Aeneas returns to the living world, he will at last be resigned to his grand and impersonal destiny, content to slog through a long war in Italy in order to secure it.

Anchises is particularly enthusiastic about one handsome Roman-to-be:

> Here is the man, he's here! Time and again
> you've heard his coming promised—
> Caesar Augustus!
> Son of a god, he will bring back the Age
> of Gold . . .

The *Aeneid* has inspired legion complaints throughout the centuries, but it was for endorsements such as this—the richly rewarded hucksterism of a party hack, the encomia of a courtier in an age of cruel kings—that Vergil has received particular opprobrium in recent years. More than the fact that he stole wholesale from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or the accusation that his formal perfection amounts to nothing more than uninspired deliberateness in a pretty dress, concern over how deeply the *Aeneid* was compromised by the political entanglements of its author has claimed the attentions of generations of readers, critics, and translators; it has surpassed and annexed into its service many of the other objections that have long attended Vergil's masterwork.

But just as the *Aeneid* is a political poem, concerned with the values of the Roman character and the character of Rome, it is not base propaganda. Its advancement of the party-line mythos is tempered by an attunement to the loss and suffering that accompany such mighty designs: war's "griefs" and "grisly crimes," "the long labor of exile," and "the pains of a great love/defiled." And although the costs of this balance have been weighed and tallied by those eager to declare the sum all too fitting or entirely unconscionable, the poem's abiding beauty and moral force lie not in the valuation of its sorrows against the glory they purchase but in their elliptical and haunting expression.

Even before it was published, the *Aeneid* was heralded as the paramount literary achievement of European civilization. "Make way, writers of Greece, writers of Rome!" announced the poet Sextus Propertius, getting caught up in the buzz. "Something greater than the *Iliad* is being born." Augustus, too, was understandably eager to see his commission executed. Vergil's poem advertised the Caesars' claim of descent from the goddess-born hero Aeneas and celebrated the order Augustus had imposed upon Rome after years of domestic strife and

Venus, Hunting, Appears to Aeneas, by Pietro da Cortona (Berrettini) © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York City

civil war, excusing his destruction of the republic.

Impatient for news of progress, the emperor set about pestering his poet by epistle and was delighted with the almost-finished poem, overruling Vergil's deathbed plea that the manuscript be burned. Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, poems celebrating the land and its cultivation, had become school textbooks in their author's own lifetime, and the *Aeneid* swiftly assumed its place in the literary firmament. By the time Pompeii was entombed in volcanic ash ninety-eight years after Vergil's death, lines from the poem were showing up as graffiti on the walls of the ill-fated city.

Two and a half centuries later, when the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and pulled the empire along with him, he cited Vergil's curious Fourth Eclogue—which prophesies the birth of a child who will usher in a golden age of justice and peace—as a direct prefiguration of Christ's birth. This interpretation, adopted by the earliest Christians and surviving as late as the nineteenth century, was responsible for the extraordinary esteem accorded Vergil and his works throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages. The *Aeneid* in particular figured prominently in approved Christian reading. The endless, divinely ordained suffering heaped upon Aeneas, and his dogged steadfastness in the face of such hardship, could serve as an allegory for godly rectitude amid the struggles and temptations of life; and the Rome for which he labored could embody the ideal political order that should presage the Empire of the Spirit.

Vergil, it was said, had been an *anima naturaliter Christiana*, a naturally Christian soul, foremost among those virtuous pagans whose unhappy fate it was to die in an age that knew no salvation. His poetic exploits and unwitting service to the Church qualified him to guide his fellow Italian Dante through the kingdoms extramundane—but only up to the Gates of Paradise, no farther. St. Paul, according to legend, had sought Vergil in Naples; he found a grave and collapsed upon it, weeping. "What would I not have made thee had I found thee still alive," he keened, "O greatest of the poets!" A popular story maintains that Pope Gelasius, revising the Scripture at the end of the fifth century, found it necessary to exclude Vergil's works and *imitationes* from the canon by explicit order. The Church fathers invoked Vergil in support of Christian doctrine, and for more than a thousand years he was venerated equally with King David and the Hebrew prophets.

As the centuries passed, Vergil's epic came to be seen as a compendium of all human knowledge. It was the "pole-star of the grammarian" and a paradigm for rhetoric, an authority on ancient history, a catalogue of the earthly realm above and the breathless dead below. It was literature itself. And because no mortal effort could have delivered such a wondrous creation, the medieval imagination transformed Vergil into a powerful magician: he had created an elaborate set of sculptures that warned the Senate of unrest in the provinces as well as a guardian statue that held Vesuvius' eruptions in check. Vergil the Necromancer had dismembered and resurrected himself. He had built a castle upon the foundation of an egg. It was said that when the emperor's daughter slighted him, he extinguished all the fires in Rome and mandated that they could be relit, one at a time, only by touching kindling to her vulva.

In fact, Vergil did not fill his days quite so colorfully. The son of a well-heeled freeholder in northern Italy, he remained a shy and rustic creature even after his talents and connections had won him the favor and generosity of the regime. He worked on the *Aeneid* quietly and steadily for ten years, answering from time to time the emperor's letters. "I think myself almost mad to have embarked upon it," he reported on one occasion, and he was probably right. He had been charged with an extraordinary task: to reinvent a national myth, to make coherent a mess of local legends and folktales, and to yoke that material to the historical record of Rome.

The *Aeneid* buckles under the strain of such obligations. Much of the poem suffers from the appearance of narrative superfluity—all this aimless bumbling, all these islands, all these battles—and the reader grows restless, suspicio that Vergil is expending a tremendo amount of energy on delaying the i evitable death of Turnus, the lus young tribal prince whom Aeneas mu defeat in order to gain a foothold Italy. Many of the adventures see little more than a laundry list of ro endorsements—a tip of the hat, say, a Tuscan tribe that helped cemer some hoary alliance.

In Voltaire's *Candide*, the Veneti aesthete Pococurante grants that Verg did himself proud with a few select bi of the *Aeneid*, then goes on to ra against practically every personage i the poem. "There cannot in nature he proclaims, "be anything more du and distasteful." Such denunciatio may be extreme, but its basic sent ment rings true for the modern reade to whom the inaccessibility and hol lowness of Vergil's characters hav long been offered as the most egre gious symptoms of their creator's aes thetic and moral failures.

Vergil's hero invites the choices scorn because he is so noticeably boob. The Aeneas to whom I was in troduced in high school was a dull plodding fellow: a melancholy bu reaucrat of Fate whose exploits in wa were so perfunctory, whose love lif was so lame, as to induce both boredom and outrage in even the most dutifu tenth-grade Latin class. Despising Aeneas, far from being the result of recent humanist revisionism, is a distinguished tradition; it achieves its apogee over his betrayal of Dido, the Carthaginian queen with whom Aeneas enters into an affair. When Jupiter spurs him to leave, he abandons Dido—ignoring her pleas, leaving her to ruin and suicide so as to pursue a dream of marble and steel and seven hills beside a river. In Renaissance drama, the lovers' confrontation in the Fourth Book of the *Aeneid*—already rich with the hue of Attic tragedy—anchored half a dozen plays in which Aeneas acts a hapless cad opposite the dignified and doomed figure of Dido; Shakespeare and Marlowe (like Dido herself) call the man, simply, "false Aeneas."

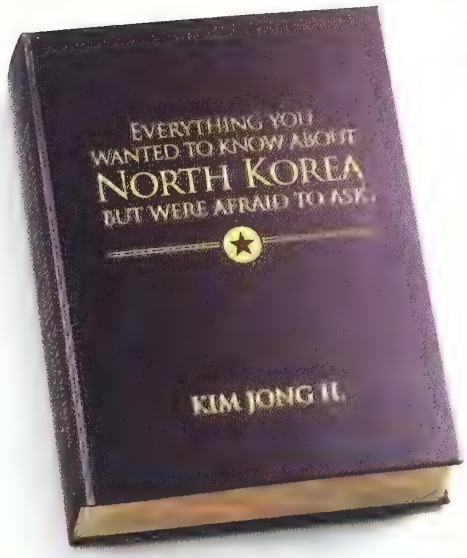
This sorry character inevitably elicits comparison with Homer's Odysseus, whose wanderings Vergil reworked to produce those of the *Aeneid*. The resulting structural simi-

rities only accentuate an untraversble gulf of spirit: Odysseus' fierce nd decisive homecoming brings him ack to everything he knows—to thaca, to blood-loyalty, to sons and erds and orchards. Aeneas dies in a ostile foreign land that he is asked, erversely, to think of and fight for s home. He lives out the balance of is days in an arranged marriage to a ointless princess, staring at the hills f a Mediterranean backwater, conoled only by a memory of the disant future.

Held up to the vigorous, romantic Odysseus, Aeneas seems not only exsperatingly bloodless but also irreeemably unmodern—an old-fangled utomaton, endowed by his creator with he powerful naiveté of an illiberal ideology. His own utterances are frequently ndistinguishable from the rest of the *Aeneid*'s monumental, lapidary verse: I am Aeneas, duty-bound," "Hail to he country owed to me by Fate!" "My ame goes past the skies," et cetera, ad nauseam. He is, in the words of one critic, "wired for sound for all the centuries to come," speaking in the same voice—stentorian and triumphalist—hat can be held to account for so many of the *Aeneid*'s offenses.

And yet there are vast tracts of the *Aeneid* that cannot be bent to that voice's purpose. There is no trace of he voice's influence in the climax to Dido's legendary anathema, which denands that Aeneas "die/before his day, unburied on some desolate beach!" And Aeneas himself, despairing and beleaguered by the storm that will deliver him to Carthage, breaks free of its spell and calls out to his fallen countrymen: "Three, four times blest, my comrades/lucky to die beneath the soaring walls of Troy—/before their parents' eyes! If only I'd gone down/... and poured out my life on the battlegrounds. . . ." In one of Vergil's most beautiful scenes, the souls of the myriad unburied dead, trapped on the earthly side of the Styx and unable to reach the farther shore, long for a final release from life:

> mothers and grown men and ghosts of great-souled heroes,
> their bodies stripped of life, and boys and unwed girls
> and sons laid on the pyre before their parents' eyes.



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SOLUTION TO THE FEBRUARY PUZZLE

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S	L	U	M	B	E	R	I	N	G	L	I
M	Y	R	M	I	D	O	N	G	O	L	D

NOTES FOR "THEME AND VARIATIONS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

ACROSS: 10. rap(t)urous; 11. imp-ercep*-t-I've; 14. homophone; 15. *; 22. *; 23. two mngs.; 25. brid(g)e; 26. dimmer-S.; 28. S.(Y.N.[rev.])C.; 32. tad-a; 34. hu(RR-y-1)ng; 35. law-n(aughty); 36. colon-1-zed; 39. (1)s-lumbering

DOWN: 1. *; 2. *; 3. a(P-pear)s; 4. homophone; 5. no-el; 6. C-UPS; 7. two mngs.; 9. hidden; 12. fram*-E; 13. teet(h)-ER; 16. moo-ring; 17. rev.; 19. two mngs.; 20. br(isrl*)ing; 21. bu([di]dd[le]-his)m; 24. re(p)ly; 31. (s)oiled; 33. d(o)-well; 37. O-bi; 38. or-O.

The solution to "Sixes and Sevens—and Twelves," which ran in the February issue, should have read "Solution to the January Puzzle," and in the diagram, 27A should have read "insures." We apologize for the errors.

As thick as leaves in autumn woods at
the first frost
that slip and float to earth, or dense as
flocks of birds
that wing from the heaving sea to shore
when winter's chill
drives them over the waves to landfalls
drenched in sunlight.

Such passages—suffused with fear and anguish and the measureless vanity of mortal want—coalesce into another voice, one that resists the bloodthirsty, inhuman appetites of empire and history and Fate. This other voice reverberates ceaselessly beneath the *Aeneid*'s titanic political and physical geography. It wells up when that geography fades, in those scenes that mourn for the desires and attachments that can find no purchase in Aeneas' world. In its involuted beauty, we can begin to make out the symmetry of Vergil's peculiar humanism: equal parts commitment to duty and commitment to sadness.

Previous efforts to translate the *Aeneid* have produced a few solid attempts and a menagerie of catastrophic flops. William Caxton, working a century after Chaucer celebrated Dido in his *Legend of Good Women*, turned out in 1490 the first translation that was recognizably the same poem as Vergil's, bringing the epic to a wider audience. Caxton did, however, inflict a number of liberties upon the text, with the result that he was posthumously treated to elaborate Scottish vituperation in the prologue to Gavin Douglas's 1513 translation—the earliest true "translation" in the modern sense. "Thocht Wilyame Caxtoun, of Inglis natioun," writes Douglas, "So schamefully that story dyd pervert./I red his wark with harmys at my hart." Like Douglas, John Dryden set his *Æneis* (1697) in heroic couplets, a form that has aged poorly—but even so, both Britons' translations retain a certain elegance. Dryden, who sought to make his version "grave, majestical, and sublime," succeeds in capturing Vergil's somber, ceremonial cadences, whereas Douglas conjures sharp vernacular dialogue and a spiritedness that, even if un-Vergilian, seems deeply felt. Ezra Pound declared Douglas "better than the original" (though he detested the original).

The twentieth century's first major translation belonged to W. F. Jackson Knight, who transmuted the *Aeneid*'s Latin verse into unflaggingly accurate prose, the preciseness of which he attributed to his weekly consultations with Vergil's ghost, and the result of which is shallow and enervated, like a Cliffs Notes that runs longer than the original. Robert Fitzgerald, whose 1981 translation appeared just before he was appointed U.S. poet laureate, succumbs to the temptation of writing his own (very good) poem, to the extent that he gets the first clause, the *Arma virumque cano*, wrong. The most faithful and appealing translation of the past century, by one Charles Billson, appeared a hundred years ago and now finds itself, copyright expired, condemned to the ignominious fate of a Dover Thrift Edition.

Robert Fagles enters into the midst of a long tradition and a thick field (some dozen versions of the *Aeneid* in print in the United States), having already produced peerless translations of the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and the major Greek tragedies. The *Aeneid* is a commingling of all these influences—glory and its celebration, destiny and its discontents, sacrifice and its elegy. Fagles, better than any other translator, captures the weird, scintillating coexistence of Vergil's defense of the Roman vision and his sympathy for those who must submit to it. This discernment rescues the poem from the dull murmuring of its imperial mission and coaxes forth the traces of despair and regret that animate Aeneas and make him, if not sympathetic, at least better than soporific.

Fagles is similarly attuned to the bloodline of English poetry and to its classical reverberations. He knows his Melville and his Auden and his Pope, and, perhaps most importantly, he knows his Milton. By adapting the cadences and vocabulary of *Paradise Lost*, Fagles is able to draw on the best model of modern English as a language suited to the epic form. Vergil's verse, thus carefully transformed, remains both epigrammatic and fluid: the passage of time is marked by the Miltonian observations that "Night, drawn by the Hours, approaches mid-career" or "comes brooding down on the sea"; when the women of Carthage learn of their queen's suicide, the uncaring "heavens echo back the keening din";

and when Turnus hurls a spear at
unfortunate Trojan, it "wings throug
the melting air and piercing the mar
stomach/thrusts up into his chest, a
froth from the wound's black pit/com
bubbling up as the steel heats in th
lung it struck."

Here we see Fagles's well-exercis
sense for the operatic qualities
Vergil's Homeric violence, which ad
some life to the joyless battles that tak
up most of the second half of the poem
But there is not much else to save in th
Italian episodes, and Vergil perhap
suspected this deficiency on some lev
el, for he attempted to invest th
Aeneid's final six books with a mo
mentousness that never materializes
piling on a multitude of awkward an
unnecessary similes (a queen as a spin
ning top, Turnus as a series of large fur
ry mammals), and allowing nuance t
be supplanted by diligence. Once Ae
neas returns from the Kingdom of th
Dead, he is suddenly and ever after fre
of the craven protests and the yearning
that identified him as human; he has be
come consubstantial with the shades
with all his unborn immaterial descen
dants, and the *Aeneid*'s austere balanc
ing act lists hopelessly to one side. To
whatever extent Fagles's translation
may come up short, the blame should be
laid on the grave that St. Paul once
tripped over.

The past century has seen the *Aeneid*'s star waver capriciously, as the book shuffled back and forth between strenuously trumpeted appositeness and stodgy irrelevance. Amid the vast wreckage of the Great War and stinging with the memory of the grandiose conceits that vomited it forth upon the Continent, many came to see the pessimist in Vergil and to reject the *Aeneid*'s "Augustan" messages, if not to dismiss the author altogether. Hermann Broch, who began writing his intimidating, hallucinatory novel, *The Death of Virgil*, in a German prison camp in 1938, went so far as to suggest that Vergil's famous dying request for the destruction of his manuscript—conventionally chalked up to the panic of a sensitive perfectionist—arose not from the poet's fear that his work was still imperfect but from his long-delayed recognition of its moral shortcomings.

In America, comparatively free of ıe cloud that hung over a broken Eu- ›pe, the vision of a sacred and arduous ational project retained currency;* nce the founding of the republic, the oem had held deep popular appeal for s depiction of the intrepid forefather ho usurps upon a rough new land and ›ils so that his people might someday onquer it completely, later reaching utward from their shores and impos- ıg a beneficent dominion. The nov- list and educator John Erskine, writ- ıg in these pages seventy-seven years go, echoes the authors—most of them uropeans—who reappraised the eneid as a dirge and a consolation for he modern predicament; he describes n age of hard-won, dirty order, in vhich we find that we share Rome's veaknesses, that "our imperialism is nly a development of the Roman and arries with it the same or greater cru- lties." And yet Erskine truly is the in- veterate American, full of brash confi- lence in the national vocation when ıe invokes the most famous part of Anchises' lecture to Aeneas:

> Others, I have no doubt,
> will forge the bronze to breathe with suppler lines,
> draw from the block of marble features quick with life,
> plead their cases better, chart with their rods the stars
> that climb the sky and foretell the times they rise.
> But you, Roman, remember, rule with all your power
> the peoples of the earth—these will be your arts:
> to put your stamp on the works and ways of peace,
> to spare the defeated, break the proud in war.

"Here," writes Erskine, approvingly, of this dreary lot, "is such an apology as we should make for ourselves today in America. Others excel us in art, but our business is to do the work of the world and make it safe for democracy."

Such musings yielded to a more aggressive rhetoric when Europe's fascist regimes claimed Vergil for their own. Curiously, the Nazi establishment was more receptive to the *Aeneid*'s imperial exhortations than were Aeneas' descendants in Mussolini's Italy, for whom the book's messianic ethic seemed, perhaps, too grim and Teutonic. The Italians took comfort in the memory of Rome's greatness, but they were more interested in Vergil's celebration of traditional agrarian values than in the resurrection of world empire.

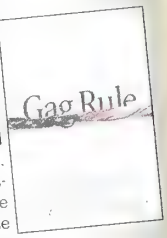
Vergil's reputation, once again tainted by the blessings of autocracy, did not survive the decline of classical education that began with the end of the Second World War. The politics and abstruseness of the *Aeneid* relegated it to the province of child torture, where it has been thrust—usually truncated—into the hands of an ever-dwindling proportion of prep-school students and college freshmen. Meanwhile, Homer's openhanded, lifelike verse flourished in translation. "The *Odyssey* is the great poem of the postwar world," explained Fagles, a decade ago, when he was asked to pinpoint the sensibility that made his translation of that book so popular. "And for many of us, we inhabit a post-war world: a post–World War II world, a post–Cold War world. There are battles to be fought and battles that can be won . . . but there's also peace to be enjoyed and relished."

Whether proto-Christian or proto-fascist, ideological readings have been bold in commandeering Vergil's poem, whose indigenous patterns of politics and allegory seem ever ready for ambitious co-optation. This is not to say that attempts to make Vergil speak to a particular era have been entirely without merit; those Europeans of the 1920s and '30s who found in the *Aeneid* a compelling occasion for self-examination also recognized, in his fullness, the Vergil called upon by Tennyson: "Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind." But what finally renders all topical readings hopeless is the fact that Vergil himself contrived to avoid the domination of his poem by the very politics he was obligated to promote. Vergil's pinnacle achievement is the set of inviolable ambiguities at the heart of the poem. These ambiguities persist even into the torpid scene-pieces of the wars in Italy, and they resonate—in Aeneas' thwarted attempts to embrace the phantoms who come visiting

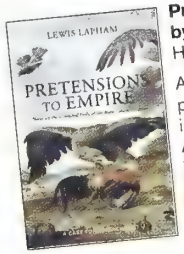
* *Literally. The U.S. dollar bill has borne three mottoes based on Vergil's poetry.*

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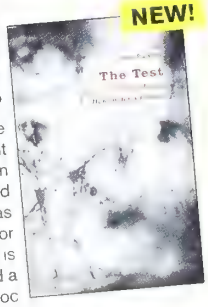


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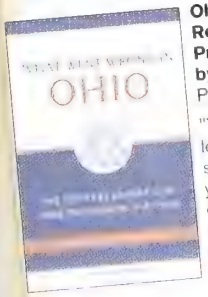
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surances of prophecy, the worth and efficacy of the noblest endeavors, the order that we carve out of a wilderness of ignorance and savagery.

The burden of these doubts becomes palpable when we examine Aeneas' mighty adversary, Turnus, who lacks them completely. Turnus is a hero of the *Iliad*, an Italian Achilles for whom existence is a straightforward matter of honor and disgrace, slaughter and the temporary absence of slaughter. He may play the loser in Vergil's story, but he does so on terms and through choices that are for him so familiar as to be congenital. "Shall I cut and run?" he wonders, "Shall the country look/on Turnus in full retreat?" ("No" and "no," naturally.) He seeks and finds the very end that Aeneas wished for and was denied: to have "poured out [his] life" in the company of worthy friends and worthier enemies. "Insane as it is, I beg you," Turnus implores those whose love for him forestalls his demise, "Let me rage before I die!"

In the Roman cosmos, that type of finality is but a curious relic. Aeneas' mission exiles him from the old, heroic world of the corporeal: the cutting of bodies, the taking of plunder, the holding of ramparts. He leaves behind an age without history, what C. S. Lewis called a "mere endless up and down, the constant aimless alternations of glory and misery," and arrives in a world thick with purpose and consequence, a world whose fields he can seize but whose symbolism confounds and recedes from him, a world to which his every act is already a reminiscence.

The chasm between these two worlds hints at one of the *Aeneid*'s chief distinctions within the Western tradition—its consciousness of a recorded past and a mutable future, a consciousness that demolishes mortality as the outer boundary of man's existence. This is an enormous, unsettling change. History, even guaranteed by Fate and confirmed by Vergil's hindsight, is neither comprehensible nor comforting to Aeneas. No matter the promises of Jupiter or Anchises; even the standard-bearer of Rome [illegible] cannot escape the dread of ending up an unburied body on a nameless shore. The relation between man and history is fragile and contingent and uncertain, and it must have been terrifying even to Vergil, terrifying to abandon his manuscript to the vagaries of the phenomenal world. Better to take it with him.

The *Aeneid*'s inscrutability takes time to get used to. We expect wise, robust messages from books like this. After all, the role of our epics—which endures even if their grandeur subsid[es] from generation to generation—is [to] pose questions of desire and death, war and kin, of the profit and the l[oss] that make up the rhythm of our liv[es]. If we are to take a message from Verg[il] perhaps it is this: that we should ho[ld] or the frustration and dignity of bei[ng] alive beneath the broad and pitile[ss] vault of Heaven. Maybe the *Aeneid* [is] a useful book, and maybe it is not. B[ut] it is beautiful. Let us read it for that.

THE DISILLUSIONIST

In praise of Milan Kundera's hypocrisies

By Arthur Phillips

Discussed in this essay:

The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts, by Milan Kundera. Translated by Linda Asher. HarperCollins. 176 pages. $22.95.

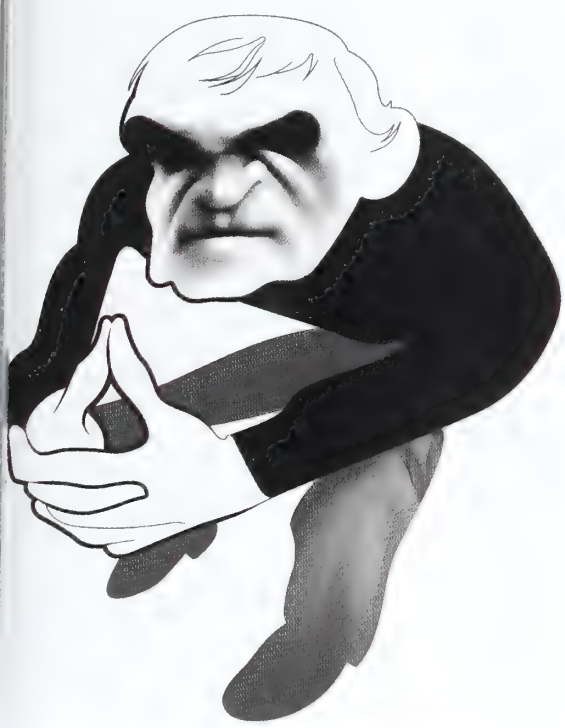
One way to start writing a novel is to have a theory about what a novel is supposed to be *for*—like healing our wounds, holding a mirror up to the American family, or engaging with the political issues of the day. If you know, as the novelist Milan Kundera knows, that your first duty as a novelist is to explore and explain hitherto unknown "existential problems," then, assuming you can dig up a hitherto unknown existential problem, you have a good start on your novel. A theory like that gives you a guide to creating your characters, a subtext for your dialogue, a clothesline from which to suspend your sex scenes and flashbacks. Be careful, though: after a while, you may find yourself wishing for a little freedom from your own big ideas. That clothesline can turn into a boa constrictor.

Kundera, best known for his nine novels, has now published his third book of literary theory and criticism. *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts* follows 1993's *Testaments Betrayed: An Essay in Nine Parts* and 1986's *The Art of the Novel*, an essay in seven parts (though it doesn't say so on the cover). Twenty-one years and twenty-three parts later, devoted admirers like me may be forgiven for feeling that the ground of Kunderan thought is tramped pretty flat, considering as well that several of his novels come cushioned in afterwords, prefaces, and dense author interviews. Kundera the essayist wants us to know what Kundera the novelist was thinking, and in *The Curtain*, through short, breezy sections, he explains himself again, fiddling with the theoretical knots he has been tying for years. Although he loosens them somewhat, he is still, in the end, well and truly bound by them.

In a voice surprisingly gentler (but no weaker), he returns here to the topics he addressed in the previous criticism: the construction and function of the novel, the menace of kitsch, the provincialism of governments, the idiocy of academic critics. With each book, he has found new lenses through which to examine his subjects. *The Art of the Novel*, for example, was a writer's book, "a practitioner's confession," that looked at his literary theory in its relation to nuts-and-bolts composition and technique. Kundera discussed chapter

Arthur Phillips is the author of Prague *and* The Egyptologist. *His third novel,* Angelica, *will be published in April.*

ngth, the use of word repetition, the ructure of novels by Kafka, Sterne, nd Broch, and tied these practical atters to his idea of the underlying ex-ential mission of novels. *Testaments etrayed* was angrier—a prophet's rant, amining how artists' rights are be-ayed by executors, publishers, and eologues. Repeating the same theo- of literature from his first book of says, he paid special attention to Kaf-a's incompetent translators, Rushdie's ersecutors (and feeble defenders), even ne composer Stravinsky's treacherous onductors. *The Curtain* is less gloomy,



nore of a reader's celebration, and the ame ideas are now viewed through the rism of literary history, the works and houghts of Kundera's masters: Cer-vantes, Tolstoy, Flaubert, and several thers, well-known and obscure, clas-ic and modern. The enraged lament in *Testaments Betrayed* that the novel and Western culture were in their death throes is now quieted, mercifully re-placed by the more hopeful reminder that the novel has "a freedom that no one can delimit and whose evolution will be a perpetual surprise."

With similar tolerance, Kundera ad-mits early in *The Curtain* to the possi-bility of aesthetic judgments that differ from his own. "In the realm of art," he calmly writes, "there are no precise mea-sures. . . . Each aesthetic judgment is a *personal wager*; but a wager [that] does not close off into its own subjectivity." In other words, we all have our opin-ions. I happen to agree, but I also ad-mit that since the rules of judging are so personal, this game of bickering over our favorite stories can feel, to use Kun-deran language, unbearably light. As a result, the instinct to charge the nov-el with a weightier purpose is hard to overcome. Kundera has always been tempted by weightiness, and, despite his new hedging, his the-ory of fiction in *The Curtain* still rings out, above all, as *important*.

The new, supposed-ly more relaxed Kun-dera is not terribly convincing, and after those opening caveats, he doesn't make many more appearances in *The Curtain*. His dis-claimers did not for long rid me of the feel-ing—familiar from reading his fiction—that certain Laws of Nature were being ex-plained, more or less patiently, and that only a child would try to resist the cold facts of the matter. "Indif-ference to aesthetic value inevitably shifts the whole culture back into provincialism," he soon reminds us, and the talk of per-sonal wagers is left behind. For him, the novel still fulfills *one* specific and vi-tal purpose, and the ultimately serious value of this "playful" art cannot be overstated. *The Curtain* explains again how the novel bears humanity's hopes for something morally crucial indeed.

We are all born with the real-ities of life hidden from us, behind a curtain of received ideas—hence the book's title. We can-not see things as they really are. Nov-els, though, like experience itself, re-veal existence to us, and the "morality" of fiction lies in its ability to pierce this curtain and shine light, without judgment, on existence and the range of human possibility, good and bad. The novel says "what only the novel can say," and in so doing, opens our eyes. The novel tears the curtain.

How does the novel do this? By ex-pressing only doubt, never certainty. Kundera has long argued that any nov-el worth the name is an *ironic* (in the sense of "uncertain") inquiry into the nuance and complexity of life, over-throwing tired wisdom, showing up easy simplifications, and replacing them only with questions. He has said that the novel is a "*realm where moral judgment is suspended*," "the imaginary paradise of individuals . . . where no one possesses the truth, neither Anna nor Karenin." The novelist's only truth: "Things are not as simple as you think." The novel takes the form of a ques-tion rather than an answer, because any answer, by definition, adds a new stitch to that curtain of pretty lies. Kundera praises Flaubert for never writ-ing "to communicate his judgments." A didactic novel tells you what you should do; Kundera says a real "ironic" novel tells you only what people could do. A novel examines "the realm of human possibilities, everything that man can become, everything he's ca-pable of."

Opposed to this high calling is not light genre fiction (Kundera says he has "never minded Agatha Christie's detective novels") but humorlessness, simplification and myth-making, in-herited dogma of any sort. Chief among these villains is kitsch, the "supreme aesthetic evil"—defined by Kundera over the years as "the trans-lation of the stupidity of received ideas into the language of beauty and feel-ing" and, memorably, in *The Unbear-able Lightness of Being* as "the absolute denial of shit." Kitsch, "a rosy veil thrown over reality" (even better: "bread drenched in perfume," accord-ing to Robert Musil), is to Kundera the ultimate sin, an act of willful anti-understanding—curtain repair. Although Kundera is easier on his old enemies in *The Curtain* than in *Testa-ments Betrayed*, he very entertain-ingly prosecutes Victor Hugo and George Sand, among others, for crimes of kitsch. The forced happy ending, the

Illustration by Andre Carrilho

...ism's evil, the clever critics, the upright and unflinching hero, the novel that confirms everything you believe, the story that promises redemption: Kundera will have none of that.

This abhorrence of kitsch is not merely a matter of taste to him. It is a matter of morals, because by exposing our naive desire to view the world in black and white, by cracking our certainties, by making things personal and thus showing the idiocy of generalizing ideologies, the novelist necessarily *disillusions* the reader (and himself, for he is never the same at the end of writing a book as he was years earlier, at the start). And, by showing us truths other than our own, the novel makes indifference to others less easy. The rights of man, Kundera argues, depend upon a shared belief in human individuality, which requires an effort to understand other people's points of view. The novel is therefore nothing less than a bastion against intolerance. Why do totalitarians and ayatollahs and priggish town councils ban novels? The answer: the novel is modernity's "most representative creation," the ultimate proof of individuality, indigestible to medieval thinkers of any faith.

Writing fiction to fulfill this ideal makes strong technical demands upon the writer and on translators. (In *Testaments Betrayed*, for instance, the varied emotional and intellectual effects of a single paragraph of Kafka are analyzed through four subtly different translations.) The novelist must be scrupulous, Kundera argues, removing every trace of his own authority and opinion, in case any idea in the novel gains a false glow of seemingly inarguable truth. In *The Curtain*, Kundera insists that "novelistic thinking" is "fiercely independent of any system of preconceived ideas; it does not judge; it does not proclaim truths; it questions, it marvels, it plumbs." In *Testaments Betrayed*, analyzing an essay-like section in one of his own favorite novels (Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalkers*), Kundera worried that the passage could "readily be taken for the author's own thinking, for the novel's truth, its statement, its thesis, and thus . . . damage the relativity that is indispensable to novelistic space." If the novelist backs a particular truth, then his efforts to illuminate our essential truthlessness are doomed.

Kundera's temptingly clear standards seem to offer the critic an almost scientific method for reading fiction: try to find, in every novel, what new element of human possibility is being revealed and where such a discovery places the novel in relation to the discoveries of predecessors and contemporaries. And since "a novel that fails to reveal some hitherto unknown bit of existence is immoral" (so much for the softer, more tolerant Kundera), book reviewers can confidently send immoral books off to their kitschy, curtained hell.

But what is the mechanism for determining which bit of existential truth was or was not previously known? And to whom? Subjectivity will always worm its way into any aesthetic theory, eroding even the best ones at their foundations. Set out rigorously, phrased brilliantly, glowing with morality, Kundera's standard, like all the others, still relies on an imaginary, even kitschy, premise: a homogeneous readership, everybody equally impressed by, and agreeing on, newly discovered existential insights. But humans are a varied bunch (which Kundera accepted as one of his premises), and my existential revelation is your grandmother's moth-eaten proverb. Kundera's theory offers no more usable standard of literary criticism than any other, no perceptible "history of values" at all, unless you happen to be Milan Kundera.

I discovered Kundera's novels in college, before I knew I was going to be a writer, and I devoured them. Later, as a closet novelist undeniably under his influence, I read *The Art of the Novel*. I was astounded. Ready to absorb any lesson from my master, I discovered a theory of art entirely contradictory to his own fiction. I felt he had read himself wrong. I loved his novels, often because I felt forced to wrestle with him and his opinions, with what I saw as his fiction's most identifying feature—the aggressively disillusioning ideas put forth as *facts* by a haughty, brilliant, moody narrator. But his theory of "irony" and novelistic "relativity" derided just such tyrannical narrators and the lessons they meant to teach. My deep admiration for Kundera (an admiration paradoxically defined in part by frustration over and anger at "his" beliefs when they contradicted my own) was an admiration for precisely what he claimed—with his essayist's pen—to disdain.

Kundera's apparent personality is very difficult to separate from his novelistic style—the intrusive narrator's voice that so marks his work, full of certain sort of black-turtleneck gloom. In one of my favorite passages from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*—after a wide-ranging discussion of Stalinism and prison camps, of ancient ideas about sex and defecation in Eden, and memories of his own childhood reading—the narrator concludes: "Without shit . . . there would be no sexual love as we know it." How he arrived here is not important, but one thing was clear to me: he, the narrator, who seemed to go by no other name than Milan Kundera, believed it, and wanted me, sitting in my dorm, to believe it too. And again: what of the chapter of *Life Is Elsewhere* that begins, "If a woman fails to live sufficiently through her body, she comes to regard her body as an enemy"? Or: "Men who pursue a multitude of women fit neatly into two categories"? Or this wonderful old-man crankiness, from *Ignorance*: "If in the past people would listen to music out of love for music, nowadays it roars everywhere and all the time . . . a flood of everything jumbled together . . . sewage water music in which music is dying"?

I often had the impression reading his novels that Kundera was on a campaign to rid his audience (me) of certain illusions—the lasting power of friendship or love or democracy, the promise of the future or the innocence of children. This is part of the unique thrill of Kundera novels, and reading them, I couldn't believe that these passages were not statements of judgment, issued by a wickedly opinionated man promoting a worldview at least partially incompatible with my own (or at least with *somebody's*). But wait: if, as the essayist insisted, the novel's wisdom was the "wisdom of uncertainty," why was the narrator Kundera so certain? The essayist instructed me that a novelist must say only, "Things are not as simple as you think," but I heard this novelist saying mostly, "Things are simply much worse than you think."

No, no, says the essayist, you mis-

nderstand: "Tone is crucial. From the ery first word, my thoughts have a one that is playful, ironic, provocative, xperimental, or inquiring." I can't laim that Kundera didn't intend that one, though I am dubious. But I can ertainly argue that, novel after nov- l, I failed to hear it, and fail still, even aving read and enjoyed every ex- lanatory essay. To take one of the ex- mples above, the woman who has iled "to live sufficiently through her ody" and now regards "her body as n enemy" is a character, Jaromil's nother. Kundera could have begun he chapter, "Jaromil's maman had iled to live sufficiently through her ody, and had even come to regard er body as an enemy." This would ave fulfilled his ideal of authorial re- usal; the ideas would have been at- ached specifically to the character, nd a reader would have been free to xtract those ideas for their possible mplications. Instead, Kundera chose more powerful and intrusive open- ng—"If a woman fails"—and then lat- r claimed as an essayist that we should ave "heard" his joshing tone and not aken his lesson too seriously. But Kun- lera's explicit goal of illuminating ex- stential problems is a *generalizing* goal; n existential problem is one we might ll face, and so he is prone to general- zing statements. "If a woman fails . . ." Such pronouncements sound suspi- iously like an opinionated narrator.

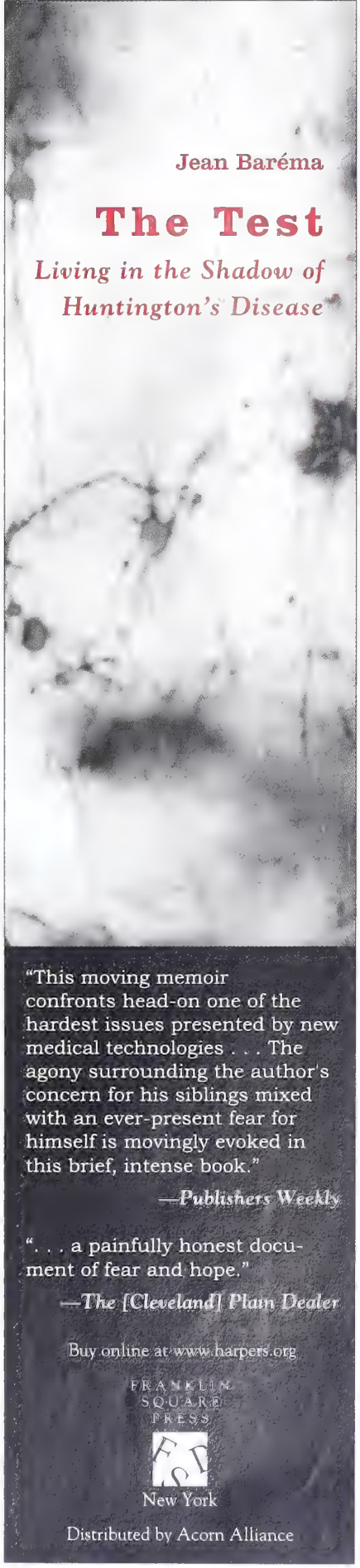
Kundera is a man of impassioned beliefs. One of those beliefs is that the novel is not the place to teach impassioned beliefs. The problem is, he can't help himself—he's as didactic as any Victorian vicar or Soviet realist. The good news, though, is that his literary theory is forgivably wrong: Kundera's novels are beautiful *because* they carry his angry, sad, laughing didacticism in them. That double paradox—he preaches non-preachiness and cannot practice it—is what makes his novels Kunderan, the high calling of the inimitable achieved by him because he is torn between incompatible ethics and aesthetics.

In any case, it's not his ideas but his style of exploring those ideas that makes his fiction fly. (Some of these ideas—about, to name a few, "lyrical" womanizing vs. "epic" womanizing, totalitarianism, music, history, children, or toilets—are profound, some inane, some offensive, some patently wrong. Figuring out which is which is part of the game.) Kundera admiringly cites Flaubert, the novelist who seeks to disappear behind his work, but Kundera's work is beautiful because he is so visible in it—that intrusive narrator against whom his own theory tells him to rage. He wants to stay cool; he can't stay cool.

It no longer bothers me that I love Kundera's novels for the very opposite reason that he would hope for. But I suspect it would bother him. He believes, I think, that the discernment of existential wisdom is not subjective—as is, say, the emotion a story provokes, or the beauty of the writing, or the charm of a character, or a good laugh. But all these qualities share the same destination: the mind of the beholder. This is not to say that Kundera the essayist is completely wrong—only to point out that in the world of humans, much is inevitably lost between the writer's intention and the reader's experience, whether that writer's intention is to stitch the curtain or to tear it. Kundera has faith that the novel will arrive in the reader's head as it left the writer's hand, but how can he look at the history of the novel and of criticism and then believe any such impossible kitsch as that?

Kundera believes that a writer's favorite writers have more in common than just their shared fan. They form a "personal history of the novel," a mission that the writer discerns, inherits, and carries forward. Without such a unifying theory, a "*history of values*," literature is just a "storehouse of works whose chronologic sequence carries no meaning." More starkly, it is "babble"; the individual works are nothing. According to Kundera, literary history is therefore like geographic exploration and cartography, a process of accumulating wisdom. He lays out in *The Curtain* his history of the novel as a series of discoveries about life, filling in a map of knowledge, slashing at that curtain of ignorance.

But wisdom is locked inside a story, or hovers around it. It's not what's left



after you throw the story away. That's [illegible] As the Hungarian novelist Sándor Márai wrote, "There is no such thing as a 'new thought,' only a new expression" that "gives new tension to the old thought." Kundera has written in the past of his "disgust for those who reduce a work to its ideas," but that is what he does in *The Curtain*, in his history of novelists as existential pioneers. A literary history of discovered wisdom is dull stuff, a bucket of great thought nuggets, a critical history of fortune cookies, and in parts of *The Curtain*, Kundera shrinks his own favorite novelists to mere messengers of a certain rueful common sense: life goes on humbly, even when people die (Cervantes); insignificance is where most of us live (Sterne); the most important moments of our lives are surrounded by an envelope of prosaic, boring detail and outright stupidity, "inseparable from 'human nature'" (Flaubert); bureaucracy is stealing our identities and our capability for individual adventure (Kafka); our decisions in everything, from politics to suicide, are made irrationally, from a jumble of stimuli (Tolstoy).

You can reduce Kundera's own novels to such "insights," usually without having to go much past his titles: being can feel unbearably light and meaningless; the corrosiveness of laughter and forgetting condemn to futility much of man's serious efforts and beliefs; the tendency to lyricism is closely tied to youth and easily harnessed by totalitarian bullies. (*Life Is Elsewhere* was originally titled *The Lyrical Age*.) But the problem with ranking literature for this sort of achievement is that you miss all the mysterious pleasure of reading—those moments of joy and beauty and wisdom that are hauntingly tied to you and your life but are quite unrelated to the great men's "discoveries."

I don't look back on my favorite novels and cherish their existential illuminations—except perhaps in the case of Kundera's work. What I recall, what I savor when reading, what is [illegible] what is profound, what is beautiful is subjective, and that's [illegible] can the "history of the novel" be a series of life lessons [illegible] recall learning from novels [illegible] mistrust bureaucracy [illegible] that Hrabal's [illegible] ed! No, Kafka taught me how hard it is to keep a blanket on your stomach when you turn into a dung beetle.

At times in *The Curtain*, Kundera seems to relax and describe his own masters' books somewhat less theoretically. Praising Hašek for *The Good Soldier Švejk* or Musil for *The Man Without Qualities*, he is generous with exclamation points. To an American eye these enthusiasms appear at first to be some sort of devastating double back-flip irony. But the arch-ironist is, I think, charmingly genuine and excitable about them, as in the beautiful passage imagining the history of the novel seen from a different writer's point of view, one of Kundera's lodestar heroes, Witold Gombrowicz, the author of *Cosmos* and *Ferdydurke*. Kundera imagines Gombrowicz tracing "for you the whole *past* of the novel's history, and in so doing will give you some sense of his own poetics of the novel, one that belongs to him alone and that is therefore, quite naturally, different from that of other writers." These are exciting ideas in Kundera's hands, but they also nullify much of what has come before in *The Curtain*.

When I was trying to teach myself to be a novelist, I, too, assembled my personal history of literature, tried to make sense of that storehouse of beautiful works. I read my favorites and the favorites of my favorites: Kundera led me to Musil, Mann, and Gombrowicz; Nabokov led me to Bely and Borges; Hemingway and James led me to Flaubert; Perec led me to Calvino; Stoppard led me to Schnitzler; Woolf led me to Proust. But I was also led down paths where I found the bloodstains of literary duels, ghosts slashing at ghosts: if Nabokov hates Mann and James, if Robertson Davies mocks Graham Greene, if Gombrowicz calls Borges pretentious, then what am I to do with my affection for all of them when it comes time to sit down and write? I found this old sniping painful, as if my parents were fighting in front of me and my friends. As I put down one book to pick up the next, I came upon a puzzling problem: my history of the novel was populated by incompatible writers who loathed each other more often than they liked each other. Unlike Kundera's favorites, very few of mine seemed to share goals or aesthetic intentions, and as a result I was repeatedly blocked from forming my own unifying theory of literatu[illegible] There seemed to be limitless varie[illegible] not only in style and method but [illegible] *purpose* as well. If I were to believe Ku[illegible]dera that the novel is "for" existent[illegible] illumination, then I must somehow [illegible] ther forsake Nabokov, or co-opt him, [illegible] make yet another exception to my fe[illegible] ble theory. And, in the meantime, wh[illegible] does it *mean* if I give my new charact[illegible] a happy childhood or a bad hairc[illegible] On what principles do I make the t[illegible] thousand decisions involved in writi[illegible] a chapter?

Vladimir Nabokov (I feel pretty co[illegible] fident in this necro-ventrilocriticism [illegible] would have dismissed *The Curtain* wit[illegible] a laugh. Nabokov's history of the no[illegible] el was not a history of existential di[illegible] covery but a history of style. For hin[illegible] beauty was found in the specifics, i[illegible] the detail as described by an inimitabl[illegible] genius. To understand *Ulysses*, Kun[illegible] dera says you need to know the histo[illegible] ry of the novel's obsession with the sin[illegible] gle moment; Nabokov says you need [illegible] map of Dublin. Kundera says the nov[illegible] el is a device for exploring ideas; Nabokov says, "I prefer . . . images t[illegible] ideas." Nabokov says, "I am supremel[illegible] indifferent to the 'problems of a write[illegible] and the future of the novel,'" but with[illegible] out these issues (without the very word[illegible] "problems" and "future of the novel") [illegible] Kundera's marvelous essays are incon[illegible] ceivable. Kundera seeks the existen[illegible] tial truth about life; Nabokov says, "Life[illegible] does not exist without a possessive ep[illegible] ithet," and the word "existential (used[illegible] seriously)" is itself deeply suspect. Kun[illegible] dera seeks to explain the function of the[illegible] novel; Nabokov says, "One of the func[illegible] tions of all my novels is to prove that[illegible] the novel in general does not exist."

And yet Nabokov and Kundera lined their shelves with works by many of the same writers: Tolstoy, Flaubert, Kafka. Somehow they drew opposite aesthetic lessons from the same books. Flaubert helped Nabokov write like Nabokov and Kundera like Kundera, without their ever sharing a theory or purpose. They were both right.

When, in *The Curtain*, Kundera writes with erudition and enthusiasm about the untapped sources of artistic inspira-

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REVIEWS

(Continued from page 92)

tion to be found in Rabelais or [illegible] epistolary novel, when he praises [illegible] thors as varied (and, refreshingly [illegible] *living*) as Carlos Fuentes, Patri[illegible] Chamoiseau, and Salman Rushdie [illegible] their style and imagination, he see[illegible] released from his self-assigned weig[illegible] duties. Speaking of Picasso, Felli[illegible] and Beethoven as old men, he sav[illegible] their "joyful irresponsibility." Th[illegible] "vesperal freedom is a miracle, an [illegible] land." He praises these artists [illegible] achieving an indifference to the op[illegible] ions of others and a uniqueness av[illegible] able only to the old. And I happ[illegible] hear Kundera giving himself that sa[illegible] freedom, perhaps to enjoy in his ov[illegible] artistry something other than a [illegible] sponsibility to illuminate existen[illegible] for us.

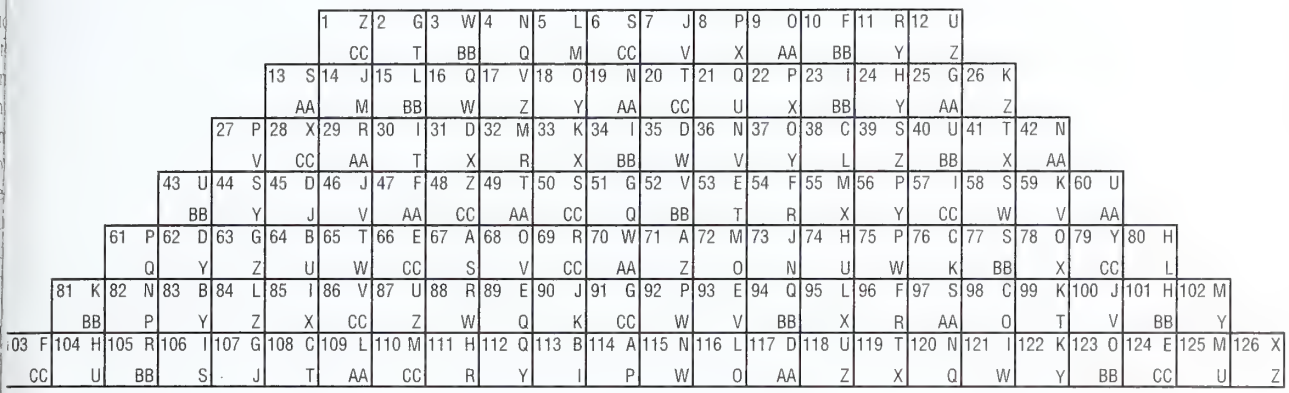
For an author obsessed with e[illegible] ploring ideas, for whom the novel [illegible] an inquiry into ideas, he seems, [illegible] moments in *The Curtain*, aware th[illegible] there is something else hidden insi[illegible] these strange stories we love to rea[illegible] When he mocks "the futility of li[illegible] erary theory . . . helpless before a wo[illegible] of art," the mockery applies no less [illegible] his own provocative essays about h[illegible] own provocative art. The mystery [illegible] the heart of beauty, even a beaut[illegible] spun from ideas, is penetrable onl[illegible] in flashes.

It is when relishing Kundera's u[illegible] mistakable opinions (a pleasure i[illegible] permissible by his own lights) that [illegible] feel I am reading a book that coul[illegible] have been written by no one else[illegible] Perhaps that is *my* unifying theory [illegible] *The Curtain* is to be savored, mor[illegible] than memorized or followed—rolle[illegible] around the palate, not for its re[illegible] vealed truths but for its continuall[illegible] revealed style, going wonderfully [illegible] strong in Kundera's eighth decade[illegible] Forget the theory, enjoy the man; a[illegible] he concludes a discussion of novelis[illegible] tic scene structure, he begins to rem[illegible] inisce. "It brings to mind the liber[illegible] tine Bohemia of my youth: m[illegible] friends used to declare that there wa[illegible] no more gorgeous experience fo[illegible] a man than to make love to thre[illegible] different women in a single day." [illegible] That's why you read Kundera [illegible] whether he likes it or not.

PUZZLE

GONNA BUILD A MOUNTAIN

By Richard Maltby Jr.



What the diagram amounts to is specified in the top row.

Clue answers are to be entered in the standard acrostic manner. Each letter in the diagram appears in precisely two answers. Clue answers are common words, and include two proper names. As an added hint, each letter of the alphabet except Q starts at least one answer. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 85.

CLUES

A. Brazenly restricting discipline (3) 67, 114, 71

B. Jay has a bit of brandy punch (3) 113, 83, 64

C. Article Latin got in by with skill (4) 76, 108, 38, 98

D. Back end in cooler state (5) 45, 62, 35, 31, 117

E. Time being noon, getting the word to start a story (5) 124, 53, 66, 93, 89

F. Part of the signature of Charles Edward Hunt? (5) 103, 54, 10, 96, 47

G. Enrich, with cultivation, creeper (6) 107, 51, 91, 2, 25, 63

H. Cigar outside a truck that's funny (6) 104, 111, 101, 80, 24, 74

I. One pound I put in container improved finally one out of the can (8) 113, 34, 57, 106, 85, 30, 121, 23

J. Loud, distant French pine for repelling hoi polloi (8) 90, 107, 46, 73, 14, 100, 7, 45

K. Decorate your vans without good taste (8) 122, 99, 81, 76, 33, 59, 90, 26

L. Spar, all elevated, requires some latitude (8) 84, 95, 109, 80, 5, 38, 15, 116

M. Church hanger-on gets sock about nothing. Grand, for starters (8) 72, 55, 14, 32, 110, 102, 5, 125

N. Turn autumn—that's a stroke of good luck! (8) 120, 36, 82, 42, 73, 19, 4, 115

O. Shouting that hurts inside—it can be a sign of age (9) 98, 9, 37, 116, 68, 18, 78, 123, 72

P. Religiously strict doctor at birth has a bit on his plate? (9) 92, 8, 27, 114, 56, 75, 22, 82, 61

Q. Learning bank now led Germans across the open spaces (9) 21, 51, 94, 120, 4, 16, 112, 61, 89

R. Hocks undershirt and jewelry to get hamper (9) 54, 111, 69, 96, 88, 29, 105, 11, 32

S. Camera lens doesn't stop making sense of animals (10) 67, 6, 97, 77, 44, 13, 50, 58, 39, 106

T. Fear of aliens spreading hope in a box (10) 20, 41, 99, 53, 49, 2, 119, 108, 30, 65

U. Track, partly, a portion of a yoga routine (11) 64, 74, 43, 21, 12, 60, 40, 125, 87, 118, 104

V. Fat, I focus on exercising that leaves one breathless! (11) 27, 86, 46, 7, 59, 93, 100, 52, 36, 68, 17

W. Make up for ski resort found by computer? (11) 58, 92, 70, 35, 88, 16, 121, 75, 65, 3, 115

X. Flying around, start to bake bread, only 3/5 shortening (12) 95, 85, 8, 126, 41, 33, 78, 55, 28, 22, 119, 31

Y. My word! Annual scrubbing makes clothes cleaner (12) 37, 62, 122, 11, 112, 56, 102, 18, 44, 79, 83, 24

Z. Slide party scanner all over the place (12) 87, 63, 1, 17, 12, 84, 39, 126, 48, 71, 118, 26

AA. Act to conceal a French war character shot in the Civil War, perhaps? (13) 42, 19, 13, 70, 9, 29, 109, 47, 97, 60, 117, 49, 25

BB. Prudish Englishmen, drinking beer, died with leaders of their class (14) 101, 10, 77, 15, 23, 105, 43, 52, 94, 40, 3, 34, 123, 81

CC. Letter about alimony? See action, possibly (15) 48, 20, 91, 6, 79, 69, 86, 124, 57, 103, 1, 28, 50, 110, 66

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Gonna Build a Mountain," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the January puzzle, "Sixes and Sevens—and Twelves," are Sara M. Dworak, Anthony, New Mexico; James Kaiser, Oakland, California; and Robert Roos, Meadville, Pennsylvania.



FINDINGS

Canadian researchers discovered that dichloroacetate, or DCA, a cheap simple drug that has been used for years to treat metabolic disorders, also happens to kill almost all cancers; unfortunately, DCA is not patented, which means that most pharmaceutical companies will have little interest in carrying out clinical trials using the drug. The FDA approved a new drug developed solely for the treatment of canine obesity. Thai authorities revealed that Chuang Chuang the panda is too fat to have sex, and evidence emerged of a "microbial component" in obesity: fat people, according to a study, tend to have fewer Bacteroidetes in their gut and more of a bacteria called Firmicutes. Chubby girls are more likely to develop heart disease, scientists said, and men who father only daughters are more likely to develop prostate cancer. Women dress better when they are ovulating. People who suffer heart attacks tend to have short telomeres.

British regulators decided to delay the creation of human-cow hybrids for about a year because of concerns that mixing the two species could be controversial. Human-rabbit hybrids were also put on hold. A reconstructed sample of the virus that caused the 1918 influenza pandemic killed macaques in a laboratory; the 1918 virus killed the monkeys by causing a cytokine storm, an autoimmune reaction in which immune-system proteins attack the body. Two groups of researchers independently warned that stem cells can cause cancer, and it was shown that human stem cells extracted from amniotic fluid can be used to grow a variety of tissues, which suggests the possibility of harvesting these cells and storing them in a tissue bank for future use. Scientists in the U.K. created genetically modified chickens that lay anti-cancer eggs. A new study found that women are attracted to men whom other women find attractive. Another study found that scientists who win a Nobel Prize tend to live two years longer than those who are merely nominated. Researchers found that excessive use of computers and other technological devices can cause people to suffer a loss of I.Q. more than twice that observed in marijuana users. Vegetarians, a new study found, are more intelligent than normal people.

Astronomers mapped the hypothetical structure of dark matter; the result suggests that dark matter could function as a kind of scaffolding that allows ordinary matter to clump together. Physicists announced that the W boson has a mass of 80.413 giga–electron volts, which means that the mass of the Higgs boson, the as-yet-undiscovered particle believed to give all other particles their mass, should be 153 giga–electron volts. Seven new dwarf galaxies were discovered, and new research suggested that the Large and Small Magellanic clouds, two nearby galaxies, are moving twice as fast as astronomers previously believed and may eventually leave the galactic neighborhood entirely. Geologists said that black diamonds might have come from outer space. Archaeologists studying an old South African skull said they had found new evidence that humans left Africa only 50,000 years ago. Researchers announced that they might have found the memory molecule, and scientists learned that amnesiacs have trouble imagining the future. A computer model suggested that planting trees in non-tropical areas to fight global warming might actually contribute to the problem. Komodo dragons are capable of giving birth to fertile eggs by means of parthenogenesis. Tonguefish were observed skipping across pools of molten sulphur near undersea volcanoes in the western Pacific. The Doomsday Clock moved forward two minutes. ■

Back Bay in Ruins, by Gail Bovajian
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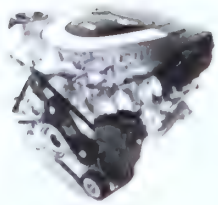


fig. A

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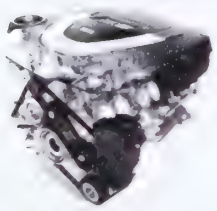
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Come Shakespeare, riding through a storm-ridden landscape (*detail*), by Giovanni Battista Cipriani, a wall painting [illegible] Henry Hoare, [illegible] 1760, for the [illegible] now Trafalgar Park. Courtesy Michael [illegible]

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LETTERS

Credit Where Credit's Due

In his beautifully crafted February criticism, "The Ecstasy of Influence," Jonathan Lethem teaches more about the importance of what I call "remix" than any other work I have read. Certainly more than my own work. It is not terribly difficult to pound out a thousand words espousing the value of synthetic creativity. I do it all the time. But it is extraordinarily difficult to do it by drawing upon the very creativity you seek to illustrate. A culture practiced in the skill Lethem demonstrates is one that understands itself. It knows its past. It understands subtle references. It expresses respect for those who have created by building upon their creativity in ways that extend it, or at least make it relevant, to a different time and different place.

But I confess I was troubled by the link between the creativity evinced in the essay and "plagiarism"—especially troubled when I found buried in the text the only sentence I ha ever written that I truly lik (Which sentence will remain a my tery here.) I was troubled becau the freedom that Lethem depen upon—the freedom to integrate an build upon the work of others—do not need the license the plagiaris takes. The rules against plagiarism after all, require only that words bo rowed be acknowledged as borrowed

Creativity requires that the artis be free to borrow freely. It demand that he not be required to get per mission in advance. But it does no require that he be allowed to hide a expression's borrowing. Whethe ideas are borrowed is too hard t know. We should thus leave them alone. But it is not too much to de mand that a beautiful (or ugly) bor rowed sentence be wrapped in sim ple quotation marks.

But maybe Lethem's essay, with its careful end credits, teaches that, too. For his work can't help but force those on the side of this insane regu lation to think again. I hope it also helps those at the other extreme to think again as well.

Lawrence Lessig
Professor of Law
Stanford Law School
Stanford, Calif.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

After reading Jonathan Lethem's ay, I couldn't help but note that truncating another person's rds, one might then create mis-es. Take, for example, the attribu-n of "Beautiful as the chance en-unter of a sewing machine and an ıbrella on an operating table" to ndré Breton. In fact, as Breton and ıristian Keathley (Lethem's source the quote) point out, the simile ıs by the Comte de Lautréamont, e of many (and by no means the ost striking) that festoon his *Can-s of Maldoror*. It was the same utréamont, this time writing un-r his original name, Isidore ucasse, who also made the apropos mment: "Plagiarism is necessary. ogress implies it. It closely grasps ı author's sentence, uses his expres-ons, deletes a false idea, replaces it ith the right one." And he should ıow: the book that contains this ıote, *Poésies*, is itself largely com-osed of repurposed maxims from ıe great French moralists.

lark Polizzotti
oston

Thank you for Jonathan Lethem's ın and illuminating essay. I first lued in to the textual appropria-ons with "his" assertion that col-ıge "might be called *the* art form of ıe twentieth century." Lethem con-sses he got this idea from filmmak-r Craig Baldwin. I, however, recog-ized the line from John Guare's lay *Six Degrees of Separation*. To-ard the end, one character asks an-ther, "Did you see Donald Barthelme's obituary? He said col-age was the art form of the twenti-th century." Here, of course, the ource is even more elusive. At any ate, the reply, I think, is apt: Everything is somebody else's."

Dave Madden
Lincoln, Nebr.

onathan Lethem responds:

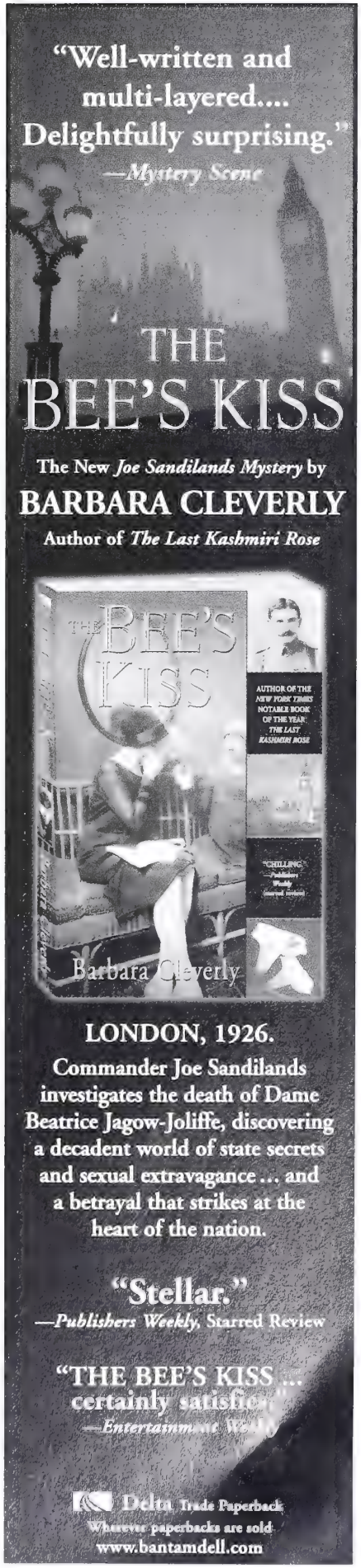
While assembling "The Ecstasy of nfluence," I was faced with a decision: contact those still-living writers whose words I'd harvested, or allow them to discover my thefts after I'd published. I settled on the latter. An essay with all my samples "cleared" wouldn't mean as much. To risk some disgruntlement meant having the courage of my convictions and was part of the provocation I had intended. Besides, such reactions might extend the conversation in unexpected ways. I did, however, promise myself then that if I was confronted, whether in a private or a public way, and no matter how gently, I would apologize. I do apologize to Lawrence Lessig now, for a discomfort for which I take full responsibility.

Still, it strikes me that the yearning for a clear and universally applicable standard for plagiarism highlights an essential difference in temperament between a public advocate for reform like Lessig (who, let me be clear, is my personal hero among public advocates) and working artists wading in the glorious murk of overlapping forms and methods. A call for quotation marks suggests that an essay such as mine ought to be considered in the context of academic, scientific, or journalistic discourses—realms where standards of accurate citation are necessary and sensible. Perhaps my essay should be judged in that context. Yet in assembling it, I was aware of my own impulses to beguile, cajole, evoke sensation, and even to manipulate, impulses not so different from those underlying my novels and stories—or, I presume, those underlying the efforts of many creators in other realms.

Artists are, among other things, mischievous, and we should try to remember that we wish them to be. In songs, films, paintings, and much poetry, allusions and even direct quotations (whether acquired by digital means or otherwise) are subsumed within the voice of the artist who claims them. Citations come afterward, if at all. There are no quotation marks around the elements in a Robert Rauschenberg collage or around Quentin Tarantino's swipes from lesser-known movies. And T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" has only endnotes—which, I suspect, are much less often read than the poem itself.

All Riots Reserved

I am a great fan of Susan Meiselas, a contributor with Joy Garnett



The Great Writers of Ireland



William Butler Yeats

Born in 1865 to a barrister-turned-artist father and a mother from a wealthy Sligo family, William Butler Yeats became one of Ireland's most influential literary figures. Yeat's early poems, such as "Celtic Twilight" and "The Wanderings of Oisin," drew inspiration from Irish folklore and mysticism. With Lady Augusta Gregory, Edward Martyn, and others, Yeats pioneered the Irish Literary Revival, a literary movement that celebrated Irish culture. Yeats was also a prolific dramatist, writing twenty-six plays. In 1904, Yeats and Lady Gregory opened the Abbey Theatre with a premiere of Yeat's *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. As Yeats matured, he began to explore more socially relevant subject matter. Poems like "September 1913" touched on political unrest in Irish society.



National Library of Ireland

Yeats, as a poet, was known for his mastery of traditional verse. In 1923, his accomplishments earned him a Nobel Prize. Yeat's later poems took on a more personal tone, as he explored his own aging and the role of art in life. Yeats died in 1939. At his request, he was buried in the Sligo town of Drumcliffe. Ireland's National Library houses the world's largest collection of Yeats manuscripts, now on display as part of a major exhibition of Yeat's life and works. Established in 1877, the National Library's books, manuscripts, prints and drawings, maps, photographs, newspapers, music, ephemera and genealogical material [illegible] the most outstanding collection of Irish documentary material in the world.

sm Ireland

to February's portfolio, "On the Rights of Molotov Man," but she, like many photojournalists, denies a crucial element of her work, to its detriment: namely, the photograph as a visual communicator. An image speaks to its viewer in a different way than a word to its reader. The "psychological gesture," a term coined by the director Michael Chekhov, is a physical pose that personifies the struggle or action of its character and conveys a feeling rather than a story. Pictures are not stories, and to attempt to keep them in the cage of storytelling is to deny their essence.

The very act of pressing the shutter of a camera is a decontextualization. It is a process of interpretation that Meiselas seems to dismiss in her own work, because (and with good reason) she maintains the importance of the events themselves. Moreover, her distinction between riot and revolution is itself interpretation. What is a riot if not part of a revolution? The use of "Molotov Man" as an archetype of struggle, an emotional emblem of the spirit of riot and revolution, is far from "diminishment of his act of defiance." It is rather a celebration of it and a sound declaration of the power of the image.

Henry Jacobson
Los Angeles

During the 1980s and 1990s, I had many occasions to live and work in Nicaragua, and Susan Meiselas's photographs shaped my understanding of the society and the insurrectionary events that preceded 1979. "Molotov Man" remains one of the most recognizable images of that place and that era. Perhaps it is unsurprising that postmodern art and artists discount historical context and reduce insurrection and revolution to a lumpen concept: riot. I myself do not question that Joy Garnett has the right to appropriate Meiselas's photograph for her own work; I simply question her work's relevance to the world in which we live.

Jon Jonakin
Cookeville, Tenn.

Joy Garnett writes in her portfolio that she let images copied from the Web "sit for a while so I could to[illegible] where I found them." This statem[illegible] illustrates both a keen insight [illegible] the essence of art and an appall[illegible] naiveté toward copyright. Great [illegible] enters into a dialogue with prior [illegible] thereby enriching both. I would [illegible] spect Garnett's position had she [illegible] knowledged this point—and [illegible] sources—from the start. She did n[illegible] nor did she give any indication t[illegible] her goal was allusion to and dialog[illegible] with Susan Meiselas's photograph[illegible]

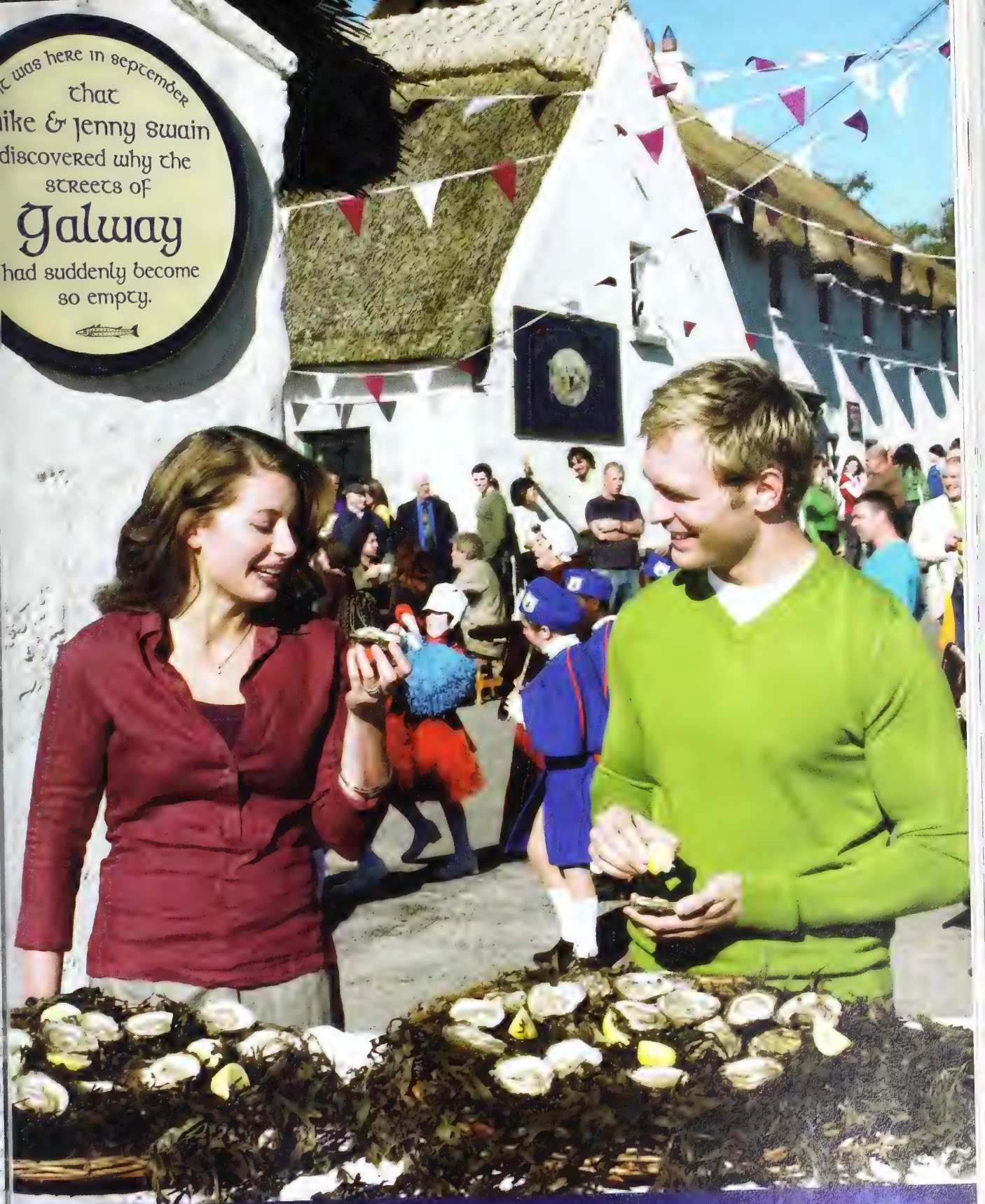
Imitating part of someone els[illegible] work with the hope of creating a [illegible] alogue is art; copying it solely [illegible] profit easily becomes plagiaris[illegible] Some artists believe that art shou[illegible] be the collective property of h[illegible] manity, and that everyone shou[illegible] benefit, unfettered, from the artis[illegible] insights. But copyright exists to [illegible] low creators to profit from their cr[illegible] ation without preventing othe[illegible] from experiencing or building [illegible] that creation. Current law offers a[illegible] equate leeway for the dialogue ar[illegible] criticism that is so crucial to art[illegible] survival and growth; new interpr[illegible] tations of the tension between [illegible] creator's right to profit from h[illegible] work and the desire for others to e[illegible] pand on it are flowering. But t[illegible] make no effort to consider a pri[illegible] artist's rights? Unethical at best.

Geoff Hart
Québec, Canada

After reviewing its various mani[illegible] festations, I am grateful that "Molo[illegible] tov Man," a photograph that res[illegible] onates with the human spirit, di[illegible] not remain frozen in time, obscur[illegible] in its original form, and "owned [illegible] solely by the artist.

The cross-pollination of ideas i[illegible] critical to human creativity, be i[illegible] art, science, or commerce. Indeed[illegible] it is a mark of both "genius" and o[illegible] being human. Thank God the intel[illegible] lectual tyranny (hopefully a tempo[illegible] rary insanity) of current U.S. copy[illegible] right law did not exist in Elizabethan England, or else, perhaps, *Romeo and Juliet* (and other great works of art) would never have been born.

Gloria Good
Asheville, N.C.



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I am a high school teacher whose students live in a world where an unfortunate news illustration May [illegible] Iraq with the massacre at Abu Ghraib, yet few of them know who he was and what he represents. I "Mirabeau Connect" article is clear, admirable, and a beautiful example of *ars gratia artis*, an acknowledgment of the historical context would have been appreciated.

Marc Antoine Meets
Burnaby, B.C.
Canada

I can understand Susan Meiselas's argument that an image must be contextualized, but she then accompanies her essay with examples of how others in Nicaragua used parts of "Molotov Man" for their own political ends. In other words, he was too powerful a symbol to stay in one contextualized photograph. Meiselas should be honored that she was working in Nicaragua during such a seminal moment, took a photograph that came to symbolize that moment, *and* that a part of this photograph has now taken on a life of its own. I know I would be.

Emma Emmerson
Battle Creek, Mich.

Courses in Empire

Edward Luttwak's mostly cogent criticism of American empire building ["Dead End," Essay, February] is marred by historical inaccuracies. His mustering of Vietnam as an example of insurgents brutalizing civilian populations into collaboration is based on a selective reading of problematic sources. In fact, the reliable researchers at RAND, a nonprofit institution that engages in research and analysis, refuted the notion of terror or coercion as the key to Vietcong political control. Even as he advocated the use of ruthless force to pacify the Vietnamese peasants, the venerable Nathan Leites acknowledged that the Vietcong gained acquiescence through a skillful indulgence of the peasant population's moral and emotional needs rather than through coercion. Such candid assessments of Vietcong advantages did not induce any meaningful soul searching. Much as with the Iraq war, this uncomfortable truth was replaced by the abuse of the data and a subsequent pandering to the pipe dreams of politicians.

Luttwak's assertion that an unwillingness to govern occupied populations has undermined American imperial ambitions is equally troubling. To begin with, Imperial Rome, the Nazi occupation of Europe, or even the Ottoman empire strike me as exercises in presentism rather than pertinent historical analogies. Luttwak also ignores the Israeli experience—the most relevant example—presumably because it belies his thesis. Until recently, the Israelis zealously governed both the Gaza Strip and the southern Lebanese enclave, yet they did not achieve the pacification envisioned by Luttwak. It would appear then that the Iraqi debacle is not the result of military malpractice but instead the sad outcome of flippant political decisions that received, at the time, the support of now-repentant military in-



ectuals. Those of us who forewarned
t the most obvious upshot of the
ıi escapade would be the creation
ı Shiite empire stretching from
hran to Beirut were ignored by
ilian strategists who should have
own better.

ı *Robin*
sociate Dean and Professor of
Culture and Communication
inhardt School of Education
w York University

ward Luttwak responds:
I suppose I should be grateful to Pro-
sor Robin—I really enjoyed 1968.
t it was not a vintage year for per-
ıal hygiene with all that camping
t, or for wisdom in foreign affairs.
opposing my contention that
nocracies are defeated by insurgents
cause they can never out-terrorize
em in order to control the popula-
n, he evokes the pure, feckless spir-
of 1968, writing: "[the] mustering of
etnam as an example of insurgents
ıtalizing civilian populations into
llaboration is based on a selective reading of problematic sources." He instead argues that the Vietcong won political support by catering to "the peasant population's moral and emotional needs."

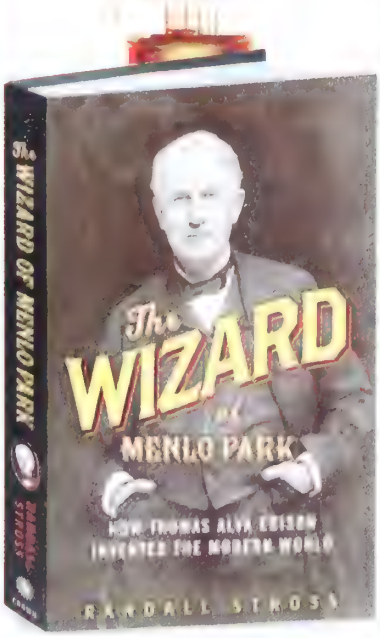
So they did, but anyone who refused the Vietcong's tender, loving care was murdered, sometimes after public beatings *pour encourager les autres*. That is how the Vietcong overcame the political problem caused by the material aid distributed by the United States and its local allies, with which their purely verbal "moral and emotional" aid could not compete. Vietcong and North Vietnamese violence against recalcitrant civilians was pervasive and mostly invisible, but it did sometimes burst into the open. Take, for example, Hue in 1968, where the bodies of some 2,800 civilians (some bound together, some burnt alive) were found after the Tet offensive. I am frankly surprised that Robin retains 1968's delusions about sweetly humanitarian Communists, which the subsequent spectacle of hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees should have cured three decades ago.

As for the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Robin writes that "until recently the Israelis zealously governed both the Gaza Strip and the southern Lebanese enclave, yet they did not achieve . . . pacification." Quite so. After 1967, the Israelis provided much aid to the West Bank and were rewarded with twenty years of tranquillity, until insurgents induced the population to revolt using the usual combination of persuasion and intimidation (e.g., in Bethlehem, where Christians were overawed by Muslim gunmen). In the Gaza Strip, however, the Israelis provided much less help, and an armed opposition emerged much sooner. In both places, democratic Israel could not out-terrorize the insurgents to the same degree as the empires of history—its use of violence has been intermittent and uncertain. The United States must be as inhibited as Israel. I for one would not sacrifice any portion of our values to defeat Iraq's flyblown insurgents.

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The Repute of Happiness

Barbara Ehrenreich's February Notebook, "Pathologies of Hope," erroneously equates the science of positive psychology with fatuous, unscientific self-help guides and gurus. Positive psychology is the empirical study of human strengths and virtues and does not, as Ehrenreich suggests, downplay or ignore the darker aspects of life. Rather than attempting to "reduce our tolerance of other people's suffering," positive psychology is concerned with just the opposite—scientifically examining the variables that contribute not only to personal happiness but to the happiness and well-being of others as well. That includes the study of such positive characteristics as empathy, tolerance, and, yes—hope.

David N. Miller
Assistant Professor of School Psychology
State University of New York at Albany

If Barbara Ehrenreich is concerned with disconnection to reality and lack of empathy, let her attack those maladies in their own right—they cannot seriously be attributed to positive thinking. I suppose that Ehrenreich's Notebook succeeds in exposing the folly of extreme optimism, to the extent that such a thing exists, but an optimist need not shut out the grim aspects of reality in order to focus on the positive.

Mark Fine
Albuquerque, N.Mex.

Thank you, Barbara Ehrenreich, for your incisive, perceptive, and brave essay on an unspoken American malady. The fad of positive psychology may be a multimillion-dollar industry; what surprises me, however, is not the selling of smiley faces but the massive denial throughout a culture that desperately needs to grieve. Older and more poetic cultures than ours recognize the spiritual value of sorrow, anger, ennui, reverence, joy, and elation in the making of an authentic human life.

Linda Bullock
Savannah, Ga.

Certain forms of hope are le
plorable. The 9/11 hijackers
hope, though the kind that is
not imitated or admired. Purch
of lottery tickets have hope,
who looks to their examples
something worth discussing? Ehr
reich can point to a numbe
"hopeful" activities we might m
none of which is based on any
of reason or substance. But d
that automatically invalidate
use of a word long associated w
sacrifice and service? If member
the Salvation Army, for instan
find themselves motivated by a
lief in "the hope of glory," are t
simply misguided lemmings? Ehr
reich shows a disdain for the dep
richness, and complexity of l
guage when she dismisses hope a
argues that it is the same thing
positive thinking or optimism.

Carl Briggs
Charlottesville, Va.

Kudos to Barbara Ehrenreich f
puncturing one of the silliest myt
in contemporary culture. In the
rush to hitch their wagons to hop
self-esteem, and the constellation
other attitudes that are supposed
carry the day, Americans are forsa
ing proven methods and tangib
competencies. The effects are see
and felt throughout society—a
not for the good. There is,
course, nothing wrong with hop
and confidence when they are rea
sonable outgrowths of the evidenc
at hand, or when they reflect
well-considered plan of action. To
day, however, positive thinking o
ten precedes the evidence or th
plan. More and more, it *is* the plan.

Fortune 500 companies, for ex
ample, allocate a growing percent
age of funds to motivational speak
ers, rather than bringing in thos
who can teach employees nuts-and
bolts skills. And in noting that un
reasoned optimism is corrupting th
practice of medicine, Ehrenreich
only begins to probe the topic. Sta
tistics demonstrate that American
are abandoning proven medicine fo
"empowered" mind-body regimen
that may sound promising but hav
not been clinically validated, and, i

ıe cases, have even been clinical-
efuted.
On the national stage, the risks and
ts of positive thinking are magnified.
ıders possessed of boundless but
eless hope may rush to judgment,
ssing important details, expecting
vado to decide nuanced geopoliti-
issues. This explains why the hope
l confidence that starts wars can-
t necessarily finish them.

ve Salerno
ıcungie, Penn.

Barbara Ehrenreich's essay is based
the antiquated concept of a mind-
dy dichotomy, as famously champi-
ed by René Descartes. Throughout
e last hundred years, however, sci-
ce has shown this dichotomy to be
illusion: Mind does influence body
ıd vice versa), and you *can* worry
ırself sick. Ehrenreich asserts that an
ıpathy deficit" leads to "harsh in-
tence on positivity in others." I am
ry that while struggling with cancer
e had this experience, but it's a mis-
ke to extend it to the whole of soci-
y. Science suggests that happiness
n be learned (along with its sibling
ontentment") and that it positively
fluences your physical health. Re-
rdless of the many problems that we
l must face, why not learn to be as
ppy as possible?

lward Korczynski
ın Jose, Calif.

Barbara Ehrenreich makes the
ılid point that hope, or mere posi-
ve thinking, doesn't heal and may
:tually do more harm than good.
hristian Science, however, was in-
:curately characterized as positive
ınking. To Christian Scientists,
ıd I am one, positive thinking does
ot heal; rather, a spiritual realiza-
on of God's control and omnipo-
ent goodness causes practical
ıanges in one's life. Christian Sci-
ıtists do not ignore problems or say
everything's fine" when it is not.

hil Davis
oston

Ticket to Ride

William T. Vollmann's January
etter on train-hopping, "Catching Out," illustrates the danger and discomfort facing people who choose to trespass illegally on tracks and trains. Unfortunately, it also perpetuates the myth that this activity is somehow a noble pursuit. When adventure turns to tragedy, the story has a much different ending. More than 800 Americans are injured or killed each year while trespassing on railroad property. No doubt many thought they were engaged in an innocent, albeit risky, activity. For the cost of a ticket, *Harper's Magazine* readers can view the landscape without the greater risk of death or injury that comes with illegal train travel.

Helen M. Sramek
Operation Lifesaver, Inc.
Alexandria, Va.

Plus Jamais

Harper's obviously intended for the title of the February reading on France's use of torture during the Algerian War, "Jamais Encore," to mean "never again." Although *jamais* often translates as "never," and *encore* as "again," taken together, *jamais encore* means "never yet." In French, "never again" is instead conveyed by the phrase *plus jamais*.

Jean-Pierre Émond
Montreal, Canada

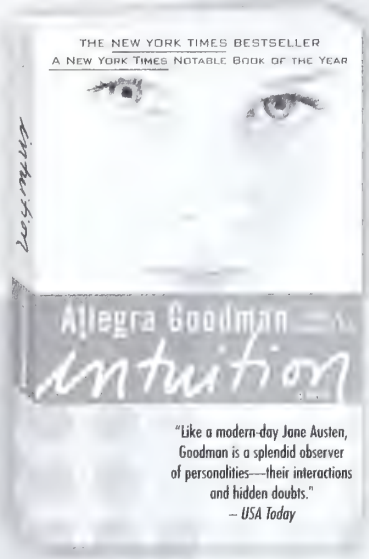
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NOTEBOOK

Driverless

By Bernard Avishai

In late November, I visited the campus of Al-Quds University in Abu Dis, an eastern suburb of Jerusalem, to attend an international conference on Palestinian refugees. Numbers are hard to validate, but it is widely accepted that 5 million survivors and descendants of the 750,000 Arabs who fled (or were chased out of) Israel during the 1948 war, as well as the 500,000 who were displaced in 1967, remain refugees. Of those registered refugees living outside the Palestinian Authority, about two thirds are in Jordan, where most qualify for citizenship, and 25 percent are evenly divided between Syria and Lebanon, where they generally do not. Palestinians will tell you that the right of return to their homes is sacred. As many as 40 percent of the refugee families still live in squalid camps, in leaking houses of cracked concrete and tin roofs. According to American University of Beirut sociologist Sari Hanafi, only a small percentage of camp dwellers marry people from the outside; the camps, he argues, are like bones misplaced in muscle, with no "connective tissue" to the urban centers where real life happens.

Israelis will tell you the refugee camps are just breeding grounds for Palestinian revanchist fantasies and should have been integrated into the Arab states two generations ago, the way Israel incorporated 600,000 Jewish refugees from neighboring countries. The Palestinian claim of a right to "their homes" is intolerable, even for veteran Israeli peace activists like the writer Amos Oz. Jews have resisted being thrown into the sea, so should they now choose to be swamped? Does not the refugees' right of return contradict Israel's right to exist? The problem would seem intractable.

Bernard Avishai is a consulting editor of the Harvard Business Review and the author of The Tragedy of Zionism. His last article for Harper's Magazine, "Saving Israel from Itself," appeared in the January 2005 issue.

The drive to Al-Quds University should take no more than fifteen minutes from my apartment in the German Colony. It is on the next scatter of hills south of the Augusta Victoria Hospital, where Arab residents of this part of Jerusalem typically go for medical treatment. But it took almost fifty-five minutes in light traffic, since Abu Dis is now formally assigned to the territory of the Palestinian Authority and is just behind the "security fence" that snakes through Jerusalem and the West Bank. To get to Abu Dis—to find a checkpoint through the fence—we had to drive around the burgeoning Jewish suburb of Ma'ale Adumim several miles to the north. Imagine going from Wall Street to NYU via the Upper West Side. Imagine making the trip to the hospital from Abu Dis when the traffic is heavy, your identity card says you are no longer a resident of Jerusalem, the checkpoint guard got up on the wrong side of the bed, and your wife is in labor. It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "right of return."

I finally got to the conference building—as it happens, a stone's throw from the fence and its defiant graffiti. The two featured speakers of the morning were Saeb Erekat, the intense, perennial Palestinian "chief negotiator," still close to (and bringing greetings from) PA President Mahmoud Abbas, and Nabil Sha'ath, perhaps the most affable diplomat of the old brain trust around Yasir Arafat. Sha'ath had managed the Palestinian negotiating team on refugees at the peace summit at Taba, the Egyptian resort town on the Red Sea, in January 2001. That summit, undertaken while the Al-Aqsa intifada burned in the background, was the last time Israelis and Palestinians formally tried to come to a "final status" agreement within the framework of the 1993 Oslo Accords. At the time, Bill Clinton had just surrendered the presidency, but his bridging parameters, negotiated in Washington in December 2000 and meant to close the gap that had emerged between Ehud Barak and Arafat at the failed Camp David talks six months before, served as the agenda. Israeli negotiators had reported progress, but the summit was rushed because of an impending Israeli election, in which Barak was widely expected to take a beating from Ariel Sharon.

Erekat spoke passionately. Using Arafat's marquee phrase, he called for the "peace of the brave," the release of prisoners on both sides: "a comprehensive calm—no Palestinian missiles, no Israeli shells." He did not consider the refugees but rebuked "forces that sow division"—namely Hamas, which had accused Abbas's Fatah party of having forgotten the refugees. He acknowledged that Hamas had been democratically elected but warned the party not to bypass the PLO, the national umbrella, which Fatah still controlls.

After almost a year of Hamas trying [illegible] prompting international financial sanctions, political isolation, and so on—the PA was now stuck with tens of thousands of unpaid teachers, police, and

other civil servants. Fatah was rising steadily in the polls and now seemed assured a majority in any new election. The air was buzzing with talk of a "unity" government, led by Fatah's own Abbas, and of the urgency of his meeting with Hamas's Khaled Meshal to avoid civil war. (They finally reached agreement on a unity government in Mecca on February 8, but it is not yet clear whether its terms, including a cautiously worded call to "respect" the PLO's previous agreements with Israel, will end Western sanctions.)

Whatever Sha'ath's real mission at the conference, he seemed to give encouragement to new negotiations by claiming that the past negotiations at Taba had almost succeeded and implying that Hamas was only making a bad situation worse. He did not disappoint. The refugee negotiations at Camp David got nowhere, Sha'ath said, because the Israelis had been stalling. But at Taba, he said, refugees were not shunted aside, and their troubles would have been resolved according to a number of "modalities." He roared them out in bullet form: There would be financial compensation for lost property. There would be paid relocation to the Palestinian state. There would be contributions by donor countries, and even by Israel, to that state. (One economist present cheerfully put the amount of reparations at $137 billion.) There would even be a program of limited family reunification in Israel, up to a number "acceptable to the Israeli government," say 10,000 a year over five years. Nobody could say justice of a kind was not being exacted.

When Sha'ath finished, however, the applause was merely polite. It was as if everybody had heard it all before. And, of course, we had. For these "modalities" were entirely familiar, basically identical to the principles that had been incorporated into the Geneva Initiative, a document signed by a team of Israeli and Palestinian politicians, writers (including Oz), and others, in October 2003. Geneva's organizers, Yossi Beilin, the former Israeli justice minister, and former PA Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, had both been at Taba and wanted to complete its work. Their document amounted to a comprehensive peace deal:

There would be a Palestinian state established in the West Bank and Gaza, joined by a bridge or tunnel, and using the 1967 borders as the starting point. Land swaps (e.g., from the Negev to Gaza) would allow densely populated Jewish settlements around Jerusalem and Hebron, some 150,000 people, to be annexed to Israel, but Israel would evacuate Jewish settlements on the hills around major Palestinian cities. (Of all major urban settlements, only Ariel in the north and Qiryat Arba in the south would be evacuated, since access to them required long fingers of land to jut into Palestine, making a contiguous state impossible.) Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, including those in the Old City, would be absorbed into the Palestinian state, with the Haram al-Sharif and its mosques coming under Palestinian sovereignty. The Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall would stay under Israeli sovereignty. International forces, mainly under U.N. auspices, would help police the Old City and the shared border. Israel would maintain a three-year security presence in the Jordan Valley, and security cooperation under U.S. mediation would continue beyond that date.

That was the deal—that's still the deal—and Sha'ath could only restate it. The refugee problem, which was supposed to prompt new study and declarations of steadfastness, was actually resolved four years ago. The border was resolved. Jerusalem was resolved. The placement of international forces was resolved. As King Abdullah of Jordan put it recently, "You have the road map, you have Taba, you have the Geneva Accord. So, we don't have to go back to the drawing board." According to a December poll, more than half of Israelis and about half of Palestinians already accept the terms of this agreement. And Abdullah might have added that we also have the Saudi plan, adopted by the Arab League summit in March 2002, declaring that all regional states will simultaneously recognize Israel in return for the 1967 border Geneva calls for. I put the matter point-blank to Sha'ath. Had the Palestinian Authority formally accepted the terms of the Geneva Initiative? "Well, that depends who we're talking to," he told me. "If I were talking to current Israeli negotiat and I said I accepted Geneva, th would say, 'Great, let's start from th and negotiate a compromise.' If I w talking to Beilin, the attitude wou be different. It would b short negotiation."

This raises a vexing question: the framework for a full peace h been negotiated, why are we st killing each other? The short answ is the vendetta logic of violence self: the Oslo process was supposed yield, first, a period of confiden building, and second, final status tal to produce an agreement. What h actually taken place since 2000 is, fir a final status agreement, and secon the catastrophic erosion of any con dence to implement it: pro-settl provocations, suicide bombings, a sassinations, missiles, shells, hollo ultimatums—and then Lebanon.

But there is a long answer, which that nothing stands in the way of a agreement, except for a reciprocal r luctance of Israeli Prime Minister Ehu Olmert and Palestinian President Ab bas, both openly committed to a two state peace such as Geneva advance to act boldly in the face of righteou domestic opposition. Fatah's wariness Hamas—its shows of force and errati exploitation of international pressur to gain the upper hand—is only on side of the equation. Olmert, too, has a opposition: several hundred thousan settlers in the West Bank and aroun Jerusalem, ultra-orthodox parties, Russ ian immigrant hawks, combat officer nervous about losing "deterrent pow er." He is understandably reluctant t take them on for the sake of a peac process that could at any time be sub verted by either the Palestinians' weak ness or their "unity."

In any case, given Olmert's im pulsive performance during the Lebanon war, his political survival is hardly assured. His approval ratings hover somewhere around 15 per cent. For most of his career, Olmert has professed an attachment to Greater Israel, and everybody knows that he favored pulling out of Gaza mainly because he thought this would make it easier to unilaterally annex large parts of East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Nevertheless, the government
nert (or his successor) will lead un-
2010 is not resisting a deal like
neva for ideological reasons. This
y be the most pragmatic govern-
nt Israel has ever had, for the elites
it organized this government have
de a huge bet on Israel's economic
balization. They are counting on
els of growth like that of the Asian
gers to mitigate ugly inequalities—
air a dysfunctional educational sys-
n and integrate Israel's own increas-
gly restive Arab minority, who make
one fifth of the country. The econ-
ıy is booming at the moment, but
growth is led by hundreds of software
mpanies, components companies,
d so forth, which need to have open
ırkets in Europe and Asia, where
out half of Israel's foreign exports
. Another war, or the revival of the
ifada—leading to a shunning of Is-
elis—will send the economy south
d the elite's children west.

The great challenge is to get each
e—Israel and Palestine—to trust in
mething without having to trust the
her. What the Israeli prime minis-
needs is a dose of what the Pales-
ıian president has been getting: great
wers forcing the issue, bringing the
les to an endgame that leaders and
ajorities will accept and do not have
e courage to "sow division" over.
radoxically, the last thing Israel needs
exactly what Olmert has been asking
—the gradualism of the road map
thout pressure, a free hand to deal
th "terror," more confidence-building
easures. The only thing that will build
nfidence today is a clear commit-
ent of Americans and Europeans to
lefinite plan like Geneva. In the ab-
nce of such a plan, Olmert and Ab-
ıs become hostages to every Islamist
rrorist or hard-line Israeli officer who
akes the decision to pursue "mili-
nts." Olmert must be able to say what
bbas has been compelled to say to
ıose who oppose him: "You are alien-
ing the world. We have to choose
etween our old dreams and Ameri-
can support. Our economy
cannot survive isolation."

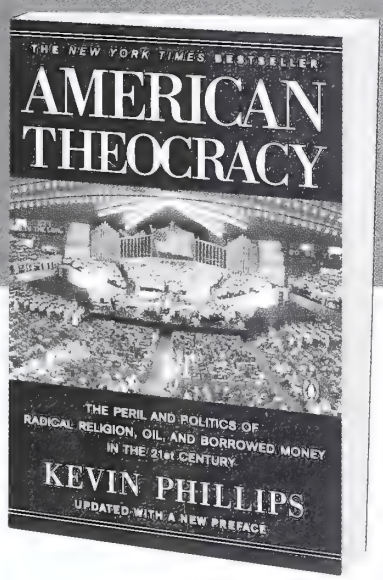
It need hardly be said that the Bush
dministration, friends to the end, do
ot subscribe to this view. Secretary
State Condoleezza Rice has spoken vaguely of bilateral negotiations moving to a "political horizon." She is reportedly looking again at Geneva. But how to get from talk about process to talk about a deal? Rice, like her boss, seems to believe mostly in evil people being beaten into joining, or in an ownership diplomacy in which the U.S. speaks best by speaking least. As I write, she has left Jerusalem after an inconclusive Olmert-Abbas summit. "The real value here was that they sat down to talk with each other," Rice said. In January, however, newspapers reported that informal (and, by all accounts, productive) negotiations between Israelis and Syrians had been curtailed due to administration disapproval. States that abet terror must stand in the corner.

But as we approach the U.S. primary season, the world-famous fatuousness of the Bush Administration is not the only danger. What "electable" Democratic presidential candidate in 2004 even raised the question of West Bank settlements? American Jews are more dependable contributors to the Democratic Party than almost any other "demographic," and elections are still fought largely by brand managers. What consultant will allow a candidate to prejudge the outcome of Israel's negotiations or limit Israel's freedom of action? Will Barack Obama risk stories about Jews in New York or Los Angeles questioning his friendliness to Israel? Will Hillary Clinton risk endorsing "bridging parameters" that carry her own name? Think of the reaction to Jimmy Carter's recent book.

Clinton's statements on the matter are especially unsatisfying, given how far her husband took the negotiation process in 2000. If she endorsed his proposals, which yielded the Geneva Initiative, she'd liberate the Democratic field to do the same. Instead, she told the Council on Foreign Relations in October 2006 that there is "no reliable partner on the Palestinian side," that progress depends on Hamas recognizing Israel, which America must remain in "close coordination with"—in all, a policy as cunningly opaque as the circles around Richard Perle's eyes. The point is, the road map leads, if anywhere, to Geneva. With no American driver, the wars continue. Do we need new refugees to tell us where that leads? ■

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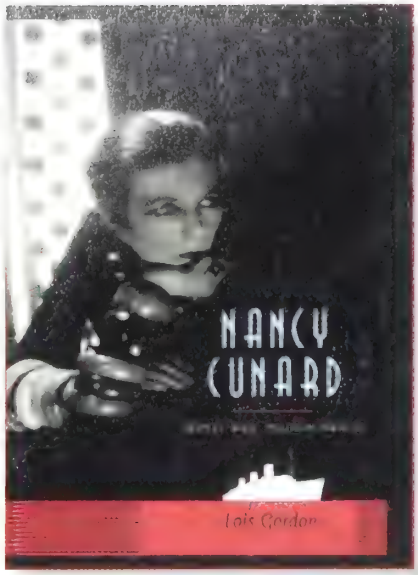
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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage of American adults held in either prisons or mental institutions in 1953 and today, respectively : 0.67, 0.68
Percentage of these adults in 1953 who were in mental institutions : 75
Percentage today who are in prisons : 97
imated amount that U.S. adults who grew up poor cost the economy each year through increased crime : $170,000,000,000
Estimated amount they cost the economy through higher health care costs : $160,000,000,000
Number of state prisoners per 100,000 who die behind bars each year : 250
Number for the general population aged 15 to 64 : 308
Factor by which the overall death rate for U.S. blacks aged 15 to 64 exceeds the rate for blacks in state prisons : 2
Ratio of the number of poor Americans living in cities to the number living in suburbs : 10:11
Number of bathrooms in John Edwards's new North Carolina home : 11
Number of vehicles in the motorcade that transports President Bush to his regular bike ride in Maryland : 14
ercentage of G.O.P. House and Senate members in an April 2006 poll who believed humans are causing climate change : 23
Percentage who believed this in January 2007 : 16
Number of local Republican officials who have been investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice since 2001 : 37
Number of local Democratic officials who have been : 262
Change since 2002 in the average number of hours that the IRS devotes to each audit of a large company : –252
Average amount of unpaid tax the IRS discovers for each hour spent auditing a large or medium-sized company : $5,195
Word count of the combined U.S. federal tax regulation in 1995 : 7,652,000
Word count today : 9,097,000
atio in 1999 of the number of U.S. federal employees to the number of private employees on government contracts : 15:6
Ratio last year : 14:15
Fine paid in 2006 by a company building the U.S. border fence, in a guilty plea for hiring illegal immigrants : $4,700,000
Total value of U.S. government contracts in 2000 that were handed out without competitive bidding : $91,000,000,000
Total last year : $170,900,000,000
Amount by which the salary of Judge Judy exceeds the salaries of all nine Supreme Court justices combined : $26,000,000
Chances that a U.S. institutional investor thinks that corporate executives are "dramatically overpaid" : 9 in 10
Chances that a director of a U.S. corporation does : 3 in 5
Number of U.S. universities in 1996 and last year, respectively, that had endowments over $1 billion : 20, 62
Rank of the People's Bank of China among the world's most profitable banks last year : 1
Maximum body-mass index that China now allows for any foreigner adopting a Chinese infant : 39
Maximum number of divorces that prospective parents can have between them : 2
Percentage of all Guatemalan infants who are adopted by Americans : 1
Estimated number of babies who have been created so far through in vitro fertilization : 3,000,000
Estimated number of Americans who die each year as a result of doctors' sloppy handwriting : 7,000
Number of times that the title of "world's oldest person" changed hands in January : 3
Average number of years that Nobel Prize–winners in chemistry or physics live longer than those merely nominated : 2
Number of the world's top ten English-language Scrabble players who are not native English speakers : 3
Score by which a software program called Quackle beat a former Scrabble champion in a tiebreaker last winter : 482–465
Cost to make the film *Zyzzyx Road*, which was released last year : $1,200,000
Amount it grossed at the U.S. box office : $30

Figures cited are the latest available as of February 2007. Sources are listed on page 75.
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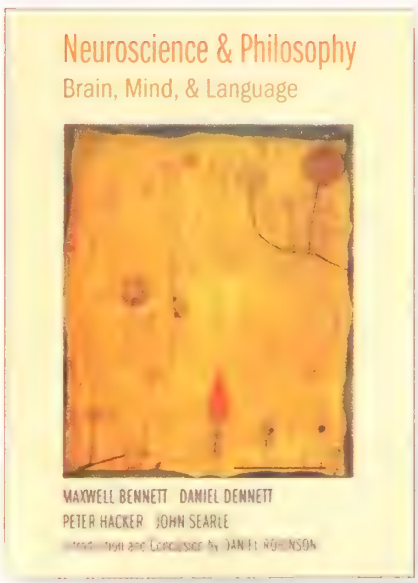
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READINGS

[Testimony]

THE UNCONTAINED WAR

Adapted from remarks by Zbigniew Brzezinski, delivered February 1 at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Brzezinski, who served as national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, is currently a professor of foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University. His book Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower *was published last month by Perseus.*

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: It is time for the White House to come to terms with two central realities. First, the war in Iraq is a historic, strategic, and moral calamity undertaken under false assumptions. It is undermining America's global legitimacy. Its collateral civilian casualties, as well as some abuses, are tarnishing America's moral credentials. Driven by Manichaean impulses and imperial hubris, it is intensifying regional instability. Secondly, only a political strategy that is historically relevant rather than reminiscent of colonial tutelage can provide the needed framework for a tolerable resolution of both the war in Iraq and intensifying regional tensions. If the United States continues to be bogged down in a protracted, bloody involvement in Iraq—and I emphasize what I am about to say—the final destination on this downhill track is likely to be a head-on conflict with Iran, and with much of the world of Islam at large.

A plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran involves Iraqi failure to meet benchmarks, followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure, then by some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the United States blamed on Iran, culminating in a "defensive" U.S. military action against Iran that plunges a lonely America into a spreading and deepening quagmire, eventually ranging across Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Indeed, a mythical historical narrative to justify the case for such a protracted and expanding war is already being articulated. Initially justified by false claims about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the war is now being redefined as the decisive ideological struggle of our time, reminiscent of the earlier collisions with Nazism and Stalinism. In that context, Islamist extremism and Al Qaeda are presented as the equivalents of the threats posed by Nazi Germany and then Soviet Russia, and 9/11 as the equivalent of the Pearl Harbor attack that precipitated America's involvement in World War II. This simplistic and demagogic narrative overlooks the fact that Nazism was based on the military power of the industrially most advanced European state, and that Stalinism was able to mobilize not only the resources of the victorious and militarily powerful Soviet Union but also had worldwide appeal through its Marxist doctrine.

In contrast, most Muslims are not embracing Islamic fundamentalism. Al Qaeda is an isolated Islamist aberration, and most Iraqis are engaged in strife because of the American occupation, which destroyed the Iraqi state,

while Iran, though gaining in regional influence, is itself politically divided, economically and militarily weak. To argue that America is already at war in a region with a wider Islamic threat of which Iran is the epicenter is to promote a self-fulfilling prophecy. Practically no country in the world—no country in the world—shares the Manichaean delusions that the administration so passionately articulates. And the result, sad to say, is growing political isolation of and pervasive popular antagonism toward the U.S. global posture.

Hence the urgent need today for a strategy that seeks to create a political framework for a resolution of the problems posed both by the U.S. occupation of Iraq and by the ensuing civil and sectarian conflict. Ending the occupation and shaping a regional security dialogue should be the mutually reinforcing goals of such a strategy, but both goals will take time and require genuine U.S. commitment. The quest to achieve these goals should involve four steps.

First, the United States should reaffirm explicitly and unambiguously its determination to leave Iraq in a reasonably short period of time. Ambiguity regarding the duration of the occupation encourages unwillingness to compromise and intensifies the underlying civil strife. Moreover, such a public declaration is needed to allay fears in the Middle East of a new and enduring American imperial hegemony. Right or wrong, many view the establishment of such a hegemony as the primary reason for the American intervention in a region only recently free of colonial domination. That perception should be discredited from the highest U.S. level. Perhaps the U.S. Congress could do so by a joint resolution.

Second, the United States should announce that it is undertaking talks with the Iraqi leaders to set with them a date by which U.S. military disengagement should be completed, and the resulting setting of such a date should be announced as a joint decision. In the meantime, the U.S. should avoid military escalation. It is necessary to engage all the Iraqi leaders, including those who do not reside within the U.S.-controlled area of Baghdad. The painful reality is that much of this current Iraqi regime, characterized by the administration as representative of the Iraqi people, defines itself largely by its physical location: the four-square-mile U.S. fortress within Baghdad, protected by a wall in places fifteen feet thick, manned by the heavily armed U.S. military, popularly known as the Green Zone.

Third, the United States should issue jointly with appropriate Iraqi leaders, or perhaps let the Iraqi leaders issue, an invitation to all neighbors of Iraq, and perhaps some other Muslim countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Pakistan, to engage in a dialogue regarding how best to enhance stability in Iraq in conjunction with U.S. military disengagement and to participate eventually in a conference on regional stability. Such discussions cannot be undertaken while the U.S. is perceived as an occupier for an indefinite duration. The setting of a date for departure would trigger a much higher probability of an effective regional dialogue because no country in the region wants to see an escalating disintegration in the region as a whole. Iran and Syria have no reason to help the United States consolidate a permanent regional hegemony. It is ironic, however, that both Iran and Syria have lately called for a regional dialogue, exploiting thereby the self-defeating

[Tale]

THE LION OF KABUL

By Laurence Wright, from "My Trip to Al-Qaeda," a monologue based on his experiences researching The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11. *The one-man show is playing this month at the Culture Project, in New York City. Wright is a staff writer for* The New Yorker.

There was once a fine zoo in Kabul. Like everything in Afghanistan, it had suffered from twenty-five years of warfare, but the animals themselves, although neglected, had not been targeted. Families still came with their children until the Taliban took over the capital.

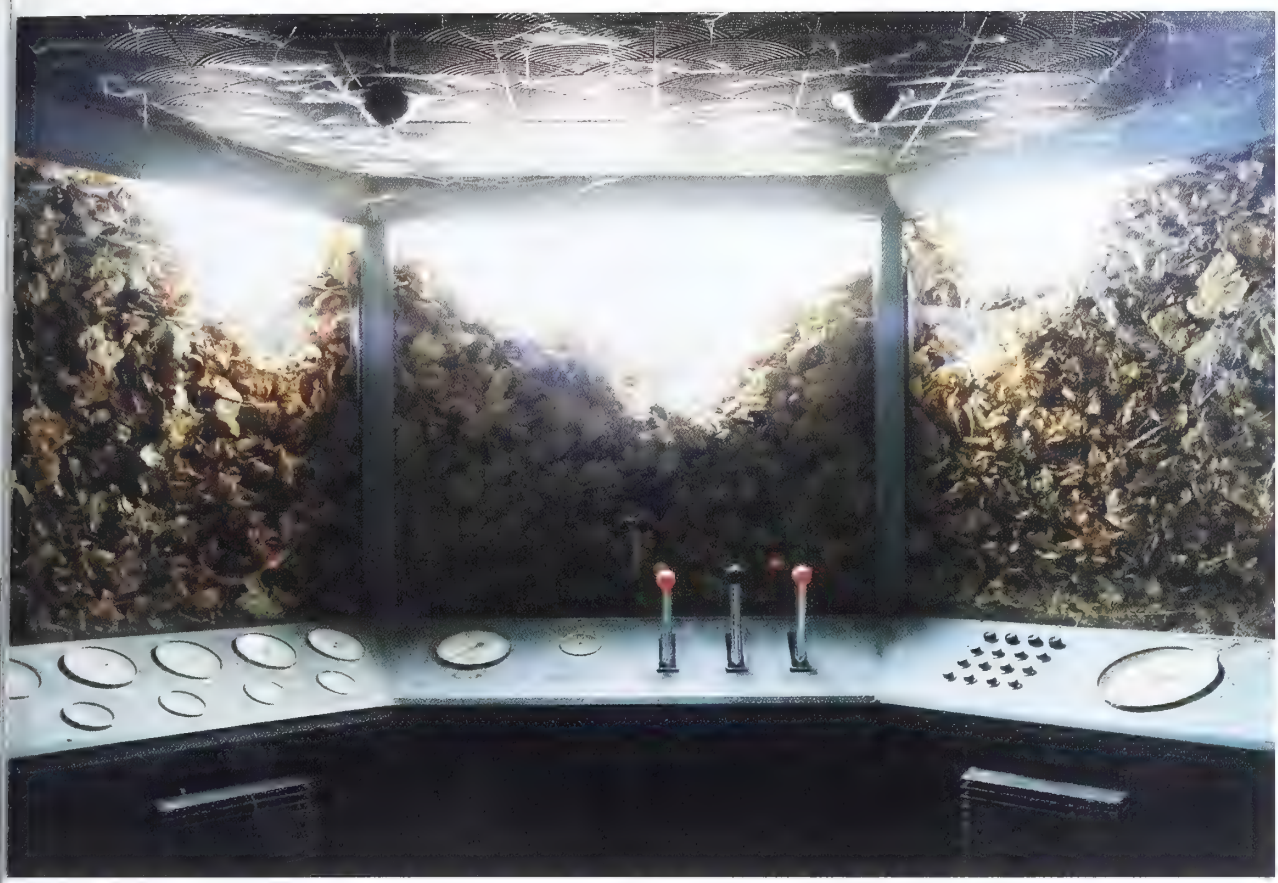
These are, surely, the most humble constituents—caged animals—entirely dependent on human government for their care. When the Taliban stormed into the city, a group of fighters entered the zoo. One of them leaped into the lion's den. There was a single elderly lion named Marjan. The fighter cried, "Who is the lion now?"

The real lion bit his arm off.

Another fighter saw what was happening and threw a hand grenade into the den, blinding the lion.

They went through the zoo, randomly killing animals. One of them cut the nose off a bear because, he said, his beard wasn't long enough.

Only three animals survived Taliban rule—a wolf, the noseless bear, and Marjan the sightless lion.



Drift," by Anne Hardy, was on display last year at Maureen Paley, in London.

character of the largely passive and mainly sloganeering U.S. diplomacy. A serious regional dialogue, promoted directly or indirectly by the United States, could be buttressed at some point by a wider circle of consultations involving other powers with a stake in the region's stability, such as the E.U., China, Japan, India, and Russia.

Fourth, the United States should activate a credible and energetic effort to reach an Israeli-Palestinian peace, making it clear in the process what the basic parameters of such a final accommodation ought to involve. The United States needs to convince the region that it is committed both to Israel's enduring security and to fairness for the Palestinians, who have waited decades for their own separate state. Only an external and activist intervention can promote the long-delayed settlement, for the record shows that the Israelis and the Palestinians will never do so on their own. Without such a settlement, both nationalist and fundamentalist passions in the region will, in the longer run, doom any Arab regime that is perceived as supportive of U.S. regional hegemony.

After World War II, the United States prevailed in the defense of democracy in Europe because it successfully pursued a long-term political strategy of uniting its friends and dividing its enemies, instead of dividing our friends and uniting our enemies, while soberly deterring aggression without initiating hostilities, all the while, also, exploring the possibility of negotiating arrangements. A similarly wise strategy of genuinely constructive political engagement is now urgently needed in the Middle East. It is time for the Congress to assert itself.

SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR. (D., DEL.): Thank you very much. The argument the president is making is that the conflict with Islam intensifies if we withdraw. You're making the argument that continuing to be bogged down in Iraq is more likely to result in that outcome.

BRZEZINSKI: Conflict, by its very nature, is not self-containable. It either diminishes, because one side has prevailed or because there's an accommodation, or it escalates. If we could prevail militarily and in a decisive fashion, even

though I opposed the war, there would be a strong case to be made for it. But I think we know by now that to prevail we will need to have 500,000 troops in Iraq, wage the war with unlimited brutality, and altogether crush that society because it would probably intensify its resistance. So that's a nonstarter. Escalating the war as a consequence of protracting it is hardly an attractive option for the United States, because before too long, we could be facing a twenty-year-long involvement not only in Iraq but in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. And think how precarious Pakistan is and how uncertain the situation in Afghanistan is becoming. So it's in our interest to isolate the conflicts and to terminate them.

BIDEN: You're confident the present course will not succeed.

BRZEZINSKI: The situation is worsening, hostility toward the United States is intensifying, our isolation worldwide is both being perpetuated and in some respects becoming more culturally grounded. Now, I realize there are risks in a strategy whereby the goal is to find an outcome other than a military victory. But at the same time, we shouldn't become prisoners of apocalyptic and horrific scenarios, in some respects reminiscent of those described and drawn in the latter phases of the Vietnam War, scenarios that did not take place. I'm not sure that if we were to disengage from Iraq that the consequence would be this kind of horrific set of dominoes falling all over the Middle East.

BIDEN: Give me your assessment of the present threat that Iran poses in the region and what a continued protracted American presence in Iraq will do to impact that assessment, whether they grow weaker, stronger, et cetera.

BRZEZINSKI: I think some form of American presence in Iraq is going to be a fact, assuming even a political settlement. But it will not be the same as a military occupation and a political hegemony imposed by a militarily successful campaign. In this context, Iran—

BIDEN: Do you think that establishing a presence in Iraq was the objective of this administration initially?

BRZEZINSKI: I have no idea what the president's initial objective was because the motives he provided for the action proved to be entirely erroneous, and if they were the real motives, then the whole campaign was based on false assumptions.

BIDEN: It's unfair to ask you to be a soothsayer. I apologize.

BRZEZINSKI: Now, if there were hidden motives, I can imagine several. One would be to gain American domination over the region's oil, to put it very simplistically. Another could be to help maximize Israel's security by removing a powerful Arab state. Another one could have been simply to get rid of an obnoxious regime with which the United States had accounts to settle

[Calculation]

SOUND OFF

From January 18 testimony by William Odom, a retired three-star Army general and former director of the National Security Agency, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. General Joseph Hoar, former chief of U.S. Central Command, who also testified, cited a September poll that found that 61 percent of Iraqis approve of attacking coalition forces.

We in the military try to do order of battle—that is, figure out how many enemies are against us. One of the great problems in Vietnam, Central America, and other places where we had client states dealing with insurgencies was a failure to look at the order of battle beyond the boundaries.

We face, maximum, 26 million Iraqis. They're not all against us, but, as General Hoar said, 61 percent are for attacking us. Others are not happy to have us there. So the potential order of battle on the other side is several million, against our 150,000 or 160,000 after the surge.

We should also include a large portion of the Iranians. They're not in there big time now—they could get in. So when you start adding troops to change the order of battle, you've got to think of the many other sides involved and their capacity to change the order of battle.

You can be sure that the so-called moderate Arab states are not benignly sitting aside and watching this. I cannot believe that resources are not flowing from some of them into the Sunni coffers—certainly from Syria.

So when you add up who we could be facing—we could be facing several states, populations in states where the regime may be on our side but the public is not—scores of millions against us. That's just not a good situation to be in.

going back to '91, including the alleged assassination attempt against President Bush Senior. There could be a variety of motives. But the official motives were weapons of mass destruction.

BIDEN: I interrupted you before. What is the basis of your concluding that Iran is politically divided, economically and militarily weak?

BRZEZINSKI: It is economically weak because it is an economy that hasn't been thriving, and it's one-dimensional and relatively isolated. It's politically divided in the sense that, in my judgment, the mullahs are Iran's past and not its future and that its fundamentalist regime is not very popular—particularly with the younger generation, much of which is very pro-American.

But, sadly, it is also more united nationalistically, in part because of our attitude toward Iran, which has been exceedingly hostile and which has gelled together a kind of residual national sentiment, particularly in support of the nuclear program. And I think our policy has unintentionally—I hope unintentionally; maybe it was devilishly clever, but I think unintentionally—helped Ahmadinejad consolidate himself in power and exercise a degree of influence that his position doesn't actually justify. Most Americans, when they say President Ahmadinejad, think he's the equivalent of President Bush. He's not. He's roughly a third-level official who doesn't even control the military resources of the country.

SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR (R., IND.): Dr. Brzezinski, you've called for U.S. military disengagement, but this would be jointly set with the Iraqi leadership. So the rush—the Vietnam embassy is given as symbolic, with the helicopter lifting the last persons out—this is obviously not what we're talking about here. I want to ask, given the fact that the amount of government anywhere in Iraq is, in some cases, minimal at this point—one of the effects of our invasion and military operations is that not only did the army disintegrate, so did the police force, so did almost any coercive ability to bring about order—the period of rebuilding is likely to be very long, and it's not clear who helps do this rebuilding, aside from us.

BRZEZINSKI: The problem is we have smashed this state. We have given an enormous opportunity for narrow sectarian interests and passions to rise. What is needed again is a sense of Iraqi nationalism, and that residually still exists. But to make it possible, it has to be led by Iraqi leaders who are viewed by their country as authentic. And, I'm sorry to say, the leadership sitting in an American fortress, which doesn't venture outside, is not very authentic. The authentic leaders are those who have their own bodyguards—indeed, their own militias—and their own capacities to assert power. They have to be engaged in a dialogue and then in the solution—a political solution.

Now, as far as dealing with the rebuilding of Iraq in a setting in which we commit ourselves to disengage, and the commitment to disengage, set jointly, becomes the trigger for an international conference, a great deal depends not on us engaging in nation-building but on the surfacing of a genuine Iraqi motivation. I personally view with great skepticism all this talk about us creating an Iraqi national army and creating a nation.

My horror scenario is that if we simply stay put, this war will continue, and the dynamic of the conflict will produce an escalating situation in which Iraqi failure to meet benchmarks will be blamed on the Iranians. There'll be, then, some clashes, collisions, and the war expands. My horror scenario is not a repetition of Saigon—the helicopters on top of the embassy and the flight out of the country. I understand that the possibility has been raised by my friend Henry Kissinger that the administration has a secret plan—my fear is that the secret plan is that there is no secret plan.

[Tradecraft]

CTRL-ALT-DECEIT

From a "Generalized Evangelism Timeline" admitted as evidence in Comes *v.* Microsoft, *an ongoing Iowa state class action suit. The plaintiffs allege that Microsoft engaged in illegal monopolization and other anticompetitive conduct. Microsoft internal documents define evangelism as "the art and science of getting developers to ship products that support Microsoft's platforms."*

Guerrilla marketing is often a long, hard slog. In the Slog, Microsoft dukes it out with the competition. Evangelism should avoid formal, frontal assaults, instead focusing its efforts on hit-and-run tactics. The elements of the evangelical infrastructure—conference presentations, books, magazine articles, white papers, etc.—should start hitting the street at the start of the Slog. They should be so numerous as to push all other books off the shelf and presentations off the stage.

Working behind the scenes to orchestrate "independent" praise of our technology is a key evangelism function. "Independent" analysts' reports

[Demonstration]

ROOKED

In "Nedap/Groenendaal ES3B Voter Computer Security Analysis," a paper posted in October on the website of the Dutch organization Wij vertrouwen stemcomputers niet, or We Do Not Trust Voting Computers, which in September acquired two ES3B voting machines manufactured by Nedap and Groenendaal, the leading makers of voting machines in the Netherlands, to analyze their security features.

Dutch election law requires physical keys to be used as part of an electronic voting system. The same key is used on all ES3B machines in the country. Spare keys can be ordered separately online for roughly a euro each. We ordered, paid for, and were subsequently supplied with a hundred of these keys without any problem. Even if spare keys were not so readily available, this type of lock can be opened with a bent paper clip.

After taking the system apart, photographing everything, and dumping the contents of the memory, we installed the election sofware on a notebook PC running Windows and hooked up the reader unit. After some experimentation, we could configure a new election, parties, candidates, and a polling station. We could then program the ballot memory module that carries the list of parties and candidates to the voting computer. After we inserted it in the voting computer, we could cast votes, close the election, and print the results. The software has a "maintenance mode" that is supposed to be accessible only to members of the Nedap election-day help desk. You need a password to get the software in this mode. A quick look in the binary revealed this password to be *geheim*, the Dutch word for "secret."

We claimed on our website that the Nedap could just as easily be programmed to play chess as to lie about the election results. We didn't think more of it until Nedap placed a document on their website to challenge our claim. It said: "And with regard to the claim that our machine can play chess: I'd like to see that demonstrated." So, obviously, one of our first goals was to make it play chess.

After learning roughly how the hardware worked, we then managed to compile and run Tom Kerrigan's Simple Chess Program (TSCP). The machine knows all the rules, and every now and then it can be surprisingly clever for what it is. But in all honesty, we have to admit that it does not play chess all that well.

should be issued, praising your technology and damning the competitors (or ignoring them). "Independent" consultants should write articles, give conference presentations, moderate stacked panels on our behalf, and set themselves up as experts in the new technology, available for just $200/hour. "Independent" academic sources should be cultivated and quoted (and granted research money). Every possible source of leverage should be sought and turned to our advantage.

I have mentioned the "stacked panel." Panel discussions naturally favor alliances of relatively weak partners—our usual opposition. For example, an "unbiased" panel would contain Apple, IBM, Novell, WordPerfect, etc. Thus, we find ourselves outnumbered in almost every "naturally occurring" panel debate. A stacked panel, on the other hand, is like a stacked deck: it is packed with people who, on the face of things, should be neutral but are in fact strong supporters of our technology.

The key to stacking a panel is being able to choose the moderator. Since you can't expect our competitors to speak on our behalf, you have to get the moderator to agree to having only "independent software vendors" on the panel. No one from Microsoft or any other formal backer of the competing technologies should be allowed—just ISVs who have to use this stuff in the "real world." Sounds marvelously independent, doesn't it? Get the press to cover this panel, and you've got a major win on your hands.

The best sources of pliable moderators are:

—Analysts: Analysts sell out—that's their business model. But they are very concerned that they never look like they are selling out, so that makes them prickly to work with.

—Consultants: These guys are your best bets as moderators. Get a well-known consultant on your side early on, but don't let him publish anything blatantly pro-Microsoft. Then get him to propose himself as a moderator to the conference organizers. Since he's well known but apparently independent, he'll be accepted—one less thing for the constantly overworked conference organizer to worry about, right?

Of course, if you are very, very lucky, there will be no competitors to your technology. But this is almost never the case. The existence of a Microsoft technology nearly guarantees that a competitive technology will spring into existence overnight, backed by an impromptu association of competitors who have decided to draw another Line in the Sand. ("If we don't stop Microsoft here, then they are going to take over the whole world!") Without a competing technology to fight, you just hand everything over to the Microsoft Developer Network and find a new technology to evangelize. But that takes most of the fun out of the game. :)



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"Hansaviertel, '53, Berlin," by Marc Räder, whose book Mallorca: Island in Progress *was published last month by Nazraeli Press.*

[Transcript]

CONAN AND THE BARBARIANS

From an audio recording of a private meeting held April 3, 2006, by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger with chief speechwriter Gary Delsohn and his staff. Last fall, a six-minute recording of such a meeting was provided to the Los Angeles Times *by the campaign of Schwarzenegger's Democratic challenger, Phil Angelides. In February, the California Highway Patrol exonerated the Angelides campaign of any wrongdoing in the matter after finding that the governor's office had posted several recordings to an unsecured part of its website. The governor's office then released transcripts covering more than three hours of meetings that were prepared for Delsohn's use in writing speeches for Schwarzenegger.*

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER: Do you go to Mexico and say, "Now we want to bring 200,000 in because 200,000 stayed here? That's your problem, Mexico. If your friends cannot return and work within the rules, then so be it." Do you go back then and chase them down? Do you then make them criminals for staying here? Do you put them in prison for staying here? Do we have the prison beds, and do we have the supervision to feed them and guard them and all of those things? Do you round them up? Do you send them back?

GARY DELSOHN: Those are the nitty-gritty detail questions that need to be answered in Washington.

SCHWARZENEGGER: You call it the "nitty-gritty detail," but that actually is the biggest issue. Because why? Because our government in 1986—

DELSOHN: The amnesty.

SCHWARZENEGGER: —has fucked the American people.

DELSOHN: Yeah, we've got twice as many illegals.

SCHWARZENEGGER: As a matter of fact, so much so that now it is almost like in Zimbabwe with the squatters. They come and land, you can't then get rid of them. You say, "Wait a minute, their kids are born here. You can't split up families." But

there are also things that only experts can answer, and I'm not an expert. Like for instance, do you believe in a 700-mile border fence? The question really is, "Look, what does this fence mean?" I come from a country where we had walls around castles, we had walls around houses, we had the Berlin Wall, we had walls everywhere. But we always looked at the wall and said, "Outside the wall is the enemy." Are we looking at Mexico as the enemy? No, these are our trading partners. So we're not looking at the Mexicans as terrorists, but there are many people that want to do us harm, not just be part of the golden dream.

DELSOHN: I've read a lot lately about how the Mexicans are assimilating more quickly, they do have family values, they're conservative.

SCHWARZENEGGER: You know something? It is changing, but in reality, there are certain things you can't say. And one of the things that is, I think, tough for the American people to digest is that Mexicans, because it's next door, are holding onto their tradition and to their language much longer than the Polish did when they came over here, the Germans and the Austrians when they came here, and the French when they came here, because back then you wanted to go and become part of America so quickly that you tried to learn the language. The older generation always had much more difficulty, as much as I have more difficulty getting up to speed with the computer. But my son is on the computer and everything, and he's much better in English than I am, and he's twelve years old. So that's just the way it is. But I made an effort. The Mexicans don't make that effort. Did you see they are building a Mexican shopping mall?

DELSOHN: You bet. Plaza de Mexico.

SCHWARZENEGGER: Which is like a growth. Literally I felt like I was in Mexico City, because I was there for months and months doing my movies. Everyone only spoke Spanish, every sign was in Spanish. They create a Mexico within California. It annoys people in America. They say, "Look, you want to come in here as a guest, then behave as if you are a guest." I always compare the country to a house. If you have someone coming to your home, he's going to say, "This family wakes up at six in the morning, and then they leave the house, or they go out running. If I stay here, I think I should get with the program." Because I'm not going to say, "Well, in my house, I sit there and I read all day, no matter what happens around me." Well, when you are a guest, you don't want to sit in a chair while everyone is working and keep reading your book because you love your novels. You get up and make an effort. "Let me go out and get flowers for the wife, for the lady of the house. I'm going to get her some flowers for doing all of this, with a little message on it." So you do certain things. But what do we see

[Notice]

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

From a letter by Sue Clark published in the February 3 issue of The Lancet. *Clark is a colorectal surgeon at St. Mark's Hospital in Harrow, England. A fistula-in-ano is an abnormal connection between the rectum and skin that can result in the discharge of feces through an opening other than the anus.*

I wish to bring to your attention difficulties one of my patients recently encountered entering the United States. He is a forty-eight-year-old man with a fistula-in-ano, managed with a long-term seton to control perianal sepsis. A seton consists of a length of suture material knotted to form a loop that lies in the fistula track. It passes through the fistula, out of the external opening beside the anus, into the anus, and re-enters the fistula through the internal opening. Various materials can be used; in this case the seton was made of a turquoise braided synthetic suture.

On arrival in New York last August for a holiday, the patient was interrogated by immigration officials, then examined and searched. The presence of the seton gave rise to much concern, I assume, because of a suspicion that a drug package or terrorist weapon was in some way attached to it. A rectal examination was done, during which the examining official pulled very hard on the seton, causing severe pain but fortunately not damaging the anal sphincter muscles it encircles.

The patient was refused entry into the country unless the seton was removed. Given the somewhat stark choice, he chose its removal, which was done by a doctor at the airport who claimed never to have come across one before. The patient now requires an examination under general anaesthetic to insert a replacement.

I thought I should highlight this rather bizarre manifestation of "homeland security," because I suspect that it might become a more frequent problem. I suggest that any patient with a seton who is planning to travel to the United States or any other country where he is likely to be searched in this manner should carry a letter from his specialist explaining the nature of his condition and treatment.

in return? We see protesters carrying the Mexican flag and stepping on the American flag. This is [illegible] when the students asked me about the protest, I said, "Go ahead, protest. But think about one thing. Don't break the law, and don't wave the Mexican flag. Wrong for America. America loves America. We love Mexico, and we go there on va[illegible]. We love to hear the mariachi music—all this stuff. But up here, for us to feel sympathetic toward you, you have to carry the American flag and say, 'We want to be part of you. We love you.'" So now imagine someone coming to your house because his house burned down next door. Because of the misery he went through, you say, "You can stay here for a week or two weeks until you get [illegible]." And that person comes out and says, "I'm not going to move anymore. You know something? I'm here to fucking stay."

[Welcome]

THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

From guidelines for recent immigrants to Canada, published in January by the municipality of Hérouxville, Quebec, a town of 1,300. Translated from the French by Rafil Kroll-Zaidi.

We wish, above all, to inform our new arrivals that the way of life they abandoned in leaving their country of origin cannot be reproduced here and that it is necessary for them to find a way to adapt to their new social identity.

We consider to be outside the norm all actions or gestures that are contrary to this pronouncement, such as the practice of stoning women to death in public places, burning them alive, burning them with acid, circumcising them, etc.

In all of our schools, the national history of Quebec is assigned. Biology, too.

You will see men and women skiing on the same mountain and at the same time. Men and women on the same hockey team and playing at the same time on the same ice. Men and women cross-country skiing at the same time.

In our families, if the children eat beef, they will not seek to know the provenance of the beef, or who killed it, or where, or in what manner, or on what day. In our families, that which is ingested [illegible] mouth is meant exclusively to nourish the body. The soul nourishes itself by other means.

[Depositions]

WHOEVER SPEAKS ILL OF US

From testimony taken in 1500 from witnesses of Christopher Columbus's reign in the New World, for an investigation ordered by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, who afterward ordered that Columbus be returned to Spain in chains. The depositions, discovered in 2005 by Isabel Aguirre in the Archivo General de Simancas, were published last August in The Fall of Christopher Columbus, *by Consuelo Varela, a Spanish historian. A celemín is a dry measurement equivalent to almost 5 liters. Translated from the Spanish by Josh Bergen.*

The Admiral said that turning the Indians into Christians was against the faith, and that our men were giving the chrism and holy oils to infidels who only converted to Christianity because they were also given clothes. If he wanted to give clothes to the Indians, the entire island would become Christian. The Admiral asked if his men wanted to see just why the Indians became Christians. He then had three Indians summoned and told them that he would give them cassocks and jerkins and shirts and that they would no longer have to go dig on the haciendas or do anything else if they became Christian. Even so, they said that they didn't want to.

Gonçalo Vizcaíno says he himself was impeded by the Admiral from converting an Indian woman he had in his house, and that if she had become Christian, her father, mother, and all the other savages would have. He claims Friar Ramón would have turned half the island Christian if it weren't for the Admiral, who preferred the price they brought as slaves to having noble Christians.

Teresa de Baeça and Ynés de Malaver said the Admiral and his brothers were from a line of weavers. Because of this, their tongues were cut off. When he heard that this had been done, the Admiral wrote a letter to the governor: "That which you have done is good, and whoever speaks ill of us deserves death, for that is the nature of the law."

The Admiral had nails run through the hand of a young lad named Arnalte in the public square because removing a basket of fish from the river, he had taken a fish.

The Admiral ordered Juan de Lúxan's throat slit because Lúxan was called a traitor and a sodomite.



Tuch, *by Matthias Weischer, was on view last year at Galerie EIGEN + ART, in Berlin.*

When "sodomite" was pronounced, Lúxan remained quiet, but when "traitor" was pronounced, he said it was a lie.

The Admiral had thirteen noteworthy men beaten in the streets, tied at the neck, their feet leashed together one behind the other, because, in hunger and in need, they had gone to the ships and bartered bits of gold for pieces of lard, bread, and some wine to drink. There was no other reason.

For stealing three or four *celemines* of wheat out of hunger, Luquetas was ordered beaten, and his nostrils and ears were cut off. He was shackled, proclaimed a slave, and sent to the bread ovens, where he stayed with his shackles for three years.

The Admiral ordered a woman to be set upon an ass and beaten, entirely naked. They beat her because she had said that she was pregnant and it was discovered not to be true.

[Plot]

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

From a February 6 posting by "Eric Hunt" to ZioPedia.org, a website that purports to collate "all there is to know about Zionism." On February 17, Eric Hunt, twenty-two, of Vernon, New Jersey, was arrested in connection with a February 1 assault on Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel at the Argent Hotel in San Francisco. Describing the incident in an interview in the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, *Wiesel said, "I feared for my life in a way that hadn't happened to me since 1945."*

On February 1, at approximately 7:30 P.M., I attempted to get a confession out of the "Pope of the Holocaust religion," Elie Wiesel.

We came in an elevator at the Argent Hotel in San Francisco. He was on his way to the thirty-sixth-floor penthouse. I had planned to bring Wiesel to my hotel room, where he would truthfully answer my questions regarding the fact that his nonfiction Holocaust memoir *Night* is almost entirely fictitious.

After ensuring no women would be traumatized by what I had to do (I had been trailing Wiesel for weeks), I stopped the elevator at the sixth floor. I pulled Wiesel out of the elevator. I said I wanted to interview him. He protested, grabbed at his chest as if he was having a heart attack. He then screamed—"HELP! HELP!"—at the top of his lungs. This is someone who in his public appearances speaks so softly that they had to use subtitles when he was a guest on *Oprah*. Wiesel had dropped this phony persona and assumed his actual personality, that of an insane lunatic. I asked him, "Why? You don't want people to know the truth?" His expression changed, and he began screaming again. So after pulling him about fifteen feet out of the elevator, I decided it was time for me to go. He was no use to our worldwide struggle for freedom if he had a heart attack. I fled from the scene, confident that the police would arrive soon and search the city looking for the insane person who forcefully attempted to interrogate a poor old "Holocaust survivor," Nobel Peace Prize winner, and, most recently, "Knight of the British Empire." I had planned on either getting Wiesel into my custody, with a cornered Wiesel finally forced to state the truth on videotape, getting arrested, or fleeing, and either way exposing him for being nothing but a genocidal liar. However, a funny thing happened—Wiesel apparently never called the police.

So I am reminded of the movie *Smokin' Aces*, in which a Jewish gangster is hiding at the top-floor penthouse in Lake Tahoe. Judaism is a crime family. It has been referred to as the "Kosher Nostra." Like the criminal he is, Wiesel knew not to call the police—because he should be in prison for the multiple perjuries he has committed under oath that have put innocent and honorable Germans through misery and death. What I am concerned about is that he will handle this much like the Mafia has been known to. Calling the police would expose him and his tribe once and for all for creating the myth of "The Holocaust," as the president of Iran has rightfully pointed out.

Every hour Wiesel refuses to take a lie detector test is the hour it takes to read *Night*. Every adult should walk into any public high school and demand to read a copy of the book their children are being brainwashed with. Read it and decide for yourself.

[Idyll]

COLIN KELLY'S KIDS

By Stanley Elkin, published last winter in New England Review. *Written after the author's heart attack in 1965, the typescript, among Elkin's papers at Washington University, in St. Louis, where he taught English, was edited by David C. Dougherty, who is writing a biography of Elkin. The author of ten novels, including* The Magic Kingdom, *Elkin died in 1995.*

This week they didn't have enough for a full team so they didn't call balls and strikes. By now, seven or eight weeks into the superb spring, the weather holding as if commanded by a thermostat, the grass as green as the top of a pool table, and not seeming, at least to him, even to grow, each blade a fat, ideal scimitar, a field of tapered harmless scimitars, the sky blue and clear as Windex. By now his fifth Saturday, and the others used to him, so used to him he wept in gratitude and thanked God, not since the first week, using him only as a pinch hitter, or since the second, offering him runners, or the third, compromising him with high, soft pitches that hung above his bat like a fat opportunity, slow as the grass, still as the blue sky. Perfect pitches, the large ball white as a tennis shoe, its tonguish seams curving eternally, even the dark flamboyance of the trademark, gyroscopically still, miraculously visible, like an object seen through the whirling blades of a fan. Such fat pitches, platter served and lovely lobbed. He'd swung and missed or swung and caught just a piece of the ball, a fraction too high or too low, too soon or too late in his swing, his timing, unlike the superior spring's, still a little off. Though the bat had come around murderously each time, the power still there, or money in the bank. (Where did he *get* his strength? In the hospital, two days off of oxygen, his nose still sore from the pinch of the apparatus, he'd had an erection, a lovely concentration of feeling like a summer sunshower. Where did that come from? What reserves of power and sentiment resided in human beings, the body's and spirit's resources, their secret veins and unseen mother lodes?)

Sometime in the last couple of weeks his teammates ceasing to patronize him. (Not teammates. An odd aspect of these Saturday morning games where the sides changed each Saturday and even positions—not his; him they allowed to play first base where he wouldn't have to run so much, though even this was hardly a concession since first base was his position even as a kid—so that the sense he got was oddly professional, of being traded, always a new man throwing to you from a new place in the infield, a mark not so much of the game's casualness, just a bunch of faculty in a



COURTESY BRYAN OHNO GALLERY, SEATTLE

Shadow x 4, *by Katina Huston, whose drawings were exhibited last summer at Dolby Chadwick Gallery, in San Francisco.*

friendly choose-up game, as of its continuity and egality.) It did not matter that he didn't hit—two or three singles in, what, twenty-three or twenty-four times at bat?—or that he was among, lately, the last to be chosen. His bad timing was still another aspect of the professionalism he felt so that once he said to Wayne, the best athlete among them, "Christ, I can't get a piece of the ball." "You're in a slump," Wayne said. "You're overanxious. You're trying to kill the ball. Just stroke it. Go for the base hit. Choke up on the bat. Start your swing before the ball reaches the plate." Wayne's words reassured him, and though the advice, which he'd tried to follow, hadn't yet helped, it was an astonishing confirmation of his youth to learn that he was in a slump. He would never have given that name to his inability to hit, but he accepted it with ease. He was in a slump. Yes. A trough, an ebb, a bearish time in the astrology—a dark phase, phases being an aspect of nature, too, one's worth underscored by tragedy, like a kid's old height ticked off on a kitchen wall. And even the heart attack a watermark of sorts, the brutal signature of the cardiograph tapes a running Dow Jones account of his health.

He began to chatter. Pepper they called it. To tease the opposition unceasingly. (No matter that this week's opposition was next week's teammate.) He was surprised at his voice the first time he heard it. "Little chatter in there," he began from his sinecure at first base. "Easy out, easy out. No stick in there, no stick, no hit." Formulas he only partly remembered from twenty or twenty-five years before. But coming out wrong somehow, his memory smudged, the classic taunts labored, unnatural, like someone reading lines off cards he cannot quite see. So going, after a time, to other incantations, "Let him hit it, pitch. Swing, what are you waiting for?" Inoffensive, friendly—these were his friends; many of them, the year before, had visited him in the hospital, had come as if on tiptoe to the brink of his bed to shake hands or offer him books, a thin packet of his mail from the English department—but edged too with a queer temper, like the bitter lining of a wine. And unsatisfactory, the easy clichés like tongue twisters in his mouth, his timing off here, too, as with his batting, his remarks crossing the plate in front of or behind the ball, even behind the hitter once or twice, his ". . . are you waiting for?" still coming out of his mouth as the ball rifled between the shortstop and second baseman on a hard line drive, faintly warped, like shoes that have been left out in the rain. So he switched this chatter, too, making up his own, speaking out in sentences, paragraphs, commentary. (But never, conserving his strength, encouraging the fast semicircles of catch around the infield between putouts and always the first to call batter-up, calling it as soon as the infielders were in position.) And up at the plate, swearing, foulmouthing foul balls, his shouted "Shit!" and "Fuck!" the exclamation points punctuating his failures at the bat, the timing returned only here, already calling out in despair anticipating a ball that would be caught, a grounder fielded.

Sometimes silent for whole innings, though, sensing how irritating he had become, and in the field or along the sidelines waiting to bat during

the silences never so unhappy in his life. No never. And once two weeks before, silent throughout the entire second game of the doubleheader. Contenting himself with his observations. Noticing John Bernard's sweatpants, Zender's cleats faintly warped, the three baseball caps between them, one blue, one black, and one red, examining their big gloves, comical as the swollen hands of cartoon mice, the lefty's mitt he borrowed from Bernard—Bernard, the only other left-hander there, was never on his team, another cryptic signal of accommodation. He would, in dull moments, study the baseball glove, its hue like a gorgeous, perfect suntan, the tough, pale, jerkylike piping around each finger, the mysterious Indian cuts and vents on the back of the mitt like the notches of battle or hieroglyphs, the hyperbolic netting between forefinger and thumb, webbing his hand, so that he felt each time he put it on, carefully, not yet unself-consciously able, placing his little finger in leather loop stitched inside the glove, amphibious, reduced a step in evolution. He looked at the ballplayer's signature endorsing the heel—Abe Beardsley—and couldn't place the name, though it seemed familiar, as the names of all athletes always seemed familiar for having been spoken over the radio. (He read no Sports page, rarely went to the ballpark, and watched the Game of the Week only if there was nothing else to do, soon asleep. He was a regular viewer of the ten-o'clock news, however, and supposed he heard these stars' names when they did the sports, gave the scores.) Once heard, they became permanently a part of his mind, the sounds and nicknames and syllables imprinted without a referent, like subliminal landmarks on a route once traveled. (It was queer about these names. Bo Belinsky, Rip Repulski—but not just alliterative—Jack Nicklaus, Joe Hoerner, the names more familiar to him than the names of guests at parties.) He saw the pocket, smooth and deep and round, but somehow afflictive, healed, like the polished stumps of amputees. And touched with his free hand the greasy leather, neat's-foot- and linseed-oiled, smelling all the balms of serious play. (And Bernard's sweat, too, as Bernard may have picked up at home after the game, raising a can of beer to his lips, his own lime aftershave.) And traced the intricate leather lacing through the tips of the fingertips with their brassy eyes.

So much to do, to see, to hear through his own silence—the expert coaching with men on base, each situation expertly parsed, "Two men on, there's a force at any base." "Two out, run on anything." (None of this was obvious or even useful to him, whose responsibility was to stand on first base and catch the ball if it was thrown to him.) The congratulations for a well-executed play or a good hit—or even sometimes just a healthy swing—simultaneous and explosive, a round-robin of good will. Nor were errors ever mentioned or plays contested. These were gentlemen, good sports. The benefit of the doubt was about. Their sportsmanship gave him confidence, allowed him to be himself, permitted his essential laziness as a fielder, and put him, out of respect, he supposed, for his memory, no further back than sixth or seventh in the lineup. He was certain that it made no difference to any of them whether they won or lost. Certainly it didn't to him. Indeed, he preferred to play always one or two runs behind in a game, insisting on pressure when he took his licks, an at least personal ante at stake for his turn at bat. Their good sportsmanship went deeper. In his imagination he wanted them to want to win, reserving for himself alone his indifference.

It was one of his "silent" innings. He was conscious of his postures, Bernard's glove held slightly in front of him, his knees slightly bent, his mimic of alertness. He smelled George Pepe's cigarette. He had been smoking again for better than a year, though he still was frightened each time he lit up, and took his pulse every twenty minutes, and still lately had begun to buy them again though he left them in his office, taking only five or six loose in his pocket—and wished his team was up so he could smoke one. The cigarettes would kill him next time. Up to three packs a day when he had his attack, he was now down to a pack and a half, filtered. And wished the side was retired so that he could smoke.

[Dialogue]

THEY CALL ME MR. DIFFICULT

From an interview with William Gaddis by Tom LeClair, conducted in 1980 and included in the essay collection Paper Empire: William Gaddis and the World System, *edited by Joseph Tabbi and Rone Shavers, published this spring by the University of Alabama Press. LeClair is a professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. Gaddis, who died in 1998, was the author of six books, including the novels* The Recognitions *and* JR.

TOM LECLAIR: Are there writers who were particularly important for you in your early years?

WILLIAM GADDIS: I remember being amazed, when *The Recognitions* first came out, by the number of reviewers who found it drawn from or an imitation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, which I had not read and have still not. I just haven't. Very few

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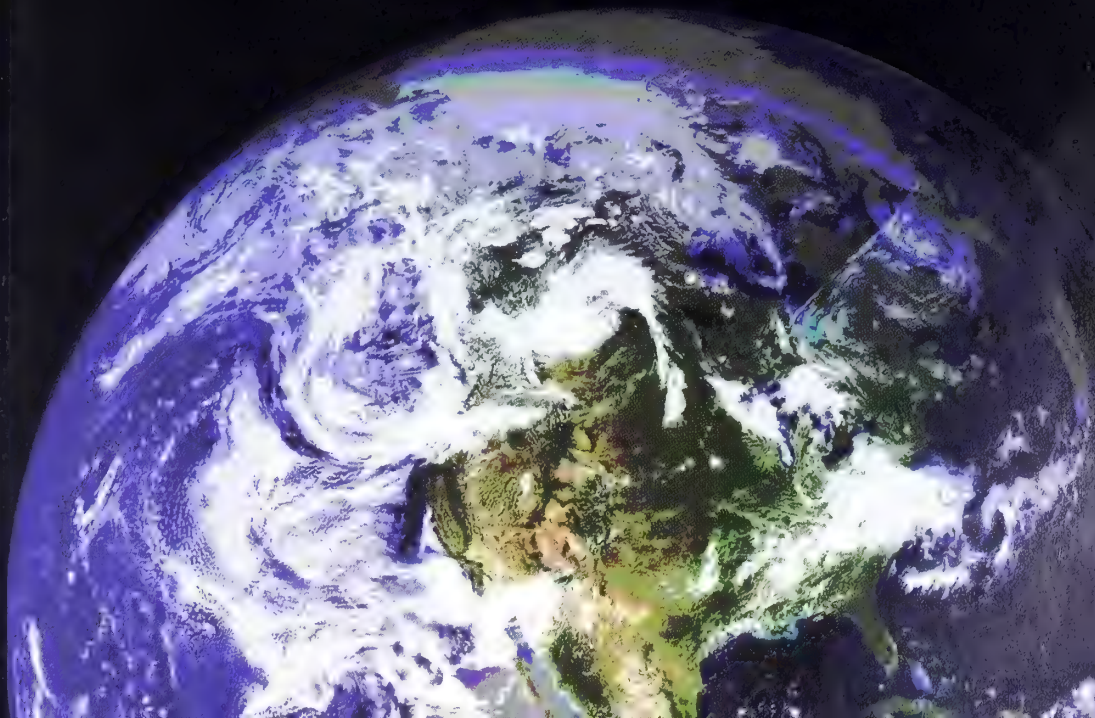
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mentioned *The Waste Land*. I read that in college and it has never left me. Keats talks about poetry as being the finest wording of one's highest feelings. But to find in a poem perfectly articulated your vision of the world is remarkable. I was just beginning to draw together my own view of the world, and here it was. It was a juxtaposition of exchequer bonds and the South Seas and Doris on the stairs. Now, for me, it is Yeats's "The Second Coming," with its impending apocalypse. It's hard to believe, but where we live now is all there in Yeats's poem.

LECLAIR: "Willie" in *The Recognitions* says he's doing for writing what Bruckner did for music. Did you have nonliterary models for your works?

GADDIS: While I do think music is the highest of the arts, totally abstract and ungraspable, why must we assume that writing is or needs to be derivative of other forms? A writer could set out to write a novel in the form of a fugue, but there is likely to be trouble with the technique overpowering the life in the book.

LECLAIR: Is it important for you to take risks?

GADDIS: This question calls for the kind of theorizing I don't like. It assumes that a writer has something to say, that you learn more about his writing by hearing him talk about it than from the writing itself. The cult of personality insists on putting the man in place of the work, on turning the creative artist into a performing artist. Writers talking about their own work is dangerous second-guessing, not trusting the work enough to let it carry its own weight. Another danger is for the writer to believe his own myth created by talk; that myth is just not there when one sits down to write. JR slips into the myth he has created, and it takes over him at the end of the novel when he reads a P.R. release describing him as a shrewd executive. The writer should avoid the possibility of being taken over by his own fiction. When I sit down to work, none of these theoretical intentions—Am I taking a risk? Am I creating beauty?—exists. One doesn't say, "I'm going to take a risk and write a 700-page book in a technique that I may not be able to bring off." What I am trying to do is achieve what a specific scene requires, what the work as a whole demands.

LECLAIR: How do the novels get to be so long, if they don't start out with mass in mind?

GADDIS: If one is involved with a complicated idea, and spends every day with it, takes notes, and reads selectively with it in mind, ramifications proliferate. If one has what could be called an obsessional wish to exhaust an idea, understand it on six, seven, or eight levels, the book gets longer and longer.

LECLAIR: Is bulk necessary to make a ripple?

GADDIS: I don't think an 800-page book is twice as good as a 400-page book. The question is: How long does the book have to be to accomplish what it comes to need to be? I was pleased when one reviewer of *JR* said that in this 726-page novel there was not one wasted word.

LECLAIR: Do reviewers prefer 250-page masterpieces?

GADDIS: This is not a joke. It is a very serious problem. I found reviewers for several New York periodicals who had clearly not read *JR*, who did not have the facts straight. I also was delighted to find that a number of reviewers in provincial newspapers, who did not have any pretensions, took their jobs seriously and read the book.

[Poem]

SCENES OF HELL

By Billy Collins, published in A Public Space: 03. *Collins's most recent book is* The Trouble with Poetry and Other Poems.

We did not have the benefit of a guide,
no crone to lead us off the common path,
no ancient to point the way with a staff,

but there were badlands to cross,
rivers of fire and blackened peaks,
and eventually we could look down and see

the jeweler running around a gold ring,
the boss captured in an hourglass,
the baker buried up to his eyes in flour,

the banker plummeting on a coin,
the teacher disappearing into a blackboard,
and the grocer silent under a pyramid of vegetables.

We saw the pilot nose-diving
and the whore impaled on a bedpost,
the pharmacist wandering in a stupor

and the child with toy wheels for legs.
You pointed to the soldier
who was dancing with his empty uniform

and I remarked on the blind tourist.
But what truly caught our attention
was the scene in the long mirror of ice:

you lighting the wick on your head,
me blowing on the final spark,
and our children trying to crawl away from
their eggshells.

LECLAIR: A common criticism of long books is self-indulgence, as though the writers had written at such length only to amuse themselves.

GADDIS: In *JR*, Gibbs complains about Schepperman's having to sell blood to buy paints and about Van Gogh's cutting off his ear. Hyde says, "Who asked him to paint?" That's a central question. If you're going to write a book, who asked you to? It is, in fact, quite an act of ego to sit down in a room, while others are getting on trains and subways, and put one's vision on paper, and then ask others to pay to read it. Not only to pay but say, "Isn't he brilliant." It's an act of audacity.

[Story]

WOLF WHISTLE

By John Edgar Wideman, collected in As You Were Saying: American Writers Respond to Their French Contemporaries, *an anthology of stories by French and American writers, to be published next month by Dalkey Archive Press. Wideman's most recent book is the story collection* God's Gym.

At first I think it's a mad boy let out of the attic or basement for air an hour a day whistling at me from the rear of a long yard, a demented boy unfamiliar with skin darker than his but crazy enough not to be afraid, not to care, and whistling scorn, racial epithets, his shrill keening anger at being surprised, intruded upon by a trespasser black as the devil or *ooh-la-la,* cutie pie, what the fuck do we have here, sweetie, shrieked loud enough for the whole neighborhood to enjoy in the long silence of Le Moustoir at the western lip of Arradon on the Gulf of Morbihan in the vicinity of Vannes in Brittany in France in Western Europe in a Universe with ample space to incarcerate boys in Turkish-looking, rusty cages crowned with minarets, hung on trees, two of them, two cages umbrellaed by trees at the front of the long yard belonging to a house on the corner of rue Saint Martin and rue de la Touline I passed without seeing on daily walks to the part tavern, part grocery store, or morning strolls to the closest sea or jogging five kilometers to Toulindac that opens like a tourist's postcard dream when you turn a corner and coast parallel to the coastline, Ile aux Moines, a gray lump framed in endless blue distance by the long, slow smile of curve embracing double-deck ferries, white sails, striped sails, a sailing school with pennants flapping where kids try to learn to fly like fish and birds, a convincing advertisement for the good life, a trick, achieved with mirrors, even though happy, piping voices reach me there, all the way up there on a road above Toulindac when I glide or pretend to glide invisibly, effortlessly as wind toward the fence-lined path that cuts steep and straight down to the beach, to acres of naked flesh, rocks and rocks and rocks, large as elephants, tiny as stinging gnats, families packed on weekends into this small, select space with stunning views almost to open sea, sea a bright lawn of water barely rippling as it laps the beach whose gently sloping sandy bottom remains visible underwater, many steps from shore, the footing awkwardly rocky through knee-high puddles of nodding algae, but soon smooth enough except for stones sharp as nails, blue, chilling water shallow enough for youngsters to wade far, far out, clear and calm, never a black triangle of fin crossing parallel to the horizon, no pain till you step out shivering, blue, slit open, the kids can play while you half watch, half doze, stupid in the sun, no need ever to get your feet wet or cold again, gashed again, your mad boy free a minute or two in the yard to wolf whistle or coo or cackle at Le Moustoir neighbors passing by, at children from the kindergarten across rue Saint Martin who break out early afternoons to car doors slamming them in, their young mothers waiting naked and dazed as sunbathers or hiding in drab colors of little doughnut cars jammed in the shade of trees adjacent to the house with a long yard on the corner where if I could ever get its attention, if I could ever master its language or the French language it might bilingually understand, I would teach one of the parrots or the other to be a mad boy again, not so mad he's locked in a cage but mad enough to whistle and hoot horribly obscene, scary things at kids and their mothers, warning them about the bright razor sea you can smell from here and all the dead things in it, including pale skin of mothers burnt to ash, including children set out to play, set out nonchalantly like they're turned out to play in traffic on busy streets of this Universe shaped like a long yard from whose shadowy rear-end a hoarse, mocking, insane voice chops at me, cuts my legs from under me so I never make it to Toulindac one day, just kneel here, bleed here, outside the house's white stucco, chin-high wall, begging forgiveness of a boy born mad and almost mute but he's picked up the gift of assaulting others with a few choice, nasty noises picked up from his Universe, on my knees imploring him to forgive me for blaming and cursing him because I saw for the first time two parrots staring, swaying, pecking gently at the bars of their rusted, oriental cages, two lynched birds I'd teach to warble *Emmett Till, Emmett Till* if I could, but they just sit there preening, ruffling their ratty feathers, each twin nailed to its perch, neither one making a sound in response to my coaxing, my artless imitations of them, and I give up.



Bristlecones on the Balcony, *by Olive Wharton, seen by our view next month at the Mid-Manhattan branch of the New York Public Library.*

Artwork © 2003 Olive Wharton courtesy the artist and Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York City.

THE MIRROR OF LIFE

How Shakespeare conquered the world

By Jonathan Bate

In 1612, around the time that Shakespeare was beginning to work in collaboration with John Fletcher, perhaps as prelude to his retirement, the young dramatist John Webster wrote a preface to his tragedy *The White Devil* in which he expressed his "good opinion" of the "worthy labours" of his peers in the art of playmaking: the grandiose style of George Chapman, the learning of Ben Jonson, the collaborative enterprise of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, and "the right happy and copious industry of Mr Shakespeare, Mr Decker, and Mr Heywood." Shakespeare's plays are thus praised for being plentiful in number and skillfully executed. He is placed in the company of Thomas Dekker and Thomas Heywood, two other prolific and highly professional writers who made their living from the stage. But he is mentioned after four writers who, while equally professional and industrious, were better connected to the court and the gentry—Chapman, Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher. Four years later, in the spring of 1616, Beaumont and Shakespeare died within a few weeks of each other. Beaumont became the first dramatist to be honored with burial in the national shrine of Westminster Abbey, beside the tombs of Geoffrey Chaucer (the father of English verse) and Edmund Spenser (the greatest poet of the Elizabethan era). Shakespeare was laid to rest in the provincial obscurity of his native Stratford-upon-Avon. That same year, Ben Jonson became the first English dramatist to publish a collected edition of his own plays written for the public stage. He was much mocked for his presumption in doing so, especially under the title of *Works*, suggestive of an edition of a classical author such as Vergil or Horace. Webster learned many of the tricks of his trade from Shakespeare, but if he had been asked which of his contemporaries would achieve immortality and come to be regarded as the greatest playmaker since the ancient Greek tragedians, he could as well have plumped for either Jonson or the team of Beaumont and Fletcher. Or possibly even Chapman.



We now think of Shakespeare as a unique genius, the embodiment of the very idea of artistic genius, but in his own time, though widely admired, he was but one of a constellation of theatrical stars. How is it, then, that when we reach the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Shakespeare's fame has outstripped that of all his peers? Why was he the sole dramatist of the age who would eventually have a genuinely international, ultimately a worldwide, impact?

One of the ways in which writers endure is through their influence on later writers. Jonson

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Detail of a colored engraving of William Shakespeare, late 19th century
© The Granger Collection, New York City

intuited this in his dedicatory poem to the 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare's collected plays, in which he described Shakespeare as a "star" whose "influence" would "chide or cheer" the future course of British drama. Once the Folio was available to, in the words of its editors, "the great Variety of Readers," the plays began to influence not just the theater but poetry more generally. The works of Milton, notably his masque *Comus*, were steeped in Shakespearean language. Indeed, the young Milton's first published poem



was a sonnet prefixed to the second edition of the Folio, in which Shakespeare was said to have built himself "a live-long Monument" in the form of his plays. Shakespeare was Milton's key precedent for the writing of his epic *Paradise Lost* (1667) in blank verse rather than rhyme. Even later seventeenth-century poets who were committed to rhyme, such as King Charles II's poet laureate, John Dryden, acknowledged the power of Shakespeare's dramatic blank verse. As an act of homage to "the Divine Shakespeare," Dryden abandoned rhyme in *All for Love* (1678), his reworking of the Cleopatra story.

The London theaters were closed during the years of civil war and republican government in the middle of the seventeenth century, and the years after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 were characterized by a somewhat schizophrenic attitude toward Shakespeare. On the positive side, he was invoked for his inspirational native genius, used to support claims for Eng[l] naturalness as opposed to French artifice and [m] the moderns against the ancients. In a sweep [g] *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), Dryden descril[bes] Shakespeare as "the man who of all Modern, [and] perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and m[ost] comprehensive soul." He brushed off charges [of] Shakespeare's lack of learning with the memora[ble] judgment that "he needed not the spectacles [of] Books to read Nature."

Contemporaneously with Dryden, the learn[ed] Margaret Cavendish, Duc[h]ess of Newcastle, prais[ed] Shakespeare for his abil[ity] to enter into his vast art[istry] of characters, to "expre[ss] the divers and different h[u]mours, or natures, or se[v]eral passions in mankind." Yet at the same time, th[e] courtly elite had spent the[ir] years of exile in France an[d] had come under the infl[u]ence of a highly refine[d] neoclassical theory of arti[s]tic decorum, according [to] which tragedy should b[e] kept apart from comed[y] and high style from lo[w] with dramatic "unity" de[-] manding obedience t[o] strict laws. For this reaso[n] Dryden and his contempo[-]raries took considerable lib[-]erties in polishing and "im[-]proving" Shakespeare's plays for performance. Ac[-]cording to the law of po[-]etic justice, wholly inno[-]cent characters should no[t] be allowed to die: Nahum Tate therefore rewrot[e] *King Lear* with a happy ending in which Cordeli[a] marries Edgar. Tate also omitted the character o[f] the Fool, on the grounds that such a figure was be[-]neath the dignity of high tragedy.

The more formal classicism of Jonson and the courtly romances of Beaumont and Fletcher an[d] swered more readily to the Frenchified standards of the Restoration theater. Actors, though, were demonstrating that the most rewarding roles in the repertoire were the Shakespearean ones. Thomas Betterton (1635–1710), the greatest player of the age, had enormous success as Hamlet, Sir Toby Belch, Henry VIII, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Lear, Falstaff, Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, and Othello (some of these in versions close to the original texts, others in heavily adapted reworkings). Playhouse scripts of individual plays found their way into print, while the Folio went through its third and fourth printings. By the end of the

David Garrick as Richard III by William Hogarth © Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool/Bridgeman Art Library

entury, Shakespeare was well entrenched in English cultural life. But he was not yet the unique genius.

Thomas Betterton's veneration for the memry of Shakespeare was such that late in his life he raveled to Warwickshire in order to find out what e could about the dramatist's origins. He passed store of anecdotes to the poet, playwright, and ventual poet laureate Nicholas Rowe, who wrote Some Account of the Life of Mr William Shakeeare," a biographical sketch published in 1709 n the first of the six volumes of his *Works of hakespeare*, the collection that is usually regardd as the first modern edition of the plays. Rowe's iography offered a mixture of truth and myth, calulated to represent Shakespeare as a man of the eople. It tells of how young Will was withdrawn rom school when his father fell on hard times, ow he then got into bad company and stole deer rom the park of local grandee Sir Thomas Lucy. he resulting prosecution forced him to leave for ondon, where he became an actor and then a ramatist. Rowe's account is a symptom of how very age reinvents Shakespeare in its own image. he road from the provinces to London was a faniliar one in the eighteenth century—Samuel ohnson and David Garrick walked it in real life, Henry Fielding's Tom Jones in fiction. Shakeeare served as exemplar of the writer who chieved success, and an unprecedented degree of inancial reward, from his pen alone. The Earl of outhampton may have helped him on his way in is early years, but he was essentially a self-made nan rather than a beneficiary of court and arisocratic patronage. For writers such as Alexander ope and Samuel Johnson, struggling in the tranition from the age of patronage to that of Grub treet professionalism, Shakespeare offered not nly a body of poetic invention but also an inpirational career trajectory.

If we had to identify a single decade in which he "cult of Shakespeare" took root, in which is celebrity and influence came to outstrip that f his contemporaries once and for all, it would robably be the 1730s. There was a proliferaion of cheap mass-market editions, while in the heater the plays came to constitute about a quarter of the entire repertoire of the London stage, four times what they had been hitherto. The promotion of Shakespeare was driven by a number of forces, ranging from state censorship of new plays to a taste for the shapely legs of actresses (who by this time were permitted on the stage) in the cross-dressed "breeches parts" of the comedies. The plays were becoming synonymous with decency and Englishness, even as the institution of the theater was still poised between respectability and disrepute.

David Garrick (1717–79), the actor who may justly be claimed as the father of what later came to be called "Bardolatry," arrived in London at a propitious moment. Shakespeare was growing into big business, and the time was ripe for a new star to cash in on his name. As in many a good theater story, Garrick's first break came when he stepped in as an understudy and outshone the actor who normally took the part. This was followed by a more formal debut, again of a kind that established a pattern for later generations: the revolutionary new reading of a major Shakespearean part. For Garrick, it was Richard III (for Edmund Kean in the next century, it was Shylock). Garrick's naturalism and eye for detail made the tragic acting of his predecessors seem crudely melodramatic. After this, there was no looking back. Garrick did all the things we have come to expect of a major star: he took on the full gamut of Shakespeare, he had an affair with his leading lady (the gorgeous and talented Peg Woffington), and he managed his own acting company, supervising the scripts and directing plays while also starring in them. It was because of Garrick's extraordinary energy in all these departments that he not only gave unprecedented respectability to the profession of actor but also effectively invented the modern theater.

WHY WAS SHAKESPEARE THE SOLE DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE A GENUINELY WORLDWIDE IMPACT?

It was in the art of self-promotion that Garrick was unique. His public image was secured by William Hogarth's vibrant painting of him in the role of Richard III, confronted with his nightmares on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth Field. The most frequently engraved and widely disseminated theatrical portrait of the eighteenth century, this iconic image simultaneously established Garrick as the quintessential tragedian and inaugurated the whole tradition of large-scale Shakespearean painting. Hitherto, the elevated genre of "history painting" had concentrated on biblical and classical subjects. With Hogarth's image—created in the studio, though influenced by Garrick's stage performance—Shakespearean drama joined this august company.

The climax of Garrick's career in Bardolatry was the Jubilee that he organized in commemoration of the bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth. The event took place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1769, on the occasion of the opening of a new town hall, a mere five years later than the anniversary it was supposed to mark. The Jubilee lasted for three days, during which scores of fashionable Londoners descended on the hitherto obscure provincial town where Shakespeare had been born. Here began the literary tourist in-

dustry: local entrepreneurs did good business in [illegible] such as souvenirs supposedly made from the wood of the great bard's mulberry tree. Not since the medieval [illegible] of fragments of the True Cross had a single tree yielded so much wood. The Jubilee program included a grand procession of Shakespearean characters, a masked ball, a horse race, and a fireworks display—though in true English fashion the outdoor events were washed out [illegible]. At the climax of the festivities, Garrick performed his own poem, "An Ode upon dedicating a building, and erecting a statue, to Shakespeare, at Stratford-upon-Avon," set to music by the leading contemporary composer Thomas Arne. In the manner of a staged theatrical "happening," Garrick had arranged for a member of the audience (a fellow actor), dressed as a Frenchified fop, to complain—as connoisseurs of French literary taste had complained for generations—that Shakespeare was vulgar, provincial, and overrated. This gave Garrick the opportunity to voice his grand defense of Shakespeare. Although the whole business was much mocked in newspaper reports, caricatures, and stage farces, the stunt generated enormous publicity for both Garrick and Shakespeare across Britain and the continent of Europe. The Jubilee did more than make Stratford-upon-Avon into a tourist attraction: it inaugurated the very idea of a summer arts festival.

SHAKESPEARE'S ENDURING APPEAL CANNOT BE SAID TO REST SOLELY ON HIS WIT, NOR ON THE LEGACY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

In an age when orthodox religion was facing severe challenges, the cult of Shakespeare was becoming a secular faith. Thanks to the enthusiasm of poets, critics, and translators such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Hazlitt, and John Keats in England, J. W. von Goethe and the Schlegel brothers in Germany, Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas in France, the grammar-school boy from the edge of the forest of Arden became the supreme deity not just of poetry and drama but of high culture itself.

From [illegible] through the dedicatory material prefaced to the First Folio, Shakespeare was renowned by his contemporaries above all for his wit, his mastery of language. He lived in a [illegible] undergoing a huge expansion, sucking in new words from all over Europe and beyond, and he worked in a profession wholly reliant upon the memorable use of language. Like all his poetic contemporaries, Shakespeare had a profoundly figurative imagination. It is a truth universally acknowledged that Shakespeare's gift of poetic invention surpassed that of any writer before or since. Sometimes, though, the art of Bardolatry has led to excessive claims. So, for instance, Shakespeare is sometimes said to have coined more new English words than anyone else, with the possible exception of James Joyce. This is not true. The illusion of his unique inventiveness in this regard was created by the tendency of the Oxford English Dictionary to cite examples from him as the first usage of a word. That was because of his readily availability when the dictionary was created at the end of the Victorian era. Now that we possess [illegible] databases of sixteenth-century books, it is easy to find prior occurrences for many supposed Shakespearean coinages. And yet the list of Shakespearean neologisms remains impressive. He gave us such verbs as "puke," "torture," "misquote," "gossip," "swagger," "blanket" (Poor Tom's "Blanket on [illegible]" in *Lear*), and "champion" (Macbeth's "champion me to the utterance"). He invented the nouns "critic," "mountaineer," "pageantry," and "eyeball"; the adjectives "fashionable," "unreal," "blood-stained," "deafening," "majestic," and "domineering"; the adverbs "instinctively" and "obsequiously" in the sense of "behaving in the appropriate way to render obsequies for the dead."[1] Many of Shakespeare's coinages are not new words but old words in new contexts (such as the application of "manager" to the entertainment business, with *Midsummer Night's Dream*'s "manager of mirth") or new compounds or old words wrested to new grammatical usage.[2] Although twenty-first-century electronic databases diminish the extent of Shakespeare's actual coinages, they immeasurably enrich our sense of the astonishingly multivalent, polysemous quality of his language.

Shakespeare's enduring appeal cannot, however, be said to rest solely on his linguistic virtuosity, nor on the proposition—favored by some of today's politically minded critics—that he achieved world domination simply because of the power of the British empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As he recognized himself, human affairs always embody a combination of permanent truths and historical contingencies, of—to use the terms of his age—"nature" and "custom." At one level, he is "not of an age, but for all time." He works with archetypal characters, core plots, and perennial conflicts, as he dramatizes the competing demands of the living and the dead, the old and the young, men and wom-

[1] *Only in the eighteenth century did the word come to* [illegible] *reference"—perhaps as the very result of Richard III's feigning performance of the word.*

[illegible] *Macbeth, "I'll* devil-porter *it no further" offers compounding*

n, self and society, integrity and role-play, insiders nd outsiders. He grasps the structural conflicts nared by all societies: religious against secular ision, country against city, birth against educa- on, strong leadership against the people's voice, ne code of honor against the energies of erotic de- re. But he also addressed the conflicts of his own istorical moment: the transition from Catholi- ism to Protestantism and from feudalism to nodernity, the formation of national identity, rade and immigration, the encounter with new vorlds overseas, the shadow of foreign powers. He was restricted by the customs of his age, no- ably when it came to the subordination of wom- n, but at the same time he was prophetic of fu- ure ages. Despite the inferior position of most vomen in his society and the fact that the con- ention of his theater meant that female parts vere played by young men, he gives a remark- able degree of freedom and mental agility to his women.

Whether set or written in the past, all great plays speak to present times. In Shakespeare, top- cal allusion is rare—the odd flattering glance at Queen Elizabeth, one conspicuous nod to the Earl of Essex—but the sense of the fictional world on- stage as a mirror of the real world beyond the au- ditorium is pervasive. In *Hamlet*, for example, the prince is delighted when he hears the news that the players have returned to Elsinore. He greets them as personal friends. Some of the theater enthusi- asts among the courtiers of Queen Elizabeth and then King James, such as the Earl of Southampton, the Earl of Pembroke, and the Earl of Montgomery, would have greeted Shakespeare and his fellow actors in the same way. The circumstances of the fictional acting company at Elsinore reflect those of the real company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, that first put on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Their high- est priority is to be available on demand for court performances, if necessary reshaping their repertoire in response to a particular demand, as when Ham- let asks for a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines to be inserted into their tragedy. While waiting to be summoned to the palace, they perform regularly nearby, trying out each new play in the court of public opinion. They are an all-male company, whose teenage apprentices play the female parts. Their business at the box office faces a range of challenges, from state cen- sorship to closure because of plague to rival attrac- tions and in particular a fashionable new company consisting entirely of high- ly trained schoolboys.



Titania Awakes, Surrounded by Attendant Fairies, Clinging Rapturously to Bottom Still Wearing the Ass's Head, by Henry Fuseli © Kunsthaus Zurich/Bridgeman Art Library

Given that the players in *Hamlet* are in part a wit- ty self-representation of Shakespeare's own acting company, it is fair to as- sume that Shakespeare himself believed, as Ham- let does, that actors are "the abstracts and brief chroni- cles of the time." Accord- ing to contemporaneous dictionaries, an abstract was "a little book or vol- ume gathered out of a greater," "an abridgement, epitome, summary, com- pendium, short course, or discourse." In an age of long sermons, interminable homilies, and closely print- ed treatises on ethics and politics, plays provided a crash course in the way of the world, an instantaneous mirror of manners and of life. The weighty folio vol- umes of *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ire-*

[illegible] by Raphael Holinshed and others were anything but brief, and in a fraction of the time it would have taken to read them—and at a fraction of the cost of buying the book—Shakespeare's players, as they moved from the Rose to the Theatre to the Curtain to the Globe, offered the London public an abridgement and compendium of the nation's history.

Their dramatized "chronicles" of times past—whether English, British, European, ancient Greek, or Roman—were also mirrors of the present. All productions were "modern dress," with just the occasional period detail, such as emblematic togas to represent classical Rome. The kings, dukes, and ladies in the plays would have looked impressively courtly not least because their wardrobe consisted in part of the secondhand clothes of courtiers: often when aristocrats died, they would bequeath items of clothing to their servants, who would sell them to the players. From his reading and his firsthand experience of submitting his work for the approval of the Master of the Revels, then performing at court, Shakespeare learned the language and manners of courtiership, and his characters came to speak and to gesture, as well as to be dressed, in the manner of monarchs and their entourage. A Duke of Buckingham or Earl of Pembroke in the audience might have seen himself mirrored in one of his ancestors in the chronicle plays. King James, who claimed descent from Banquo, would have watched the Scottish play with close attention. And the followers of the Earl of Essex, who liked to consider him the modern Achilles, would have found rich food for thought in Shakespeare's deconstruction of the Achillean code of chivalry in his *Troilus and Cressida*, written soon after Essex's dramatic fall from Queen Elizabeth's favor.

SHAKESPEARE LIVED IN A WORLD OF GOVERNMENT SPIES, CATHOLIC CONSPIRACIES, AND THE PUBLIC EXECUTIONS OF TRAITORS

Since the 1700s, the cult of Shakespeare has been closely bound up with the idealization of Queen Elizabeth I. Consequently, his plays often have been set beside the poetry of John Donne, the gentleman-like virtues of Sir Philip Sidney, the global circumnavigation of Francis Drake, the colonial enterprise of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada: these, it has been said, were the fruits of England's golden age. The reality is that Queen Elizabeth inherited, and Shakespeare grew up in, a divided and vulnerable nation. The Spanish threat and the Irish problem would not go away. The queen's tactic of not marrying was a highly effective way of keeping open a range of possible alliances, b[illegible] by the 1590s it had created severe anxiety abo[illegible] the succession to the throne. In the period wh[illegible] Shakespeare was writing his plays, the queen a[illegible] her ministers had come to rely more and more [illegible] coercion, threat, and surveillance in order [illegible] maintain authority.[3]

At the end of his career, writing in collabor[illegible]tion with John Fletcher, Shakespeare turned h[illegible] direct attention to the moment that shaped th[illegible] historical context of his own life: Henry VIII's d[illegible]cision to divorce Catherine of Aragon and ma[illegible]ry Anne Boleyn (or Bullen) in the hope of siri[illegible] a son to succeed him on the throne of Englan[illegible] an act of high political risk that eventually ha[illegible] consequences for the spiritual life of the entire n[illegible]tion. When Shakespeare's father, John, was bor[illegible] there was no church other than that of Rom[illegible] When Shakespeare was born, there was a ne[illegible] state religion, the Church of England. Whe[illegible] Shakespeare's father was born, he owed a sub[illegible]ject's obedience to the king but a soul's obedienc[illegible] to God via the pope. During Shakespeare's youth [illegible] successive popes excommunicated the Queen o[illegible] England and licensed her assassination. Drasti[illegible] measures were taken to protect her safety.

Shakespeare lived in a world of governmen[illegible] spies, Catholic conspiracies, supposed Catholi[illegible] conspiracies that were really secret-service frame[illegible]ups, and public executions of traitors. In 1584 [illegible] the queen's Privy Council, their eye cast anx[illegible]iously on the claim to the throne of Elizabeth's [illegible] Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, instigat[illegible]ed a "Bond of Association for the Preservation of

[3] *Ironically, the only literary composition to survive in Shakespeare's handwriting is a scene for a play that was never performed and with which he had very limited involvement. It seems to have been sometime around the turn of the century that the Lord Chamberlain's Men obtained the script of a play about Sir Thomas More that had not been staged, due to political objections from the Master of the Revels, who licensed all performances. Shakespeare contributed a skillful scene in which More quelled a rioting crowd through the force of his rhetoric. In a characteristic balancing act, he managed both to animate the ordinary people in the crowd with colorful detail (thus Doll says that More's care for the people is witnessed by his having "made my brother, Arthur Watchins, Sergeant Safe's yeoman") and to argue in More's voice on behalf of both empathy with the dispossessed (in this case, immigrants) and respect for the order of the state ("For to the king God hath his office lent/Of dread, of justice, power and command,/Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey"). This was not enough to make the play acceptable. "Leave out the insurrection wholly, with the cause thereof," demanded the Master of the Revels, with the result that it languished in manuscript until the nineteenth century, when a scholar realized for the first time that here were a few precious pages in Shakespeare's fluent, barely punctuated hand. Contrary to the expectation established by Hemings and Condell's observation, in the preface to the First Folio, that when Shakespeare handed his manuscripts over to his acting company there was barely a crossing-out, the scene from* Sir Thomas More *reveals him in the process of having second thoughts even as he composes.*

Her Majesty's Royal Person," whereby they vowed to pursue to utter extermination all that shall attempt by any act, counsel, or consent to anything that shall tend to the harm of Her Majesty's Royal Person, or claim succession to the Crown by the untimely death of Her Majesty; vowing and protesting in the presence of the Eternal and Everliving God to prosecute such persons to the death." The Bond, to which thousands of Englishmen signed up, specifically called for vengeance in the event of the queen's assassination. The world of oaths and factions, plot and counterplot, murder and seizure of the throne, vengeance and blood, in Shakespeare's tragedies and histories should be understood in this historical context.

The public drama naturally had enormous propaganda potential. A play such as Christopher Marlowe's dramatization of *The Massacre at Paris* that had occurred on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572 was a perfect vehicle for inflaming the people against murderous popish tyranny and also creating sympathy for London's population of exiled Huguenot Protestants. But the drama had equal and opposite subversive potential. In 1597 an order went out for all the playhouses to be demolished as a result of Nashe and Jonson's "lewd and mutinous" *The Isle of Dogs*, which had been staged at the Swan. Had the order been carried through, Shakespeare's career would have been cut short well before he wrote many of his greatest plays. As it was, the Privy Council relented, though for a time performances were restricted to the two trusty troupes, the Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's Men. But plays touching on politics, religion, and international relations always retained the element of risk. The archives of the Revels office are punctuated by entries that reveal the censorship process at work: "this is too insolent, and to be changed" scribbled against a speech, or the note "I did refuse to allow a play of Massinger's because it did contain dangerous matter, as the deposing of Sebastian King of Portugal by Philip the Second and there being a peace sworn twixt the Kings of England and Spain." A passage about York usurping the crown through popular incitement appears in the original published version of the play that became *Henry IV Part 2*, but not the Folio text. References to Irish rebellion are toned down in the same play, and Macmorris's plea on behalf of the Irish nation is absent from the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*. The deposition scene is absent from the first three editions of *Richard II*. Passages concerning rebellion seem to have been removed from *Henry IV Part 2*. Shakespeare had to change the name of Oldcastle to Falstaff so as not to tarnish the memory of a famous proto-Protestant martyr.

In 1599 severely dangerous matter was published in the form of a history of the reign of Henry IV by Sir John Hayward, a follower of the queen's restless favorite, the Earl of Essex, in which it was argued that Richard II's weakness as a ruler was sufficient justification for Henry Bullingbrook's seizure of the throne. The book was suppressed, but its aura of subversion clung to Shakespeare's dramatization of the same material: the day before Essex and his followers attempted to seize the court, in February 1601, they commissioned a performance of *Richard II* at the Globe, as if to prepare Londoners for the removal of an anointed but ineffective monarch.

Shakespeare's political beliefs are as elusive as his religion, his sexuality, and just about everything else about him that matters. Precisely because he



The Ghost of Banquo, by Theodore Chasseriau © Musee des Beaux-Arts, Reims, France/Lauros/Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library

was not an apologist for any single position, it has been possible for the plays to be effectively reinterpreted in the light of each successive age. In the four centuries since his death, he has been made the apologist for all sorts of diametrically opposed ideologies, many of them anachronistic. But we should not forget that he was writing before the time when toleration and liberal democracy became totemic values. But the political appropriation of him is true to his own practice: he, too, was a great trader in anachronism. He took the political structures of ancient Rome and mapped them onto his own time and state with fascinating effect. *The Rape of Lucrece* is set at the moment of transition from monarchy to republic; *Coriolanus*, during the republican era; *Julius Caesar*, at the pivotal moment when a crown is offered and refused but the republic collapses anyway. *Antony and Cleopatra* ends with the beginning of empire, and *Titus Andronicus* fictionalizes the Roman empire in decay, approaching the time when the great city will be sacked by "barbarian" hordes from the north. *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* find echoes of the modern in the matter of ancient Britain. The history plays speak to both the generations before Shakespeare and his live audience. Several other plays use contemporary Italy as a mirror. Humanist learning and mercantile travel meant that the eyes of the Elizabethans were open to alternative forms of government other than the hereditary monarchy they experienced at home. They had great admiration for Venice, regarding that island city-state as a model of anti-papal modernity and trading prowess. Venice had no monarch but a sophisticated oligarchic system, which was observed by English travelers and absorbed by readers such as Shakespeare by way of Lewis Lewkenor's translation of Contarini's *The Government and Republic of Venice* (an important source for *Othello*).

Not so long ago, it was commonplace for historians to assert that republican thought had no following in England until well into the seventeenth century—that the intellectual conditions that made the Cromwellian republic possible emerged only a few years before the extraordinary moment when the English chopped off their king's head. Recent scholarship has shown that this was not the case: republican discourse, if not overt republican polemic, was widespread in Shakespeare's time. So, for instance, the anti-imperial Roman historian Tacitus was read and discussed and admired as the most dispassionate of historians, whose work combined moral insight into the behavior of political actors with an assessment of their value as governors. Several of Shakespeare's plays may by this light be described as "Tacitean." The flavor of Tacitus is wonderfully captured in Justus Lipsius' dedicatory epistle to his edition of the *Annals*: "Behold . . . a theatre of our modern life. I see a ruler rising up against the laws in one passage, subjects rising up against a ruler elsewhere. I find the devices that make the destruction of liberty possible and the unsuccessful effort to regain it. I read of tyrants overthrown in their turn, and of power, ever unfaithful to those who abuse it." This could equally well serve as a conspectus of Shakespeare's history plays and political tragedies.

The association of Shakespeare with Tacitism is especially interesting because it aligns him with the Earl of Essex. Henry Savile, the first English translator of Tacitus, became provost of Eton through Essex's patronage, and there were a number of other Tacitean scholars and apologists in his circle. Shakespeare's patron, Southampton, was a follower of Essex, so it must have been a political gesture on Shakespeare's part to dedicate to him *The Rape of Lucrece*, a highly Tacitean account of the tyranny of Tarquin and the establishment of the Roman republic. Shakespeare's most explicit contemporary political allusion is a flattering reference in one of the *Henry V* choruses to Essex's military expedition against the Irish. The commissioning of the performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex rebellion suggests that the Tacitean faction still considered Shakespeare to be effectively their house dramatist in the last years of the old queen's reign. But with his usual cunning, Shakespeare somehow managed to throw off the association: Essex was executed for treason, and Southampton was sent to the Tower, but the players got away with a reprimand. They claimed that they had put on the show only because they had been well paid to do so.

Shakespeare sometimes wrote in direct flattery of Queen Elizabeth, as in the epilogue to a court performance on Shrove Tuesday 1599. And the Virgin Queen is almost certainly the immortal phoenix of the mysteriously beautiful poem that has become known as "The Phoenix and the Turtle," published the same year as the Essex rebellion. But when the old queen finally died in 1603, Henry Chettle expressed surprise that Shakespeare did not "drop from his honied Muse one sable tear" in her memory. Although there seems not to have been a published elegy, Shakespeare did perhaps reflect on the end of the era and the uncertain times to come in Sonnet 107, with its reference to the "eclipse" of the "mortal moon" (in classical mythology, the moon was associated with Diana the virgin huntress—and Elizabeth in turn was associated with her).

The new king, James I, who had held the Scottish throne as James VI since he had been an infant, immediately took the Lord Chamberlain's Men under his direct patronage. Henceforth they would be the King's Men, and for the rest of

nakespeare's career they were favored with far ore court performances than any of their rivals. here even seem to have been rumors early in the ign that Shakespeare and Burbage were being nsidered for knighthoods, an unprecedented nor for mere actors—and one that in the event as not accorded to a member of the profession r nearly three hundred years, when the title was estowed upon Henry Irving, the leading Shakearean actor of Queen Victoria's reign.

The King's Men were given the status of rooms of the Chamber. Each sharer in the company was given four and a half yards of red cloth om the Master of the Great Wardrobe for the ccasion of the new king's ceremonial procesion through the city of London in March 1604. n August of that year, they had to close their theter and spend eighteen days literally "waiting" n attendance at Somerset House during the visof a special envoy from the king of Spain, while peace treaty was being thrashed out. This moent of suspension was an important turning oint in Shakespeare's career. Elizabethan Shakeeare was a war poet: the Armada and the campaigns against the Spanish in the Netherlands had vershadowed his whole career. Jacobean Shakeeare was a peace poet: of course he still wrote attle scenes, which were always good box office, but a play such as *Coriolanus* is equally interested in the question of what happens to a an of action in time of peace. A Scottish king working in harmony with the English court brings eace at the climax of *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline* ends with a peace treaty, and *Antony and Cleopatra* oncludes with Octavius becoming Augustus and romising to fulfill his prediction that "The time f universal peace is near." James liked to see imself as a modern Augustus, at once the bringer f peace across Europe and the founder of a new mpire ("Britain," in contrast to Elizabeth's "England"). Shakespeare's Jacobean plays resonate with the new king's preoccupations: in *Macbeth*, he Gunpowder Plot, witchcraft, the lineage of Banquo, the practice of "touching" subjects to ure them of scrofula, known as the King's Evil; n *Lear*, the need to unite Britain and the dire consequences of its division; in *Cymbeline*, Britain is a new Rome and the talismanic Welsh port of Milford Haven, where Henry Richmond landed t the dawn of the Tudor dynasty; in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, royal children and dynastic liaisons.

Shakespeare's insights into the dynamics of oyalty and power are such that, whoever is king r president or prime minister, one or more of the lays will always strike a resonance with the imes. Shakespeare endures because with each new turn of history, a new dimension of his work pens up before us. When George III went mad, *King Lear* was kept off the stage—it was just too close to the truth. During the Cold War, *Lear* again became Shakespeare's hottest play, its combination of starkness and absurdity answering to the mood of the age, inspiring the Polish critic Jan Kott to compare it to Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* in his influential book *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1962) and both the Russian Grigori Kozintsev (1969) and the English Peter Brook (1971) to make darkly brilliant film versions.

Early in 1934, when the French Socialist government was close to collapse, a new translation of *Coriolanus* was staged at the Comédie Française in Paris. The production was perceived as an attack on democratic institutions. Clashing pro- and anti-government factions shut down the auditorium. Shakespeare's translator, a Swiss, was branded a foreign fascist. The prime minister fired the theater director and replaced him with the head of the national police, whose artistic credentials were somewhat questionable. What are we to conclude from this real-life drama? That Coriolanus' contempt for the rabble makes Shakespeare himself into a proto-fascist? How could it then have been that the following year the Maly Theatre in Stalin's Moscow staged a production of the same play that sought to demonstrate that Coriolanus was an "enemy of the people" and that Shakespeare was therefore a true socialist? Shakespeare was neither an absolutist nor a democrat, but the fact that both productions were possible is one of the major reasons why he continues to command our interest.

On June 16, 2006, a production of *Titus Andronicus* directed by Yukio Ninagawa opened at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, as part of a festival in which Shakespeare's complete works were staged in the course of a year. *Titus* is a dramatization of the bloody and inexorable logic of revenge in a militarized world where the highest value is placed upon the code of honor. For Shakespeare and his original audiences, imperial Rome was synonymous with such a culture; the Ninagawa production powerfully aligned the play with samurai codes of behavior (twenty years earlier, the same director had achieved a similar cultural translation in an internationally acclaimed staging of *Macbeth*). This *Titus* was an abstract and brief chronicle of several eras at once: Ninagawa followed Shakespeare in skillfully collapsing several phases of ancient Roman history into one (primitive, republican, imperial, decadent), while at the same time spectators were conscious of both Shakespeare's sixteenth-century England and the enduring influence of samurai Japan. But the play also resonated with the present: at the same time in Iraq two American soldiers had their throats slit in revenge for the death in an air strike two weeks earlier of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of

Al Qaeda in Iraq. According to the Mujahedeen Shura Council, this ritualized act of vengeance was carried out personally by al-Zarqawi's successor—just as Titus exacts revenge with his own remaining hand. As long as we have wars, rape, codes of honor, and violent acts of revenge, Shakespeare's tragic vision will go on being contemporary. As long as we continue to be fascinated by human relationships—children rebelling against parents, mothers struggling to let their sons grow up and break free, best friends falling for the same girl, servants and counselors who are wiser than their masters, ordinary people using jokes as a way of deflating those in authority—his comic vision will also remain alive.

People are not really killed on the Shakespearean stage—nor do people speak highly rhetorical five-beat iambic pentameter verse lines in real life. Thus, there can be no such thing as an entirely naturalistic staging of Shakespeare. (Stylistically, the kind of drama from which he is furthest is soap opera—though, gloriously, for all the fine language and exotic settings, many of his plots and themes inhabit the same realm as those of the soaps.) Every production has to maintain a delicate balance between creating the illusion of reality and self-consciously acknowledging the theatrical process. Shakespeare loved that duality, which is why one of his favorite devices is what critics call "metadrama": plays-within-the-play, impersonation and dressing-up, allusions to the world as theater and life as acting, direct addresses to the audience, choric figures who are both inside and outside the action.

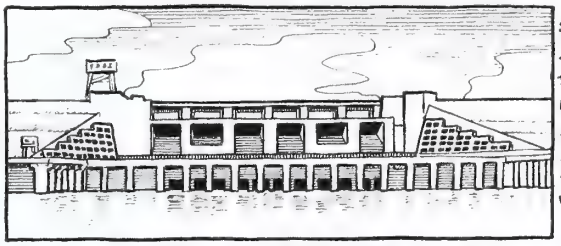
In Shakespeare's world, character is not predetermined. People become themselves through action, dialogue, the process of thinking. Drama is a basic tool for discovery of the self, achieved through exile, disguise, soliloquy, and scenic counterpoint. For Shakespeare, value is not absolute. It depends upon reflection, as when a person's "virtues shining upon others/Heat them, and they retort that heat again/To the first giver" (*Troilus and Cressida*). Shakespeare's theory of human relativity is made possible by his dramatic medium, by double plots, contradictions between word and action, and the constant presence of a questioning audience.

In our journey through life, a character's journey through a play, do we find a core of "self" or do we make ourselves up as we go along? In Shakespeare, those with pre-written scripts find their plotted stories disrupted: Prospero, Angelo, the men in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shylock, Bertram, Leontes, Henry IV, Coriolanus, Lear. The powerful exception is Prince Hal/Henry V, who always remains ruthlessly in control of his master plan even as he gives the impression of being just one of the boys. Those who improvise are tl characters who most excite Shakespeare (a us): Hamlet, Falstaff, Lady Macbeth, Beatric Rosalind, Viola, the Bastard in *King John*, Me cutio, Cleopatra, and in their darker way Richa III, Edmund in *Lear*, and Iago. Those who ca not adapt to change inspire our pity (Richard I Othello). At the deepest level, Shakespeare most successful characters are the best actors.

"Shakespeare's plays," wrote Dr. Samuel Joh son in the preface to his edition of 1765, "a not in the rigorous and critical sense eithe tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a di tinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunar nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy an sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportio and innumerable modes of combination; and ex pressing the course of the world, in which the los of one is the gain of another; in which, at the sam time, the reveler is hasting to his wine, and th mourner burying his friend; in which the malig nity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic c another; and many mischiefs and many benefit are done and hindered without design." In Athen in the fifth century before Christ, tragedy an comedy were strictly separated. Tragedy con cerned the downfall of great men and women larger-than-life figures, kings and queens, myth ical heroes and anti-heroes—Agamemnon Clytemnestra, Oedipus, Hercules, Medea. Com edy was filled with ordinary people: petulant fa thers, unruly wives, clever servants, young lover on the make. Arbiters of taste have a tendency to shelter themselves under the wings of tradition For this reason, literary theorists from the six teenth to the eighteenth century regarded the practices of the ancients as rules to be obeye rather than examples to be admired. In Shake speare's lifetime, Sir Philip Sidney wrote with lofty disdain of the "mongrel tragi-comedy" that was the staple fare of the London stage.

Johnson's preface to Shakespeare was written in a spirit of English empiricism that did not worry itself about neoclassical rules. "There is always an appeal open from criticism to nature," he says: Shakespeare's plays are great for the very reason that they mingle joy with sorrow and high with low. They may not conform to the model of the ancients, but they are true to life. The fall of the mighty is only part of the picture. Even Shakespeare's severest tragedies have their comedians: the Porter in *Macbeth*, *Lear*'s Fool. Even his happiest comedies have their malcontents: Jaques in *As You Like It*, Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*. We might even say that all Shakespeare's plays are tragicomedies, and that is one of the principal reasons why his drama is, as Dr. Johnson also recognized, "the mirror of life." And why it remains so vibrantly alive on page, stage, and screen some four centuries after his death. ■

December 2004. On the Euphrates River, in Iraq's volatile Anbar province, on one of the top levels of the Haditha Dam, isolated from the reserve marines of the 1st Battalion of the 23rd Regiment, which is headquartered here, two U.S. servicemen are tasked with shaping a motley group from the Iraqi National Guard (I.N.G.) into the sort of self-motivated, competent soldiers that can—in the words of President George W. Bush—"stand up" so that we can "stand down."





Joe Sacco's most recent book of comics journalism is The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo.


Ahmed, the interpreter, translates, and—
ON YOUR FACE!
ON YOUR FACE!
DOWN! UP! DOWN! UP!
GET OFF YOUR KNEES!
Sgt. Weaver and his Navy colleagu Petty Officer 2n Class Scott "Doc Saba, have just three weeks to whip these guys into shape befor they'll be expecte to "accompany and assist" marine on patrol, and so the Iraqis had better learn a few basic commands—in English—'cause any mistake out there and a bunc of friendlies are gonna get killed
THREE WRONG: 30 PUSH UPS
HE SAYS HIS STOMACH HURTS.
I DON'T CARE!
HEY!
GET YOUR DICK OFF THE GROUND!
WHY ARE YOU FUCKING THE GROUND?
FOUR WRONG: 40 PUSH UPS
Sgt. Weaver, 28, a heavy equipment service manager in his civilian life in Crosby, Texas, can't believe these guys. They'd gone over the formations "with little army men" again and again.
One hapless fellow can't get past his 20th push up so an even harder exercise is substituted.
Doc Saba, a 37-year-old paramedic from Plymouth, Massachusetts, demonstrates.
THEY'RE CALLED BUTTERFLY KICKS.
IF I CAN GET MY SIX-YEAR-OLD SON TO DO THEM—AND HE'S TINIER THAN YOU—YOU CAN DO THEM.
I DO THEM WHILE I'M TALKING TO MY WIFE OR SON OR WHILE I'M WATCHING T.V.


inally. here s one guards-man left—
the one who cheated.
ON YOUR FACE!
DOWN! UP!
DOWN! UP!
COME ON, BOOT! YOU CAN DO IT!
GET OFF YOUR KNEES!
IF YOU HADN'T CHEATED, YOU WOULDN'T BE IN THIS PO-SITION!
THAT'S 30!
Twenty more to go!
ARE YOU GONNA CRY?
ARE YOU GONNA CRY LIKE A LITTLE BABY?
DOES IT HURT?
I BET YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHEAT ANY-MORE, ARE YOU?
The Iraqi can't do another push up.
Okay!
He's sen-tenced to 25 leg lifts then!
GET 'EM UP! GET 'EM UP!
YOU STILL HAVE TO TAKE THE TEST OVER!
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR CHEAT-ING!
J. SACCO '06


FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ACED THE TEST, EXCELLENT JOB!
YOU HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION BECAUSE IF YOUR FIRE TEAM LEADER GETS KILLED IN COMBAT, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STEP UP AND TAKE OVER.
NEXT WEEK WE GET ON THE RIFLE RANGE.
YOU'VE GO TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING OR SOLDIERS AR GOING TO GE SHOT IN TH BACK.
While the men go over the answers to the quiz, Sgt. Weaver steps over to where I've been sitting taking notes.
SOME OF THEM ARE UNEDUCATED.
In fact, only five of the 14 can read and write.
THEY'RE BACKWOODS BOYS.
SOME OF THEM HAVE NO COMMON SENSE, NO COMPREHENSION SKILLS.
It's time to check the make-up test of the guardsman who cheated.
Oops!
He still got three wrong!
I TOLD YOU WE COULD DO IT THE EASY WAY AND LEARN, OR WE CAN DO IT THROUGH PAIN!
Sgt. Weaver orders the fellow into a stress position and tells him to hold it for ten minutes.
EVERY TIME YOU STAND OR TOUCH YOUR LEGS OR ANYTHING, WE'LL START THE TEN MINUTES AGAIN!
I'LL GET IN YOUR MIND!
Before too long, the guardsman squirms upright and drops his arms. He's made to start again. Minutes later he's babbling.
IF YOU WANT TO GO HOME TO MOMMA, I'LL CALL HER!
J. SACCO '06


...ow it's ...oc Saba's turn.
DON'T EVER WRITE ANSWERS ON YOUR HAND.
EVER.
THAT'S CHEATING.
CHEATING DISHONORS YOURSELF.
WHEN I SEE SGT. WEAVER, I FORGET EVERYTHING...
YOU NEED TO REMEMBER YOUR 'RIGHT' FROM YOUR 'LEFT.'
Sgt. Weaver, too, worries that they haven't got the basics down. He reviews hand signals they should know by now.
DIRECTION LEFT!
STOP FIRE!
ENEMY, 300 METERS!
They yell out the answers in English like happy school kids.
Sgt. Weaver promises real combat training after chow.
SO ALL OF YOU WHO ARE PISSED OFF AT ME, YOU CAN KICK MY ASS...
The Iraqis are given Meals Ready to Eat.
They pester Ahmed to translate what the packets and pouches contain.
THESE GUYS ARE IN MORE DANGER THAN WE ARE.
THERE'S MORE OF THEM GETTING KILLED OFF EVERY WEEK THAN AMERICANS AND COALITION FORCES.
WE GET THEM OUT OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND UP HERE 'CAUSE THERE'S NO TRIBAL CONNECTION AND THEY'LL BE ABLE TO FIGHT.
J SACCO 7.06


In fact, none of these men, who were already in the I.N.G., knew they were in for this Marine boot camp stuff. One day they were locked in a room, and the next they were in vehicles heading for Haditha Dam. For security reasons they were not told where they were going; their loved ones still do not know they are here.
The idea is eventually to reunite them with their families at some location far from their home villages, thus snapping the old loyalties
After their three-week course, Doc Saba tells me, they'll have a graduation ceremony where awards will be given to the best and the most-improved trainee.
WE'RE GETTING A PATCH DESIGNED FOR THEM, SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF.
WITHOUT THAT PATCH, AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, YOU'RE NOT AN I.N.G. SOLDIER.
SABA
Doc Saba, who was attached to the scout snipers, and Sgt. Weaver, who was pulled from the battalion's motor transport unit, put this program together in just two weeks.
I LOVE DOING THIS SHIT.
I LOVE YELLING AT PEOPLE.
After lunch, Sgt. Weaver demonstrates the "basic warrior stance."
STEP! PLACE! STEP! PLACE!
It's time for the Iraqis to try.
BACK! BACK! BACK!
FORWARD! FORWARD! FORWARD!
J SACCO 7.06

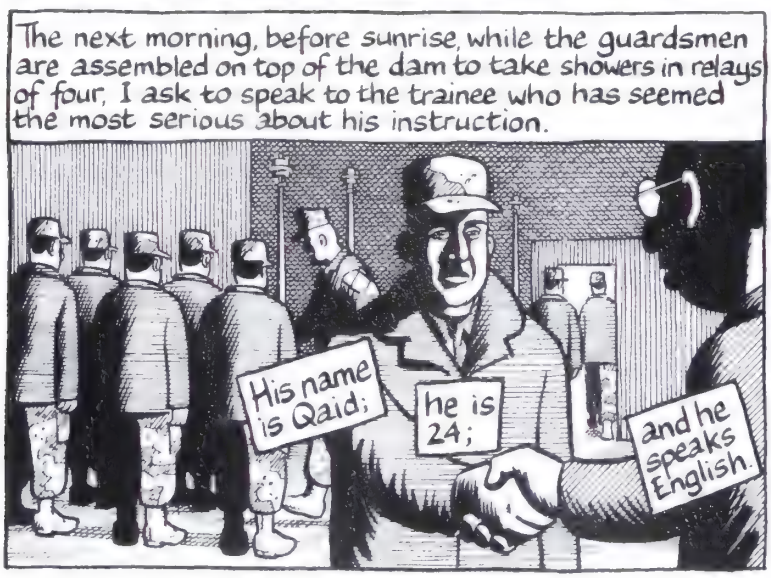

A few minutes later, the lesson disintegrates.
YOU'VE GOT SO MUCH ENERGY TO PLAY AROUND-?
EVERY-ONE, ON YOUR FACE!
DOWN!
UP!
DOWN!
UP!
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO STAND AROUND AND BOX AND KISS AND TOUCH EACH OTHER'S BUTTS!
PLAY TIME IS OVER!
THIS SHIT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!
Sgt. Weaver tries organizing them again, but pretty soon they're cruising for another round of push ups.
DOWN!
UP!
YOU'RE FUCKING THE GROUND!
But Sgt. Weaver isn't satisfied he's made his point.
He gets them into a new position and makes them hold it till they collapse.
Doc Saba tells them he can be just as ferocious, but—
—I'M JUST NOT IN A SHOUTING MOOD TODAY...
IF SGT. WEAVER AND I CAN'T TRUST YOU WITH PAYING ATTENTION AND LISTENING TO US, THEN THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE GOING TO PUT A WEAPON IN YOUR HANDS.
USHER
J. SACCO 8.06

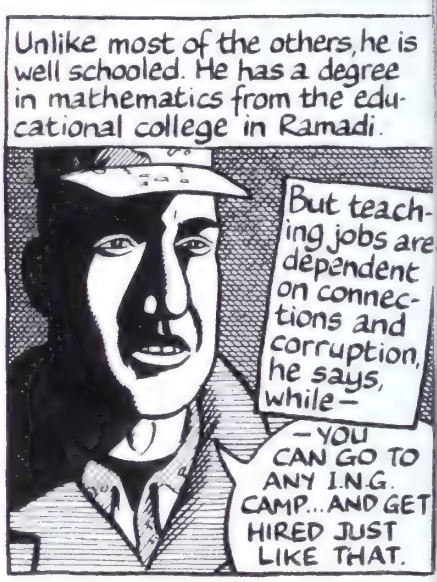

THIS IS NO JOKING MATTER. WE ARE TRAINING YOU FOR A REASON.
YOU JOINED ON YOUR OWN INTO THE I.N.G. I DIDN'T FORCE YOU TO JOIN.
BEING A SOLDIER IS NOT EASY WORK.


Meanwhile, one guy still hasn't come to his feet. He's complainin about his hips. Not even Sgt. Weave can shout him off the ground.


Doc Saba listens to the guardsman, but Sgt. Weaver's not having any of it.
LOOK AT THAT GUY. HE SAYS HE'S 28 BUT HE LOOKS 40.
HE SIMPLY HAS NEVER EXERCISED IN HIS LIFE, THAT'S WHY HIS MUSCLES ARE ACH-ING.
WE HAVE TO TEAR DOWN THE RECRUITS IN ORDER TO BUILD THEM UP.


WE'RE NOT TRYING TO KILL YOU...
I AM.


The next morning, before sunrise, while the guardsmen are assembled on top of the dam to take showers in relays of four, I ask to speak to the trainee who has seemed the most serious about his instruction.
His name is Qaid;
he is 24;
and he speaks English.

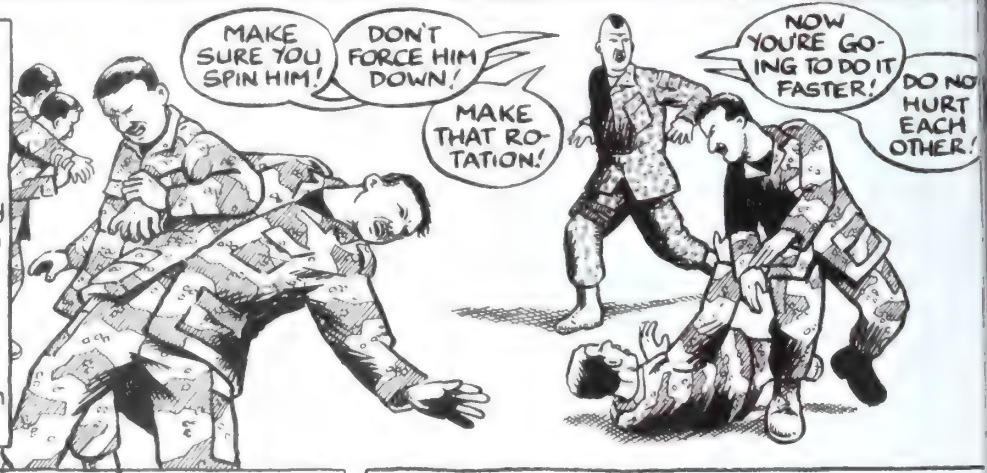

Unlike most of the others, he is well schooled. He has a degree in mathematics from the educational college in Ramadi.
But teaching jobs are dependent on connections and corruption, he says, while—
—YOU CAN GO TO ANY I.N.G. CAMP... AND GET HIRED JUST LIKE THAT.

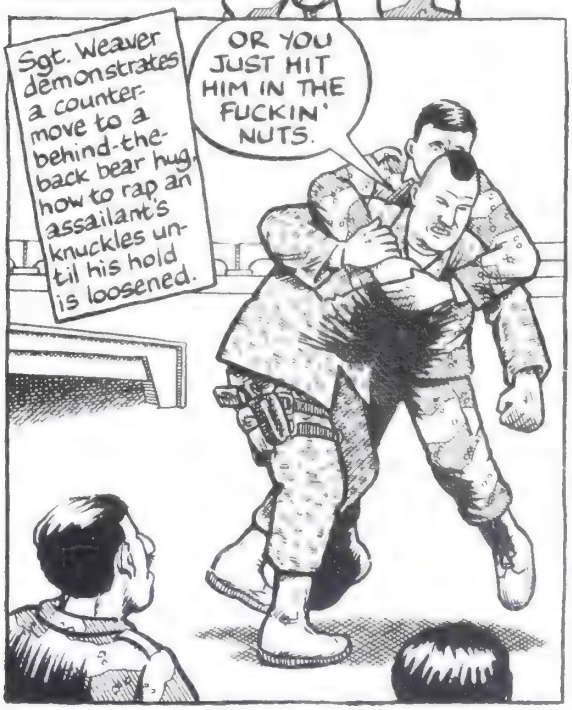

nd even though the I.N.G. is targeted relentlessly by the insurgents, it offers Qaid one of the only steady sources of income available to him.
I AM A POOR MAN.
THERE ARE 14 PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY...
IT'S A HARD SITUATION IN GENERAL.
Qaid has other reasons for earning money any way he can.
I WAS IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN, BUT I COULDN'T MARRY HER BECAUSE I AM VERY POOR AND SHE IS FROM A HIGH CLASS FAMILY. I'LL DO ANYTHING IN THE WORLD TO MARRY HER.
But now he is having second thoughts about the I.N.G.
I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS COMING TO HADITHA.
I DON'T WANT TO STAY IN THE GUARD.
FIRST THING, I LIKE THE CIVILIAN LIFE.
THE MILITARY LIFE NOW IN IRAQ IS UGLY.
THIRD, MOST OF THE OFFICERS ARE CORRUPT.
He says he intends to "quit" in a couple of months.
I HOPE IN THE FUTURE TO HAVE A SCHOLARSHIP TO GET TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.
AND I WILL TRY TO GET ANOTHER CITIZENSHIP...
THEN I WILL BE HAPPY — BECAUSE I AM FINISHED WITH IRAQ.
RUN IN AND TELL OMER, IF HE CAN'T GET OUT OF THE SHOWER NOW, I'M GONNA CUT HIS DICK OFF!
I KNOW ARABIC, TOO.
'GET THE FUCK OVER HERE!'
THEY SEEM TO KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
J SACCO 8.06



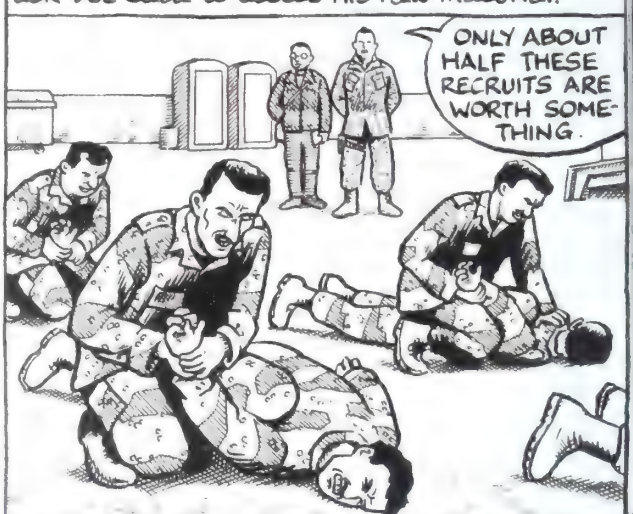


Today's class takes place on top of the dam. After some warm ups, the guardsmen are paired up to try the moves they learned yesterday. They seem enthusiastic about this kung fu stuff, about inflicting pain on their partners.





While the guardsmen continue their training, I ask Doc Saba to assess his raw material.



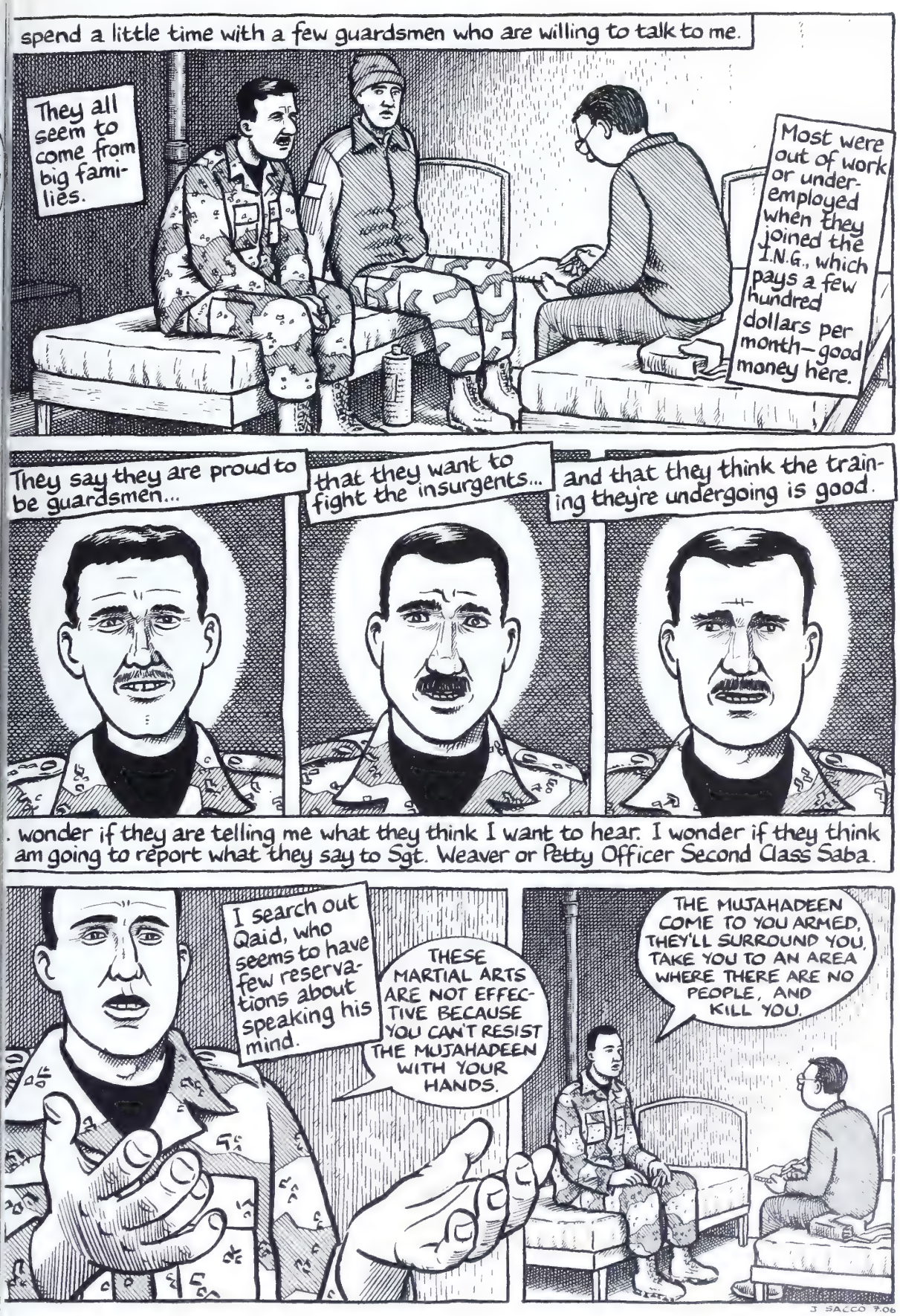
In any case, he says, this course is too short. They need six or even eight weeks' training to be "minimally" ready to patrol with marines.

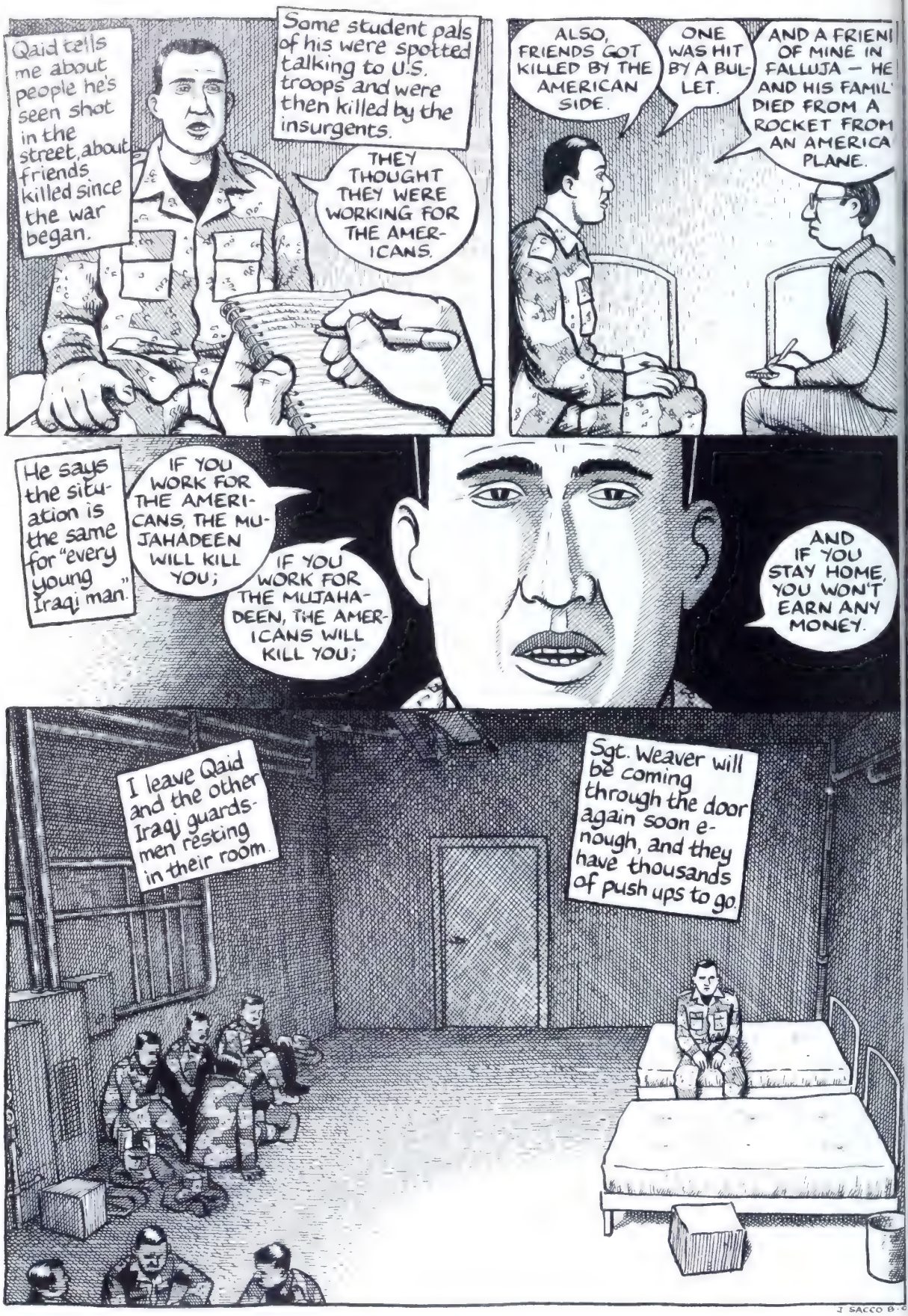

Soon they'll be put on the firing range to test their proficiency on the A.K.47.
They'll be given only six rounds each, just in case—
Well, just in case they're bad guys bent on a killing spree.
AS FAR AS TRUST, WE DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THESE GUYS. IT NEVER FAILS THAT THE MUJAHADEEN PUT INSURGENTS AND SPIES AMONG THE RECRUITS.
Meanwhile, Sgt. Weaver has caught two Iraqis smoking cigarette butts and fibbing about where they got 'em.
YOU LIE TO ME AND I'LL SHOOT YOU!
And maybe he will, too!
He's drawn his pistol and loaded a clip!
I WILL SHOOT YOU IF YOU LIE TO ME ON PATROL!
YOUR LIES MIGHT COST MARINE LIVES!
After that drama ends without casualties, Sgt. Weaver lines up the guardsmen to test them individually on their hand-to-hand skills.
He barks out the maneuver he wants to see.
STRONG-SIDE WRIST LOCK!
Few of the Iraqis get the moves right.
I TOLD YOU TO FUCKING PAY ATTENTION!
YOU DIDN'T DO IT!
Sgt. Weaver starts throwing the guys who get the moves wrong.
T SACCO 8-06


One of the younger trainees can't do a "leg sweep"...
so Sgt. Weaver does one for him.
Ouch!
MY HEAD! MY HEAD!
YOU'RE CRYING LIKE A FUCKING BABY!
YOU'RE A GROWN MAN, NOT A LITTLE BOY!
Doc Saba steps in. He thinks the fellow might actually be hurt.
MY HEAD!
HE'S PROBABLY NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT IN HIS LIFE.
MY HEAD...
The kid sits out the rest of the lesson but he can't stop shaking.
By the way, everyone's shivering in the crisp December air.
ARE YOU ALL FUCKING COLD?
ON YOUR FACE!
DOWN!
UP!
DOWN!
UP!
A few minutes later, Sgt. Weaver is at wit's end. Only two of the 14 guardsmen perform the hand-to-hand drill to his satisfaction.
ALL RIGHT, DOC. I'M DONE.
IT'S KILLING ME.


e
inks
nly
ive of
the
guards-
men are
worth
his
time.
THE REST OF THEM, THEY ARE KIDS.
THEY ARE NOT MEN.
THE ONES THAT ARE MEN, THEY ARE RETARD-ED.
Today's lesson sputters to an end, and it's time for a pep talk.
WHEN THE FUCKIN' MUJ JUMPS IN YOUR FACE, YOU'LL START PISSING AND SHITTING YOUR PANTS!
INSTEAD OF BEING AN I.N.G. SOLDIER, YOU'LL GO HOME TO MOMMA AND PUT HER TITTIE IN YOUR MOUTH AND START SUCKING!
IF I WAS YOU, I'D TAKE THAT TITTIE OUT OF MY MOUTH...
WEAVER
U.S. MARINES
GROW THE HELL UP...
AND GET THE JOB DONE!
Doc Saba lets them know about a group of Iraqi police just executed in Tikrit.
THE MUJ PULLED 12 POLICE OUT OF THEIR POLICE STATION... THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
AFTER THEY'D DONE KILLING THE POLICE OFFI-CERS, THEY THREW A SATCHEL CHARGE IN THE POLICE STA-TION AND BLEW IT UP.
THE MUJAHADEEN DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT YOU.
WE'RE TRY-ING TO TEACH YOU THE TRAIN-ING SO YOU CAN STAY ALIVE.
THE MUJ ARE REAL.
THE BULLETS ARE REAL.
AND IF YOU GET KILLED, THAT'S REAL.
J SACCO 7.06


He tells them they'll be expected to encourage others to join the I.N.G. Then:
PRESIDENT BUSH WANTS TO SEE YOUR COUNTRY SUCCEED.
PRESIDENT BUSH HAS HELPED YOUR COUNTRY A LOT...
DON'T LET HIM DOWN.
I DON'T THINK THEY GRASP WHY THEY'RE HERE.
After the session breaks up, I have a word with Ahmed, the translator, in the guardsmen's quarters. He has echoed Sgt. Weaver's commands all day, yell for yell.
He tells me about another translator, a friend of his, who recently was killed by insurgents.
THEY MUTILATED HIM AND LEFT HIM WITH HIS I.D. AND HIS PAYCHECK.
HE WAS WITH A MALE AND A FEMALE INTERPRETER, ALSO KILLED.
AFTER I HEARD ABOUT THEM, I WAS SHOCKED.
MY FAMILY IS PUTTING PRESSURE ON ME TO STOP THIS WORK.
BUT I'D WORK FOR FREE.
I WANT THESE PEOPLE TO GET ON THEIR FEET...
IF THEY DIE, THEY EACH BETTER KILL ONE OF THE INSURGENTS.
ALL THESE GUYS WANT TO QUIT.
THEY DON'T WANT TO DO THE HARD WORK.
THEY'RE ALL THINKING THAT THE AMERICANS GET PISSED OFF AND HAVE COME TO CHEW THEIR ASSES.
AMERICANS WANT THEM TO BE STRONG.
J. SACCO 8.06


spend a little time with a few guardsmen who are willing to talk to me.
They all seem to come from big families.
Most were out of work or under-employed when they joined the I.N.G., which pays a few hundred dollars per month—good money here.
They say they are proud to be guardsmen...
that they want to fight the insurgents...
and that they think the training they're undergoing is good.
. wonder if they are telling me what they think I want to hear. I wonder if they think am going to report what they say to Sgt. Weaver or Petty Officer Second Class Saba.
I search out Qaid, who seems to have few reservations about speaking his mind.
THESE MARTIAL ARTS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T RESIST THE MUJAHADEEN WITH YOUR HANDS.
THE MUJAHADEEN COME TO YOU ARMED, THEY'LL SURROUND YOU, TAKE YOU TO AN AREA WHERE THERE ARE NO PEOPLE, AND KILL YOU.
J SACCO 7.06


Qaid tells me about people he's seen shot in the street, about friends killed since the war began.
Some student pals of his were spotted talking to U.S. troops and were then killed by the insurgents.
THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE WORKING FOR THE AMERICANS.
ALSO, FRIENDS GOT KILLED BY THE AMERICAN SIDE.
ONE WAS HIT BY A BULLET.
AND A FRIEND OF MINE IN FALLUJA — HE AND HIS FAMILY DIED FROM A ROCKET FROM AN AMERICAN PLANE.
He says the situation is the same for "every young Iraqi man."
IF YOU WORK FOR THE AMERICANS, THE MUJAHADEEN WILL KILL YOU;
IF YOU WORK FOR THE MUJAHADEEN, THE AMERICANS WILL KILL YOU;
AND IF YOU STAY HOME, YOU WON'T EARN ANY MONEY.
I leave Qaid and the other Iraqi guardsmen resting in their room.
Sgt. Weaver will be coming through the door again soon enough, and they have thousands of push ups to go.
J SACCO 8-06

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DIETARY-INDU

Giving the Muslim worl

An army, it is said, marches on its stomach. And in the wars the United States has waged since September 11, the nation has had to provide not only for its own troops but also for friends and even foes entangled in its operations abroad. Prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, translators in Afghanistan, a quickly ramped-up Iraqi army—the U.S. military feeds them all, and not just any fare: these rations are Islamically sanctioned, halal versions of the military's own go-anywhere, high-calorie Meals Ready to Eat (MREs). Over the past five years, millions of these halal MRE packs have been prepared at home and shipped to the remote fronts in America's global fight. The massive dietary operation, though, has proven almost as difficult to carry out as its military complement. Feeding the Muslim world, it turns out, is not that different from policing it.

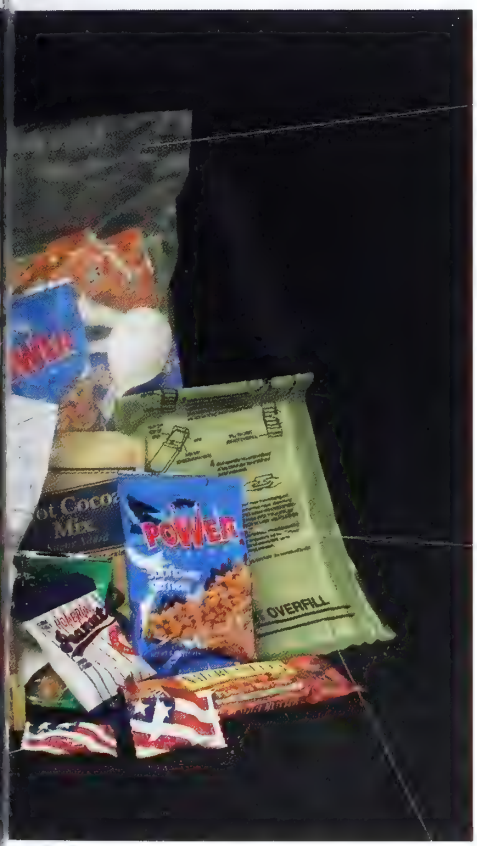


Just as with war, you cannot do a halal MRE on the cheap. Every single ingredient of every piece of food in the meals must meet exacting certification standards. Foods flavored with vanilla extract, which includes alcohol, are *haram*, or forbidden, as are most mass-produced bakery goods, which frequently contain a nonessential amino acid derived from human hair. The meats in the halal entrées, such as in this Chicken Mediterranean, must be specially butchered—the slaughter supervised, the animals prayed over, the blood properly drained. The entrées are then assembled in a plant that is triple-cleaned before work begins, to ensure that no non-halal scraps lurk in the machinery. Because the company contracted to make the meals provides the military with kosher MREs as well, it had hoped to save costs by combining its operations. A rabbi, a halal butcher, and the company's lawyer met to figure out whether chickens might be killed in a way that simultaneously satisfied the dietary laws of both faiths. After a long day of trying to slaughter a theoretical bird, all had to admit that it couldn't be done.

A hungry Iraqi soldier, on ripping open one of these MREs, might be inclined to think of the Americans less as liberators than as imperial invaders and occupiers. Everything in the packs is made 100 percent in the USA, and the meals are chock-full of iconic American food brands, such as these Kellogg's Froot Loops. (According to his U.S. guards, Saddam Hussein hated the stuff and often tried to trade them for boxes of Kellogg's Raisin Bran.) Indeed, the halal MRE forces one to partake of a smorgasbord of America itself—candies covered in U.S.-flag wrappers, images of baseball, professional golf, and the heartland. The meals even include these "New York style" bagel chips, their bag emblazoned with a rendering of a Manhattan skyline.

[AL COMPLEX

ıerica, *by Jen Banbury*



Once the halal MREs have been bagged and sealed at a plant in Illinois, they take their place among the millions of items that the military sends overseas each month. On their ocean voyage from a distribution center in Pennsylvania to the port of Kuwait, the meals might cruise among Humvees, modular-housing parts, boots, or body bags. To get to depots in Iraq, the MREs then travel in military-escorted convoys along the Main Supply Route Tampa. The convoys, as "soft targets," are regularly ambushed or attacked, and more than seventy contracted drivers have been killed since 2003. Although the military claims that the hijacking of supplies is a minor problem, many of the halal meals have disappeared. Last March, the makers of the halal MREs received an email from a Pakistani shop owner who said the meals had saturated his town's black market. "please care . . . when u send it to pakistan its not going o afghanistan its beeing sale . . . by pakistani's and its haveing too much trouble for our buisnes please do something."

With the American effort to ready an independent Iraqi army falling gravely short, some in the military contend that the halal MREs haven't exactly helped. According to a U.S. lieutenant tasked with this training, Iraqis find the meals inedible and would rather "kick them" than eat them. Iraqi troops at a combat outpost near Ramadi told a reporter there that these "Power" brand sunflower kernels were especially unpalatable. The Marines at the outpost, for their part, were more than happy to take the sunflower kernels and any other rejected halal items off the Iraqis' hands—brand-name goods being preferable alternatives to the generics in the Marines' own MREs. In fact, the halal meals eventually had to be kept under lock and key, to make sure that U.S. troops didn't deprive Iraqis of their rations entirely.

"We have the finest food, the finest equipment, the best spirit," George Patton said of the U.S. military in 1944. "I actually pity those poor sons-of-bitches we're going up against." Today, each time a terror suspect or Iraqi recruit tears into a halal MRE, he is meant to experience this prowess firsthand, in part through such awe-inspiring equipment as this heating pouch, which in seconds warms an MRE entrée to more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. But unlike WWII, our current wars have done much to call American superiority into question. The Pentagon already is trying to relinquish as many logistical aspects of its disastrous occupation of Iraq as possible, including its control of the National Depot and the five regional supply centers. And soon the Iraqis will likely choose not to buy America's "finest" military meals, as Turkey, France, India, and China all make less expensive versions of the halal MREs. Even as more than 20,000 additional U.S. troops are being sent to Iraq, as part of President Bush's "new strategy," the dietary mission there is steadily being drawn down. ■

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LITERARY ENTRAILS

The boys in the alley, the disappearing readers, and the novel's ghostly twin

By Cynthia Ozick



"On or about December 1910," Virginia Woolf wrote nearly one hundred years ago, "human character changed." The phrase has come down to us mockingly, notoriously, but also with the truth-like endurance of a maxim. By a change in human character, Woolf meant modernism, and by modernism she meant the kind of overt self-consciousness that identifies and interrogates its own motions and motives. Set forth in "Character in Fiction," an essay arguing for innovation in the novel, it was an aesthetic rather than an essentialist proposition. The change—a new dispensation of premise and utterance—had been wickedly heralded two years before, on an August afternoon in 1908, when Lytton Strachey happened to notice a stain on Woolf's sister's skirt. "Semen?" Strachey inquired, as definitively as the final squeal of a hinge: a door flung shut for the last time. Behind that door lurked the muzzled premodern, and before it swarmed what modernism has long since made of us (and postmodernism even more so): harriers of the hour, soothsayers and pulse-takers, augurs and dowsers, examiners of entrails. Literary entrails especially: many are the stains subject to writerly divination.

And so it was that in April 1996, Jonathan Franzen published in these pages a manifesto on the situation of the contemporary novelist (with himself as chief specimen and proof text), and the character of bookish querulousness changed. What had been muttered mutedly in *cénacles* and bars erupted uninhibitedly in print, as flagrante delicto as any old spot of early-twentieth-century semen. *The Corrections*, Franzen's ambitious and celebrated literary best-seller, had not yet appeared; he was still a mostly obscure fiction writer whose two previous novels, though praised by reviewers, had slid into the usual quicksand of forgotten books.

When a little-known writer undertakes a manifesto—a statement, after all, of sober purpose and principle—it is likely also to be a cri de coeur, and its reasoned argument will derive from the intimate wounds of autobiogra-

Cynthia Ozick's most recent book is The Din in the Head, *a collection of essays.*

"Draft," by Thomas Allen. Courtesy Foley Gallery, New York City

"I'd intended to provoke; what I got instead," Franzen said of his first novel, "was sixty reviews in a vacuum." Even sixty reviews, he made plain, was not sufficient: it was not equivalent to a public event, attention was not being paid, certainly not in the coin of genuine Fame, and the vacuum in question was the airlessness of writer's depression.

It was a brave stand, then, to issue a manifesto in the form of a turbulent confluence of introspective memoir and cultural analysis; nor was it a career move, despite its publication in a major magazine. Literary essays are generally well beneath popular notice, and Franzen's piece, though pumped up by anecdote ("When I got off the phone, I couldn't stop laughing") and political apocalypse ("the United States seemed to me . . . terminally out of touch with reality"), aroused its expected flurry among the literati, but was overlooked by Oprah. It took *The Corrections* to catch the eye, and then the ire, of television's publishing goddess, and Franzen's fame was confirmed. Retrospectively, if the success of *The Corrections* had not catapulted Franzen into precisely those precincts of the literary stratosphere he had so ringingly and publicly coveted, his manifesto might have disintegrated, like all other articles of passing faith, into a half-remembered bleat.

This has not happened—partly because Franzen continues as a noted writerly presence, and partly because his observations of a decade ago have failed to escape the transience of mere personal complaint. There was plenty of the latter, embedded in irritating trivia, to wit: " . . . even as I was sanctifying the reading of literature, I was becoming so depressed that I could do little after dinner but flop in front of the TV. Even without cable, I could always find something delicious: Phillies and Padres, Eagles and Bengals, M*A*S*H, *Cheers*, *Homicide*." More complaint followed, about the discouraging fate of a second novel: "But the result was the same: another report card with A's and B's from the reviewers who had replaced the teachers whose approval, when I was younger, I had both craved and taken no satisfaction from; decent sales; and the deafening silence of irrelevance"—all this as if private grievance could rise to societal position-taking. Yet the deafening silence of irrelevance was, finally, the undergirding of Franzen's point: that the common culture has undermined the novelist's traditional role as news-bringer. Novelists, he said, "do feel a responsibility to dramatize important issues of the day, and they now confront a culture in which almost all the issues are burned out almost all of the time." They are burned out by the proliferating, instantaneous, and superior technological sources of what Franzen calls "social instruction."

His subject, in short, was the decline of reading in an electronic age, when scores of plots, shocks, titillations, and unfolding dramatic disclosures, shot out daily by the reality-machines of radio, television, the Internet, and the journalist's up-to-the-nanosecond confiding cell phone, appear to supply all the storytelling seductions anyone might thirst after. Franzen was hardly the first writer to notice this; he acknowledged that Philip Roth, three decades earlier, was already despairing of the novel's viability in the face of mad actuality's pervasive power. Franzen's thesis was not fresh, but neither was it stale. What *was* new was his linking the question of public literacy with marketplace lust, with—in an idiom Norman Podhoretz made famous nearly forty years ago—Making It. Having confessed to a blatant desire for success ("the dirty little secret"), Podhoretz was roundly excoriated, so much so that if flogging had been legal, the reigning literary-intellectual tribe of that period would have come after him with a forest of cat-o'-nine-tails. It was a time, moreover, when the publication of a serious literary novel was an exuberant communal event; only recall how *The Naked and the Dead*, or *The Adventures of Augie March*, was received. And it was a time, paradoxically, when serious writers looked down on the wider publishing marketplace and were sedulously detached from it: "popular" novelists were scorned. No one spoke of the decline of reading, because it had not yet occurred.

All that is nowadays obsolete. Ambition, even of the kind termed naked, no longer invites elitist denunciation. Writers who define themselves by the loftiest standards of literary art are happy to be counted as popular; the lucky ones gratefully, not to say covetously, accept the high advances that signify the hope for a six-digit readership. Fifty years ago, Lionel Trilling, the paramount critic of the American mid-century, inveighed against the democratic wider audience and the "l[ow] advertising appropriation" that accompanied it as corrupting forces, even as he worshipped Hemingway, who had the largest readership of any serious novelist then writing. In an essay titled "The Function of the Literary Magazine" (referring to the literary quarterlies that once occupied the pinnacle of intellectual prestige), Trilling recommended the most ideal readership of all, no matter how closed or small or invisible or abstract or imaginary. "The writer must define his audience by its abilities, by its perfections," he insisted. "He does well, he cannot see his right audience with in immediate reach of his voice, to direct his words to his spiritual ancestors, or to posterity, or even if need be, to a coterie."

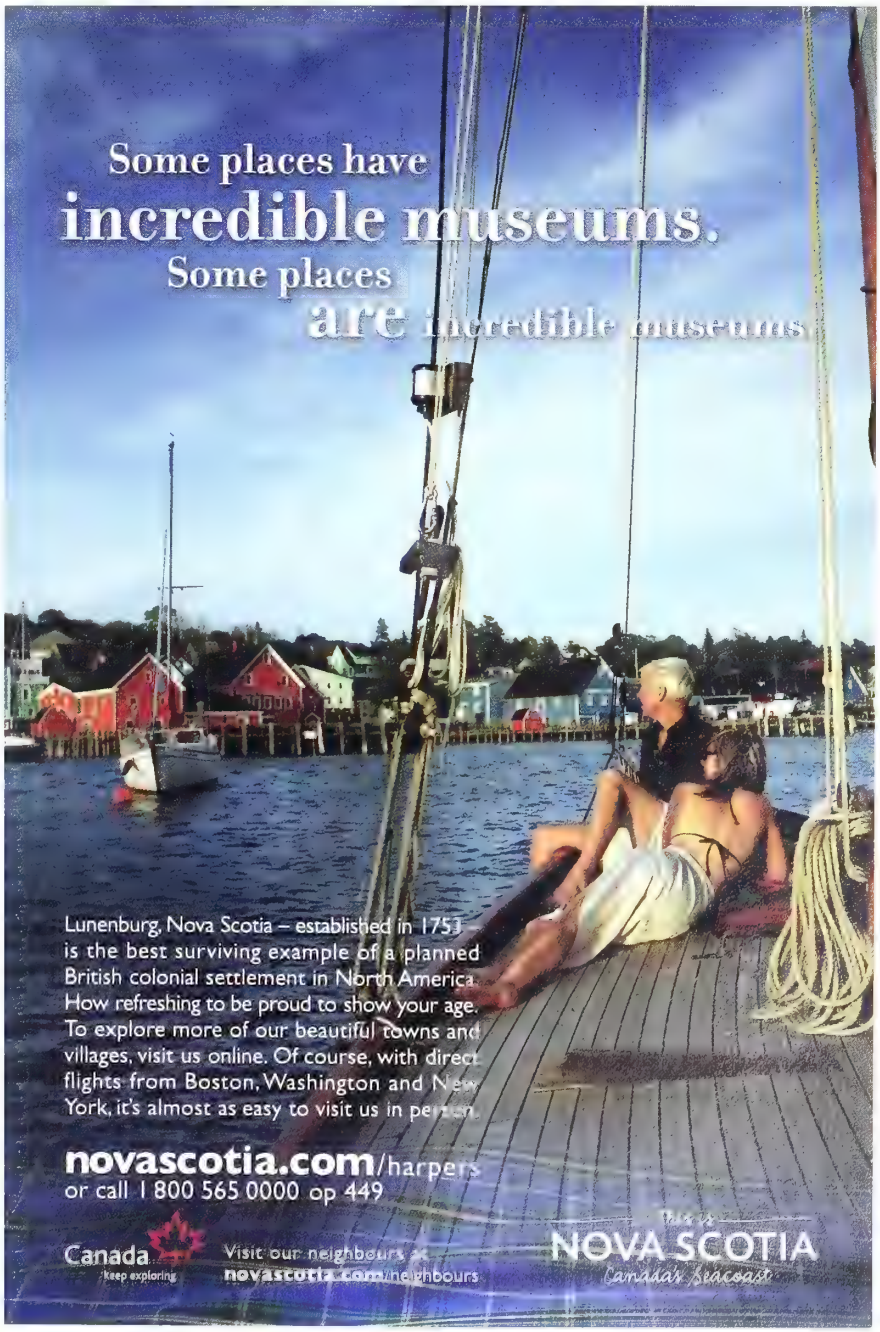
A coterie! Spiritual ancestors! Posterity! Such martyred satisfaction are a long way from Franzen's appetite or the appetite of his contemporaries. Trilling demanded a self-denying purity; purity for the sake of a higher purity. Franzen, more pragmatic and businesslike, talks numbers. "The educated single New Yorker who in 1945 read twenty-five serious novels in a year today has time for maybe five," he writes. "That hard core is a very small prize to be divided among a very large number of working novelists," and he tots up the few who, back in 1996, "actually hit the charts": "Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* has sold nearly a million copies in the last two years; the hardcover literary best-seller *The Crossing*, by Cormac McCarthy, came in on the *Publishers Weekly* annual best-seller list." (Up there in Paradise among his spiritual ancestors, one can hear Lionel Trilling's fastidious sighs.) By now, Franzen has caught up with, or perhaps surpassed, those impressive sales figures of ten years ago. And if Trilling cannot be Franzen's spiritual ancestor (he once tried out the purity path, he tells us), it is because our world has left reticence behind: a ret-

ence that, for Franzen, has come to semble "an estrangement from humanity." He calls it that; but what he means is being "known," and escape om the confinements of a small readrship, and finally that desirable state, r trait, that goes by the name of "accessibility." All the same, the terminology of publishing success has grown ofter with the years. Instead of the rash Making It, there is the melanholy worry over the silence of irrelevance. Almost no one, least of all Franzen, is asking for invisible, unheard coteries.

Yet in October of 2005, also in hese pages, Trilling (or his proselytizng shade) made an unexpected comeack, in the form of an answering manesto that challenged Franzen's. Under gaudy banner—"Why Experimental iction Threatens to Destroy Publishng, Jonathan Franzen, and Life as We Cnow It," slyly subtitled "A Correcion"—Ben Marcus, Franzen's dediated antagonist, undertook, Trillingike, to prescribe the nature of his ideal eader. Marcus's reader was not 'ranzen's. Franzen had identified the orn reader as a "social isolate" in childood, an insight supplied to him by a racticing anthropologist. Marcus's own lefinition was derived from the fairy ealm of elixirs and transmutations. "A vriter might be forgiven," he said, "for vishing to slip readers enhancements o their Wernicke's areas [the segment f the human brain responsible for lanuage], doses of a potion that might urn them into fierce little reading machines, devourers of new syntax, fluent interpreters of the most lyrical comlex grammar, so that the more difficult kind of sense writing might strive to nake could find its appropriate Turng machine, and would be revealed o the reader with the delicacy the vriter intended. . . . But these enhancements to Wernicke's area in fact already exist, and they're called books."

As these wishful magickings may intimate, the books Marcus speaks of are not the kinds of books Franzen might champion: conventional social narratives promising pleasure sans difficulty. Ultimately Franzen's credo, as he expressed it nine years before Marcus threw down the gauntlet, is the need to attract and please readers. A declared enemy of audience-friendly writing, Marcus is fearlessly on the side of difficulty: "entirely new syntactical byways," "a poetic aim that believes in the possibility of language to create ghostly frames of sense." Gertrude Stein, Samuel Beckett, and William Gaddis are among his older models, and these he opposes to a "narrative realist mode, which generally builds linearly on what has gone before, subscribes to cinematic verisimilitude, and, when it's not narrating, slaps mortar into an already stable fictional world." Accordingly, he bludgeons Franzen relentlessly: "Language is a poor medium for the kinds of mass entertainment that Franzen seems interested in." And: "He wants literary language to function as modestly as spoken language." And: "He seems desperately frustrated by writers who don't actively court their audiences, who do not strive for his specific kind of clarity, and who take a little too much pleasure in language."

So it is a fight rather than an argument, really—a fight over complexi-



instance of manly bloodletting (Jungian it is that too) as a dust-up over prestige. What has the prior right to swagger in public? It cannot be an argument these two are having—meaning a debate between fundamentally differing positions—because both Franzen and Marcus are in stringent agreement. What they are in agreement about is the necessity of having a readership. Franzen's is large, Marcus's is decidedly smaller—a coterie perhaps, drawn to entirely new syntactical byways and similar hurdles. Each scorns the other's audience; each is content with his own. And both are preoccupied with the recitation of numbers—Franzen earnestly, with those bestseller millions, Marcus derisively, with something called the Fog Index point spread. The Fog Index, he explains, provides statistical proof that Franzen's vocabulary beats Gaddis's by several school grades: Franzen's fog is even thicker than Gaddis's! Then there is the Lexile Framework for Reading, according to which, Marcus points out, Gaddis's prose in *A Frolic of His Own* is "just slightly more readable than the Harry Potter series," while Franzen's far higher readability score is on a par with the abstrusely specialized vocabulary of a manual on how to lay brick. All this recondite mathematical taunting appears in an ample footnote designed to mock Franzen's commitment to popularity and his flaunted disdain for difficulty. Still, it is Gaddis, Marcus gloats, who, for all his simpler words and shorter sentences, remains the more complex writer. So: a punch in the eye for Franzen! The Crips and the Bloods would feel right at home in this alley.

Out of the alley and along the culture's main concourse, both Franzen and Marcus have stumbled into the same deep public ditch—a nearly vacant trench in need of filler. Never mind that one believes in diversion and the other dreams of potions. If the two of them are equally touchy and contentious and competitive, what has made them so is the one great plaint they have in common: *the readers are going away*. Whether they are readers to be lured to Marcus's putative avant-garde experiments or to Franzen's entertainments, it hardly matters. The readers are diminishing, they are going away.

Denis Donoghue, in an essay in the *New Criterion* titled "Defeating the Poem," tells where they are going. An eminent literary scholar, and for thirty years a university professor, Donoghue is here speaking of American undergraduates: the newest crop of potential readers that novelists will try to harvest. "When I started teaching, at University College, Dublin many years ago," he reports,

> I urged students to believe that the merit of reading a great poem, play, or novel consisted in the pleasure of gaining access to deeply imagined lives other than their own. Over the years, that opinion, still cogent to me, seems to have lost much of its persuasive force. Students seem to be convinced that their own lives are the primary and sufficient incentive. They report that reading literature is mainly a burden. Those students who think of themselves as writers and take classes in "creative writing" to define themselves as poets or fiction writers evidently write more than they read, and regard reading as a gross expenditure of time and energy. They are not open to the idea that one learns to write by reading good writers.
>
> In class, many students are ready to talk, but they want to talk either about themselves or about large-scale public themes, independent of the books they are supposedly reading. They are happy to denounce imperialism and colonialism rather than read "Heart of Darkness," *Kim*, and *A Passage to India* in which imperialism and colonialism are held up to complex judgment. They are voluble in giving you their opinions on race and its injustices, but they are tongue-tied when it is a question of submitting to the languages of *The Sound and the Fury*, *Things Fall Apart*, and *A Bend in the River*. They find it arduous to engage with the styles of *Hard Times* and *The Wings of the Dove*, but easy to say what they think about industrialism, adultery, and greed.

So is that where the readers of the next generation are going: to the perdition of egotism and moralizing politicized self-righteousness? The case can be made—Franzen surmised this a decade ago—that these students will never evolve into discriminating readers; or, as Marcus would have it, their Wernicke's areas have been rendered inert. Then where are they going to not to Faulkner and Achebe and Naipaul? The answer is almost too hackneyed. To the movies; to television (hours and hours); to Googling obsessively (hours and hours); to blogging and emailing and text-messaging; and undoubtedly also to *People* magazine, where the celebrity photos outnumber the words. While concentrating on disparaising audience-friendliness, Marcus seems to have overlooked, or thinks not worth mentioning (as Gertrude Stein, his predecessor in autonomous art, once put it): *there is no there there*. The audience, or most of it, has gone the way of the typewriter and the telephone booth and fedoras and stockings with seams.

Then what is to be done about the making, and the taking in, of literature—specifically, in our time, the serious literary novel? Is Franzen right to blame popular electronic seductions for the novelist's problems? Is Marcus justified in rating the wizardry of language-juxtaposition over the traditional novel's long heritage of "deeply imagined lives"? Is the realist novel, as he claims, merely a degraded device whereby "language is meant to flow, predigested, like liquid down a feeding tube"? (Does this, by the way, characterize any novel by Nabokov or Bellow?) As it turns out, Marcus does not altogether denigrate realism—he pauses to laud its "deep engineering" as a "brilliant feat"—but he faults it, in furious italics, because "*it has already been accomplished*." According to this thesis, nothing is worth doing unless it has never been done before. But we have heard, and from a master, that ripeness—not newness—is all. Besides, why should one literary form lust to dispossess another? Why must there be a hierarchy, Experimentalism (pushing the envelope) on top, Realism (old hat) below? Mozart and jazz, for instance, live honorably together on the same planet. Marcus describes the style of writing he admires as "free of coherence, so much more interested in forging complex bursts of meaning that are expressive

ther than figurative, enigmatic ther than earthly, evasive rather an embracing." He concludes: "I ıd it difficult to discover literary adition so warmly embraced and ɔddled, as if artists existed merely to ıve flagrant intercourse with the ıst, guaranteed to draw a crowd, but so to cover that crowd in an old, eavy breading." Ah, now we are ıck at the old gang rumble. At Mar-ıs's end of the alley, though, some-ıing smells stale, like old heavy eading. "Expressive rather than fig-ative," "enigmatic rather than ırthly," "free of coherence," and all ıe rest: *it has already been accom-ished*. The avant-garde's overused ıvelope was pushed long ago, and ɔthing is more exhaustedly old hat ıan the so-called experimental. oary superannuated abstract paint-g, consisting chiefly of colors and anes, practiced by Mondrian, born 372; by Kandinsky, born 1866; by elaunay, born 1885. Experimental usic, micro-macrocosmic rhythmic ructure à la John Cage, born 1912. xperimental writing, as in Dadaism, a movement begun in 1916. And here comes Ben Marcus, self-styled enigmatic experimentalist innovator, born 1967.

All the foregoing may be mesmerizing for those in the book business who are drawn to the spectacle of writerly acrobatics—i.e., to the shifting highs and lows of publicity—but it is beside the point and misleading. Except for the few preeminent novelists who have earned, via stature and money, the power to stand aloof, serious fiction writers are pressed by elements external to the imagination's privacies, and external also to the secrets of language (including the clarinet that attends the semicolon). But in searching for the key to the Problem of the Contemporary Novel (or Novelist), there are cupboards where it is useless to look. And there are reasons that do not apply: writers vying for the highest rung of literary prestige; potential readers distracted by the multiplicity of storytelling machines. Feuds and jealousies are hardly pertinent, and the notorious decline of reading, while incontrovertible, may have less to do with the admittedly shaky situation of literary fiction than many believe.

The real trouble lies not in what is happening but in what is not happening.

What is not happening is literary criticism.

But wait. Why should the novel care about that? Novels *will* be written, whatever the conditions that roil around them. The novel is an independent art, secretive in its gestation, a living organism subject to a hundred protean characterizations. Of all its touted representations, the most irritable is Henry James's "loose baggy monster," while the most insistently self-proclaiming is Flaubert's "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi*." The critic Robert Alter, if less succinct, is more suggestive: "In the novel," he writes, "the possibility always exists, and is often exploited, to zigzag rapidly between different narrative stances, voices, styles, to improvise and juggle with new options of narration, to flaunt the mechanisms of narration as they are



[illegible] and anyone." He goes on to say, "The Subterranean does not omniscient narrator of *Tom Jones* . . . the [illegible] person narrations of *Wuthering Heights*, the purportedly impassive narratorial manipulator of *style indirect libre* in *Madame Bovary*, the shifting verbal vaudeville of *Ulysses*." (A definition as capacious as this one should get it to reconcile the boys in the alley.)

The novel, then, in all its forms and freedoms, is not in danger; nor is the born novelist—dwindling audiences and the intrusions of pixels notwithstanding. The next Saul Bellow may at this moment be playing patty-cake in his crib—or we may have to wait another two hundred years or so for a writer equal in intellect and brio and breadth to turn up. It hardly matters. The "fate of the novel," that overmasticated, flavorless wad of old chewing gum, is not in question. Novels, however they may manifest themselves, will never be lacking. What is missing is a powerfully persuasive, and pervasive, intuition for how they are connected, what they portend in the aggregate, how they comprise and color an era. A novel, it goes without saying, is an idiosyncrasy: it stands alone, it intends originality—and if it is commandeered by genius, it will shout originality. Yet the novels that crop up in any given period are like the individual nerves that make up a distinct but variegated sensation, or act in chorus to catch a face or a tone. What is missing is an undercurrent, or call it, rather (because so much rests on it), an infrastructure, of serious criticism.

This does not mean reviews. A reviewer is not the same as a critic; a case can be made (I will try to make it) that a reviewer is, in effect, the *opposite* of a critic, in the way that an architect is different, not in degree but in kind, from a mason, or in the way that a string theorist is different, though both employ mathematics, from a bookkeeper. Neither masons nor bookkeepers are likely to feel disparaged by this observation. Reviewers may be stung. Reviewers, after all, together with the big bookstore chains, are the sustenance of publishing. Reviews are indispensable: a book that goes unreviewed is a dud to its publisher and a grief to its author. Besides, reviews through their ubiquity simulate the skin of a genuine literary culture—rather like those plastic faux-alligator bags sold everywhere, which can almost pass for the real thing. In newspapers and magazines, both print and electronic, in book clubs and on blogs, in television interviews and in radio format, reviews proliferate more freely than ever before. And they have the advantage of accelerating and multiplying through undreamed-of new venues open to nonprofessionals. The book clubs, for instance. Book club reviewers are characterized, by and large, by earnestness and eagerness, and by a sort of virtuous communal glow: they are "amateur" in its root meaning—they are lovers, lovers of books. Some, or perhaps many, may also be amateur in the sense of being unskilled; but they practice reviewing privately, in the secluded warmth of a living room, within a circle of friends, hence innocently. That these clubs are too often caught in a kind of Möbius spiral, or chicken-and-egg conundrum, is an ongoing curiosity: because they choose to read mainly bestsellers (e.g., *The Kite Runner*), they appear simultaneously to *create* these bestsellers.

Less innocent is the rise of the nonprofessional reviewer on Amazon—though "rise" suggests an ascent, whereas this computerized exploitation, through commerce and cynicism, of typically unlettered exhibitionists signals a new low in public responsibility. Unlike the valued book club reviewer, who may be cozily challenged by companionable discourse, Amazon's "customer reviewer" goes uncontested and unedited: the customer is always right. And the customer, the star of this shoddy procedure, controls the number of stars that reward or denigrate writers. Amazon's unspoken credo is that anyone, or everyone, is well suited to make literary judgments—so that a reader of chick lit (the term defines the reader), perhaps misled by ad hype (the term defines book marketing), will howl with impatience at any serious literary fiction she may have blundered into. Here is "Peggy of Sacramento (*see my other reviews*)" grudgingly granting one ill-intentioned star to a demanding contempor[illegible] novel: "boring slowness, hard goi[illegible] characters not even a mother co[illegible] love." Or Tim: "A thoroughly [illegible] pressing book. The home life was [illegible] a pleasant atmosphere in which to r[illegible] children."[1] Most customer reviewe[illegible] though clearly tough customers wh[illegible] it comes to awarding stars, are [illegible] tough enough—or well-read enough—for tragic realism or psychological co[illegible] plexity. Amazon encourages naive a[illegible] unqualified readers who look for ea[illegible] prose and uplifting endings to expe[illegible] their insipidities to a mass audience. [illegible] is true that one can, on occasion, fi[illegible] on Amazon a literate, lively, per[illegible] tratingly intelligent response: an arti[illegible] golden minnow in a fetid sea, whe[illegible] both praise and blame are leveled [illegible] tsunamis of incapacity.

(Academic theorists equipped wi[illegible] advanced degrees, who make up y[illegible] another species of limited reviewe[illegible] are worthy only of a parenthesis. Th[illegible] confining ideologies, heavily poli[illegible] cized and rendered in a kind of mul[illegible] syllabic pidgin, have for decades ma[illegible] inated literature in dogma. Of the[illegible] inflated dons and doctors it is futile [illegible] speak, since, unlike the hardier cu[illegible] tomer reviewers, they are destined [illegible] vanish like the fog they evoke.)

And what of the professional r[illegible] viewers? They count as writers, ce[illegible] tainly; but few writers of fiction, sa[illegible] can be found among them. It may [illegible] that novelists wish to stick to writi[illegible] novels, uninterrupted; or that compe[illegible] itiveness toward other people's boo[illegible] engenders a sour reluctance to cel[illegible] brate a rival; or simply that reviewing [illegible] a skill antithetical to the fictive talen[illegible] or, less simply, that the reviewer's mo[illegible] modest stitches will not satisfy the wid[illegible] ambition of the tapestry weaver wh[illegible] hopes to cover a wall. For all these re[illegible] sons, and possibly more, most nove[illegible] ists, especially as they mature, tend t[illegible] eschew reviewing. A good thing, to[illegible] The literary judgments even of nove[illegible] ists of consequence can be capricious—[illegible] Virginia Woolf dismissing James Joyc[illegible] for example, or, more recently, V. [illegible] Naipaul dissing Henry James:

> The worst writer in the world actual[illegible] [Naipaul told an interviewer in Britain

[1] *These are, admittedly, inventions, bu[illegible] with recognizable verisimilitude.*

Literary Review]. He never went out into the world.... He never risked anything.... He never thought he should mingle in the crowd and find out what they were there for, or how they behaved. He did it all from the top of a carriage or the top of a coach. A lot of his writing is like that. And he exalts his material because he thinks this subject matter he alighted on—the grandeur of Europe and the grandeur of American new money—is unbeatable.

For generations of readers of *The olden Bowl* and *The Princess Casamassima,* that Jamesian subject *has* been nbeatable, and is as worldly as the nge of an expansively inquisitive ind can be; so it is a relief to know at Sir Vidia is not an incessant reewer of his lowly contemporaries. nd a relief also to recognize that ough reviewers are, in their fashion, iters, they are not often Nobelnning novelists.

Frequently they are publishers. In ct, a book's publisher is its first and rhaps most influential reviewer. How ook is "positioned"—i.e., described the sales staff and in catalogues and p copy—can nearly seal its fate, or at ast condition its reception. In the se of a literary novel (the term inds a dangerous elitism), in-house sitioning can snuff it with a word. nat word is "midlist"; whoever coined merits hanging. It emits defeatism. It omises failure. An emblem of noesse oblige, it reminds publishers that ey still owe a modicum of responsility to the higher literary culture. But hat executive editor or vice president ill want to back, with dollars and fanre, a novel tainted by the whisper of idlist? Even so, the writer privileged be included in this doubtful categois a thousand times more fortunate an the serious literary novelist who not likely to be published at all. A ublishing house is not an eleemosyary organization: who today would ublish Proust? (An inept question, nce no one published Proust *then*: inially he paid out of his own pocket to t his work into print.) Your typical ublisher as first-stage reviewer is more one to spangle treacle—to treat an olifting pedestrian fiction as a genne literary novel—than to honor the al right thing. Or, on the other hand, gussy up the real right thing with commerce-pleasing fakery: only imagine *Pride and Prejudice* hyped, in suitable shiny jacket, as a bodice-ripper. Still, in crannies here and there (the golden minnow factor), and again in the larger houses, there remain editors possessed by the old calling—the bringing to light of darker worlds, heretical glimpses, adamantine art.

I stand accused, nevertheless, of misleading. Book club members, Amazon customers, postcolonialist English departments, canny publishing executives—are these what we mean when we speak of reviewers? Aren't the *real* reviewers the people who do it for a living, the talented hired hands who write regularly for a single periodical, or the diligent scattershot freelancers? In brief, that body of readers-by-occupation whose expertise, we feel, ought to make up, collectively, a society's cultural temperament. Were there space enough and time, it might be so—this notion of a powerful undercurrent of literary intelligences, streams crossing streams, all flowing out of one great governing critical headwater; but it is not so. The professional reviewer, given fifteen hundred words or less to consider a work of fiction, must jump in and jump out again: an introductory paragraph, sometimes thematic though often not, a smattering of plot, a lick at idea (if there is one), and then the verdict, the definitive cut—yes or no. A sonnet, with worse constraints, or a haiku's even tinier confines, can conjure philosophies and worlds. A review, whose nature is prose, is not permitted such magickings. Nor is criticism. Yet what separates reviewing from criticism—pragmatically—are the reductive limits of space; the end is always near. What separates criticism from reviewing—intrinsically—is that the critic must summon what the reviewer cannot: horizonless freedoms, multiple histories, multiple libraries, multiple metaphysics and intuitions. Reviewers are not merely critics of lesser degree, on the farther end of a spectrum. Critics belong to a wholly distinct phylum.

This is a phylum that, at present, hardly exists. When, not long ago, the *New York Times Book Review* asked a pool of writers to name the best novel of the last twenty-five years, the results were partly predictable and consider-

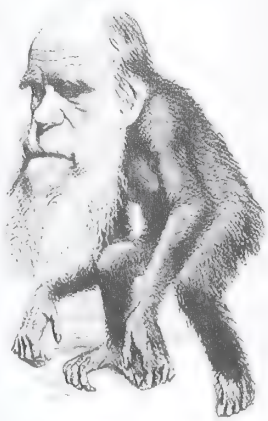
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a tale of slavery and its aftermath, won the most votes. Philip Roth, John Updike, Don DeLillo, and Cormac McCarthy were substantially represented. In an essay musing on the outcome of an exercise seemingly more quixotic than significant, A. O. Scott noted that the choices gave "a rich, if partial and unscientific picture of American literature, a kind of composite self-portrait as interesting perhaps for its blind spots and distortions as for its details." Or call it flotsam and jetsam. You could not tell, from the novels that floated to the top, and from those bubbling vigorously below, anything more than that they were all written in varieties of the American language. You could not tell what, taken all together, they intimated in the larger sense—the tone of their time. A quarter-century encompasses a generation, and a generation does have a composite feel to it. But here nothing was composite, nothing joined these disparate writers to one another—only the catchall of the question itself, dipping like a fishing net into the sea of fiction and picking up what was closest to the surface, or had already prominently surfaced. All these novels had been abundantly reviewed—piecemeal. No reviewer had thought to set *Beloved* beside Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (both are political novels historically disguised) to catch the cross reverberations. No reviewer had thought to investigate the possibly intermarried lineage of any of these works: what, for instance, has Nick in DeLillo's *Underworld* absorbed from the Nick of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*? The novels that rose up to meet the *Book Review*'s inquiry had never been suspected of being linked, whether horizontally or vertically. It was as if each one was a wolf-child reared beyond the commonality of a civilization; as if there was no recognizable thread of literary inheritance that could bind, say, Mark Helprin to Raymond Carver. Or if there was, no one cared to look for it. Nothing was indebted to nothing.

Many readers shrugged off this poll as entertaining trivia, or as run-of-the-mill editorial attention-seeking. But something culturally important came of it. It revealed, blazingly, what was missing, and has long been missing, in American letters: criticism that explains, both ancestrally and contemporaneously, not only how literature evolves but how literature influences and alters the workings of human imagination. Here—not in one of his grand critical essays but merely in a short public letter—is James Wood, making the case for Flaubert as the founder of the modern novel:

> Our indebtedness, whether we like it or not, extends to, among other things: the fetishizing of visual detail; the inverted relationship between background and foreground detail (or habitual and dynamic detail); the sacralization of art; the privileging of the music of style over the recalcitrance of "unmusical" subject matter (Flaubert's famous desire to write a book about nothing); the agonizing over aesthetic labor—all this looks pretty new, and different in many ways from Balzac's great achievements and solutions, not least because these new Flaubertian anxieties cannot be solutions. You might say that Flaubert founds realism and simultaneously destroys it, by making it so aesthetic: fiction is real and artificial at once. And I could have added two other elements of modernity, the refinement of "free indirect style", and the relative plotlessness of Flaubert's novels. All this is why different writers—realists, modernists and postmodernists—from Stephen Crane to Ian McEwan, from Kafka to Nabokov to Robbe-Grillet all owe so much to Flaubert.

Surely we have not heard a critical mind like this at work since Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*. The key is indebtedness. The key is connectedness. If Wood cannot read Flaubert without thinking of McEwan, neither can he read McEwan without thinking of Flaubert. In this single densely packed paragraph (though he is not usually so compact), Wood reflects on how scenes are constructed; how art imitates faith; how aesthetics can either combine with or annihilate what passes for the actual world. And also: the relation of story to the language that consumes it, and the descent of literature not only from one nation to another but from one writer to another—all the while clinging to a unitary theme, the origin and nature of the modern. Such an imperial analysis has both a Darwinian and a biblical flavor: evolution mixed with Genesis.

It is not enough to have one W[ood]. What is needed is a thicket—a r[ain]forest of Woods. What is needed is a broad infrastructure, through a critical mass of critics, of the kind of criticism that can define, or prompt, or inspire, or at least intuit, what is happening in a culture in a given time frame. What is needed are critics who can tease out hidden imperatives and assumptions held in common, and who will create the contentious conditions that underlie and stimulate a living literary consciousness. In this there is something almost ceremonial, or ceremoniously slow: unhurried thinking, the ripened long (or sidewise) view, the gradualism of nuance.

Should an infrastructure comprising critics of this description ever come into being—or, rather, return, since it once existed in large enough numbers to make a recognizable literary force—what would change? Professional reviewers, those hemmed-in heralds of the new, would go on as before, useful as always. Prudent publishers would go on expediently touting the sentimental while marginally tolerating the serious. Readers would continue to drift away, seduced and socialized by the ever-breeding pixels. The boys in the alley—sophisticated armies on the darkling plain—would continue to clash over accessibility and iconoclasm. But for them, for Franzen and Marcus and everyone else who worries about the neglect of the literary novel, something instinctually different might begin to hover: a hint of innate kinship, a backdrop, the white noise of the e[ther].

Perhaps because Wood is partial to re[alism (though not to "magical" or ... term—"hysterical" realism), he is some[times] faulted for narrow sympathies, ... for deprecating those styles and dispositi[ons] that escape the bounds of his particular ... do. Yet a critic is nothing without an ... thoritative posture, or standard, or even ... prejudice, against which an opposing o[r] look or proposition can be tested. To k[now] to a point of view is itself a critical valu[e]. The grand historical example of critical au[thority] is Samuel Johnson, whose unyie[lding] mastery of a position was such that ... affirm it wholly was never easy, while ... dissent from it was still more difficult—[for] the assertion alone roused the mind. In [its] this sense of instigating counterbalance, Wood is a necessary contemporary goad.

hat claims us all. In times that are made conscious of themselves—a consciousness that only a critical infrastructure can supply—the varieties of literary experience become less antagonistic than inquisitively receptive. In the age we have learned to call Victorian, Disraeli and Oscar Wilde, novelists (and souls) as unlike as can be imagined, evince a certain virtuoso interplay: we know this because criticism has taught us how to see it.

When Lionel Trilling prevailed at Columbia, Edmund Wilson, Irving Howe, and Alfred Kazin enlivened the magazines, decade upon decade. Today here are inklings of who might constitute a potential critical aggregate—John Updike, pressing on with essay after essay over forty years; Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Alter, Geoffrey Hartman, Morris Dickstein, the prophetic Harold Bloom, Sven Birkerts, Thomas Mallon, Daniel Mendelsohn, Christopher Hitchens (when he isn't being political), Frank Kermode, Richard Howard, Wyatt Mason, Ruth Franklin, Adam Kirsch—a range of age, consistency of publication, breadth of attentiveness, depth of desire. These, and others I have failed to mention, some perhaps in embryo, a few busy elsewhere as poets or novelists—not even these are enough. Issues and principles are plentiful beyond the anxieties of Franzen and Marcus, whose chief urgencies appear to be who will read. The better question is not who will read, or how they will read, but *why*. It is the *why* that implicates and judges readers, and professors, and publishers, and bestsellerists. And novelists.

I come back to James Wood, whose rigorous virtuosities I take to be a template for the building of an infrastructure: elasticity, history, connectedness; the visual, the tactile, the comic. Wood on Saul Bellow's metaphysics: 'In his fictional world, people do not stream with motives; as novelists go, he has no depth psychologist. Instead, his characters are embodied souls. Their bodies are their confessions, their moral camouflage faulty and peeling: they have the bodies they deserve." On Toni Morrison's magical realism: "But magic—impossible happenings, ghoulish returns—dismantles belief, forcing on us apparitions which, because they are beyond belief, we cannot choose not to believe. Belief is a mere appendix to magic, its unused organ. This is a moral problem." On Salman Rushdie's stylistic exuberance: "True vivacity—which is not the same as mere lifelikeness—has no need to shout. It goes by, in Yeats's words, with white footfall." On Jonathan Franzen and the social novel: "The contemporary novel has such a desire to be clever about so many elements of life that it sometimes resembles a man who takes so many classes that he has no time to read: auditing abolishes composure."

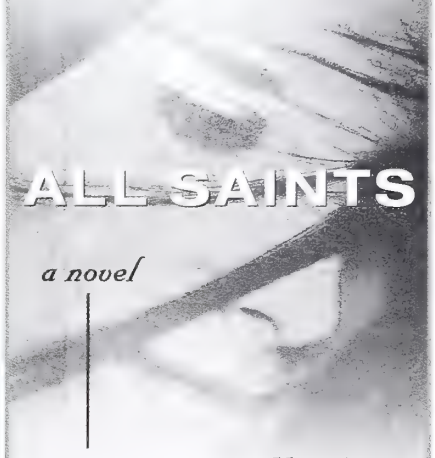
These are neither casual aesthetic riffs nor a reviewer's mere "personal" opinion: they are philosophies. They represent what we can hope will one day be a wider company. They tell us that superior criticism not only unifies and interprets a literary culture but has the power to imagine it into being: the novel's ghostly twin. ■

April Index Sources

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THE WIZARD OF WEST ORANGE

By Steven Millhauser



OCTOBER 14, 1889. But the Wizard's on fire! The Wizard is wild! He sleeps for two hours and works for twelve, sleeps for three hours and works for nineteen. The cot in the library, the cot in Room 12. Hair falling on forehead, vest open, tie askew. He bounds up the stairs, strides from room to room, greeting the experimenters, asking questions, cracking a joke. His boyish smile, his sharp eye. Why that way? Why not this? Notebook open, a furious sketch. Another. On to the next room! Hurls himself into a score of projects, concentrating with fanatical attention on each one before dismissing it to fling himself into next. The automatic adjustment for the recording stylus of the perfected phonograph. The speaking doll. Instantly grasps the essential problem, makes a decisive suggestion. Improved machinery for drawing brass wire. The aurophone, for enhancement of hearing. His trip to Paris has charged him with energy. Out into the courtyard! The electrical lab, the chemical lab. Dangers of high voltage alternating current: tests for safety. Improved insulation for electrical conductors. On to the metallurgical lab, to examine the graders and crushers, the belt conveyors, the ore samples. His magnetic ore-separator. "Work like hell, boys!" In Photographic Building, an air of secrecy. Excitement over the new Eastman film, the long strip in which lies the secret of visual motion. The Wizard says kinetoscope will do for the eye what phonograph does for the ear. But not yet, not yet!

The men talk. What else? What next? A method of producing electricity directly from coal? A machine for compacting snow to clear city streets? Artificial silk? He hasn't slept at home for a week. They say the Wizard goes down to the Box, the experimental room in basement. Always kept locked. Rumors swirl. Another big invention to rival the phonograph? Surpass the incandescent lamp? The Wizard reads in library in the early mornings. From my desk in alcove I see him turn pages impatiently. Sometimes he thrusts at me a list of books to order. Warburton's *Physiology of Animals*. Greene and Wilson, *Cutaneous Sensation*. Makes a note, slams book shut, strides out. Earnshaw says Wizard spent three hours shut up in the Box last night.

OCTOBER 16. Today a book arrived: Kerner, *Archaeology of the Skin*. Immediately left library and walked upstairs to experimental rooms. Room 12 open, cot empty, the Wizard gone. On table an open notebook, a glass battery, and parts of a dissected phonograph scattered around a boxed motor: three wax cylinders, a recording stylus attached to its diaphragm, a voice horn, a cutting blade for shaving used cylinders. Notebook showed a rough draw-

Steven Millhauser's last story for Harper's Magazine, "A Change in Fashion," appeared in the May 2006 issue.

Illustration by Steven Dana

g. Identified it at once: design for an tomatic adjustment in recording chanism, whereby stylus would en- ge cylinder automatically at correct pth. The Wizard absolutely deter- ned to crush Bell's graphophone. om window, a view of courtyard and rt of chemical lab.

Returned to corridor. Ran into orbett, an experimental assistant. ne Wizard had just left. Someone lled out he thought Wizard head- g to stockroom. I returned down e stairs. Passed through library, shed open double door, and crossed rridor to stockroom.

Always exhilarating to enter Earn- aw's domain. The high walls, lined om floor to ceiling with long draw- s—hides, bones, roots, textiles, teeth. igeonholes, hundreds of them, ammed with resins, waxes, twines. it that, like library itself, stockroom an orderly and teeming universe— world of worlds—a finitude with as- rations to allness? Earnshaw hadn't en him, thought he might be in base- ent. His hesitation when I held up erner and announced my mission. old him the Wizard had insisted it be rought to him immediately. Earn- aw still hesitant as he took out ring f keys. Is loyal to Wizard, but more oyal to me. Opened door leading to asement storeroom and preceded me own into the maze.

Crates of feathers, sheet metal, itch, plumbago, cork. He hesitated gain at locked door of Box. Do not isturb: Wizard's strict orders. But the Wizard had left strict orders with me: eliver book immediately. Two un- mbiguous commands, each contra- licting the other. Earnshaw torn. A ood man, earnest, but not strong. Un- ble to resist a sense of moral obliga- ion to me, owing to a number of tri- ling services rendered to him in the ordinary course of work. In addition, en years younger. In my presence in- tinctively assumes an attitude of def- erence. Rapped lightly on door. No nswer. "Open it," I said—not un- kindly. He stood outside as I entered.

Analysis of motives. Desire to deliv- er book (good). Desire to see room (bad). Yielded to base desire. But ask yourself: was it only base? I revere the Wizard and desire his success. He is searching for something, for some piece of crucial knowledge. If I see experiment, may be able to find information he needs. Analyze later.

Small room well-lit by incandescent bulbs. Bare of furnishings except for central table, two armchairs against wall. On table a closed notebook, a copper-oxide battery, and two striking objects. One a long stiff blackish glove, about the length of a forearm, which rests horizontally on two Y-shaped supports about eight inches high. Glove made of some solid dark material, perhaps vulcanized rubber, and covered with a skein of wires emerging from small brass caps. The other: a wooden framework supporting a horizontal cylinder, whose upper surface is in contact with a row of short metal strips suspended from a crossbar. Next to cylinder a small electric motor. Two bundles of wire lead from glove to battery, which in turn is connected to cylinder mechanism by way of motor. On closer inspection I see that interior of glove is lined with black silky material, studded with tiny silver disks like heads of pins. "Sir!" whispers Earnshaw.

I switch off lights and step outside. Footsteps above our heads. I follow Earnshaw back upstairs into stockroom, where an experimental assistant awaits him with request for copper wire. Return to library. Am about to sit down at desk when Wizard enters from other door. Gray gabardine laboratory gown flowing around his legs, tie crooked, hair mussed. "Has that book—?" he says loudly. Deaf in his left ear. "I was just bringing it to you," I shout. Holding out Kerner. Seizes it and throws himself down in an armchair, frowning as if angry at the flung-open pages.

OCTOBER 17. A quiet day in library. Rain, scudding clouds. Arranged books on third-floor gallery, dusted mineral specimens in their glass-doored cabinets. Restless.

OCTOBER 18. That wired glove. Can it be a self-warming device, to replace a lady's muff? Have heard that in Paris, on cold winter nights, vendors stand before the Opera House, selling hot potatoes for ladies to place in their muffs. But the pin-heads? The cylinder? And why then such secrecy? Wizard in the locked room again, for two hours, with Kistenmacher.

OCTOBER 20. This morning overheard a few words in courtyard. Immediately set off for stockroom in search of Earnshaw. E's passion—his weakness, one might say—is for idea of motion photography. Eager to get hold of any information about the closely guarded experiments in Photographic Building and Room 5. Words overheard were between two machinists, who'd heard an experimental assistant speaking to so-and-so from chemical lab about an experiment in Photographic Building conducted with the new Eastman film. Talk was of perforations along both edges of strip, as in the old telegraph tape. The film to be driven forward on sprockets that engage and release it. This of course the most roundabout hearsay. Nevertheless not first time there has been talk of modifying strip film by means of perforations, which some say the Wizard saw in Paris: studio of Monsieur Marey. Earnshaw thrives on such rumors.

Not in stockroom but down in storeroom, as I knew at once by partially open door. In basement, reported my news. Excited him visibly. At that instant—suddenly—I became aware of darker motive underlying my impulse to inform Earnshaw of conversation in courtyard. Paused. Looked about. Asked him to admit me for a moment—only a moment—to the Box.

An expression of alarm invading his features. But Earnshaw particularly well qualified to understand a deep curiosity about experiments conducted in secret. Furthermore: could not refuse to satisfy an indebtedness he felt he'd incurred by listening eagerly to my report. Stationed himself outside door. Guardian of inner sanctum. I quickly entered.

The glove, the battery, the cylinder. I detected a single difference: notebook now open. Showed a barely executed drawing of glove, surrounded by several smaller sketches of what appeared to be electromagnets, with coils of wire about a core. Under glove a single word: haptograph.

Did not hesitate to insert hand and arm in glove. Operation somewhat impeded by silken lining, evidently intended to prevent skin from directly

touching any part of inner structure. When I [illegible] was buried up to elbow, threw switch attached to wires at base of cylinder mechanism.

The excitement returns, even as I write these words. How to explain it? The activated current caused motor to turn cylinder on its shaft beneath the metal rods suspended from crossbar, which in turn caused silver points in lining of glove to move against my hand. Was aware at first of many small gentle pointed pressures. But—behold!—the merely mechanical sensation soon gave way to another, and I felt—distinctly—a sensation as of a hand grasping my own in a firm handshake. External glove had remained stiff and immobile. Switched off current, breathed deeply. Repeated experiment. Again the motor turning the cylinder. Sensation unmistakable: I felt my hand gripped in a handshake, my fingers lightly squeezed. At that moment experienced a strange elation, as if standing on a dock listening to water lap against piles as I prepared to embark on a longed-for voyage. Switched off current, withdrew hand. Stood still for a moment before turning suddenly to leave room.

OCTOBER 21. Books borrowed by Kistenmacher, as recorded in library notebook, Oct. 7–Oct. 14: *The Nervous System and the Mind*, *The Tactile Sphere*, *Leçons sur la Physiologie du Système Nerveux*, *Lezioni di Fisiologia Sperimentale*, *Sensation and Pain*. The glove, the cylinder, the phantom handshake. Clear—is it clear?—that Wizard has turned his attention to sense of touch. To what end, exactly? Yet even as I ask, I seem to grasp principle of haptograph. "The kinetoscope will do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear." Is he not isolating each of the five senses? Creating for each a machine that records and plays back one sense alone? Voices disembodied, moving images without physical substance, immaterial touches. The phonograph, the kinetoscope, the haptograph. Voices preserved in cylinders of wax, moving bodies in strips of nitrocellulose, touches in pinheads and wires. A gallery of ghosts. Cylinder as it turns must transmit electrical impulses that activate the silver points. Ghosts? Consider: the skin is touched. A firm handshake. Hello, my name is. And yours? Strange thoughts on an October night.

OCTOBER 24. This morning, after Wizard was done looking through mail and had ascended stairs to experimental rooms, Kistenmacher entered library. Headed directly toward me. Have always harbored a certain dislike for Kistenmacher, though he treats me respectfully enough. Dislike the aggressive directness of his walk, with arms swinging so far forward that he seems to be pulling himself along by gripping onto chunks of air. Dislike his big hands with neat black hairs growing sideways across fingers, the intense stare of eyes that take you in without seeing you, his black stiff hair combed as if violently sideways across head, necktie straight as a plumb line. Kistenmacher one of the most respected of electrical experimenters. Came directly up to my rolltop desk, stopping too close to it, as if the wood were barring his way.

"I wish to report a missing book," he said.

Deeper meaning of Kistenmacher's remark. It happens—infrequently—that a library book is temporarily misplaced. The cause not difficult to wrest from the hidden springs of existence. Any experimenter—or assistant—or indeed any member of staff—is permitted to browse among all three tiers of books, or to remove a volume and read anywhere on premises. Instead of leaving book for me to replace, as everyone is instructed to do, occasionally someone takes it upon self to reshelve. An act well-meant but better left undone, since mistakes easy to make. Earnshaw, in particular, guilty of this sort of misplaced kindness. Nevertheless, I patrol shelves carefully, several times a day, not only when I replace books returned by staff, or add new books and scientific journals ordered for library, but also on tours of inspection intended to ensure correct arrangement of books on shelves. As a result, quite rare for a misplaced volume to escape detection. Kistenmacher's statement, therefore, not the simple statement of fact it appeared to be but an implied reproach: You have been negligent in your duties.

"I'm quite certain we can find it without difficulty," I said. Rising immediately. "Sometimes the new assistants—"

"Giesinger," he said. "*Musculo-Cutaneous Feeling*."

A slight heat in my neck. Wondered whether a flush was visible.

"You see," I said with a smile. "The mystery solved." Lifted from my desk *Musculo-Cutaneous Feeling* by Otto Giesinger and handed it to Kistenmacher. He glanced at spine, to make certain I hadn't made a mistake, then looked at me with interest.

"This is a highly specialized study." Said he.

"Yes, a little too specialized for me," I replied.

"But the subject interests you?"

Hesitation. "I try to keep abreast of—developments."

"Excellent," he said, and suddenly smiled—a disconcerting smile, of startling charm. "I will be sure to consult with you." Held up book, tightly clasped in one big hand, gave a little wave with it, and took his leave.

The whole incident rich with possibility. My responsibility in library is to keep up with scientific and technical literature, so that I may order books I deem essential. Most of my professional reading confined to scientific journals, technical periodicals, and institutional proceedings but peruse many books as well, in a broad range of subjects, from psychology of hysteria to structure of the constant-pressure dynamo; my interests are wide. Still, it cannot have failed to strike Kistenmacher that I had removed from shelves a study directly related to his investigations in Box. Kistenmacher perfectly well aware that everyone knows of his secretive experiments, about which many rumors. Is said to enjoy such rumors and even to contribute to them by enigmatic hints of his own. Once told Earnshaw, who reported it to me, that there would soon be no human sensation that could not be replicated mechanically. At time I imagined a machine for production of odors, a machine of

es. Knows of course that I keep a ord of books borrowed by staff, h with name of borrower. Now ws I have been reading Giesinger musculo-cutaneous feeling. What else does he know? Can nshaw have said something?

TOBER 26. A slow day. Reading. m my desk in alcove I can see ard's rolltop desk with its scatter- of books and papers, the railed eries of second and third levels, h up a flash of sun on a glass- nted cabinet holding mineral cimens. The pine-paneled ceil- . Beyond Wizard's desk, the white rble statue brought back from is Exposition. Winged youth seat- on ruins of a gas streetlamp, hold- high in one hand an incandes- it lamp. The Genius of Light. In feet a rumble of dynamos from chine shop beyond stockroom.

TOBER 28. In courtyard, gossip out secret experiments in Photo- phic Building, Room 8, the Box. machine for extracting nutrients m seaweed? A speaking photo- aph? Rumors of hidden work- oms, secret assistants. In courtyard e night, an experimental assistant n with cylinders under each arm, ading in direction of basement.

TOBER 29. For the Wizard, there always a practical consideration. ie incandescent lamp, the electric n, the magnetic ore-separator. The adruplex telegraph. Origin of oving photographs in study of ani- al motion: Muybridge's horses, arey's birds. Even the phonograph: ncedes its secondary use as instru- ent of entertainment, but insists primary value as business ma- ine for use in dictation. And the ptograph? A possible use in hospi- is? A young mother dies. Bereft ild comforted by simulated caress- : Old people, lingering out their es alone, untouched. Shake of a endly hand. It might work.

OVEMBER 3. A momentous day. en now it seems unlikely. And t, looked at calmly, a day like any her: experimenters in their rooms, sitors walking in courtyard, a group of schoolchildren with their teacher, assistants passing up and down corridors and stairways, men working on grounds. After a long morning decided to take walk in courtyard, as I sometimes do. Warmish day, touch of autumn chill in the shade. Walked length of courtyard, between electrical lab and chemical lab, nodding to several men who stood talking in groups. At end of yard, took a long look at buildings of Phonograph Works. Started back. Nearly halfway to main building when aware of sharp footsteps not far behind me. Drawing closer. Turned and saw Kistenmacher.

"A fine day for a walk," he said. Falling into step beside me.

Hidden significance of Kistenmacher's apparently guileless salutation. His voice addressed to the air—to the universe—but with a ripple of the confidential meant for me. Instantly alert. Common enough of course to meet an experimenter or machinist in courtyard. Courtyard after all serves as informal meeting place, where members of staff freely mingle. Have encountered Kistenmacher himself innumerable times, striding along with great arms swinging. No, what struck me, on this occasion, was one indisputable fact: instead of passing me with habitual brisk nod, Kistenmacher attached himself to me with tremendous decisiveness. So apparent he had something to say to me that I suspected he'd been watching for me from a window.

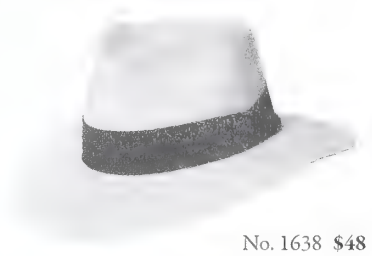
"My sentiment exactly," I replied.

"I wonder whether you might accompany me to Room 8," he then said.

An invitation meant to startle me. I confess it did. Kistenmacher knows I am curious about experimental rooms on second floor, just up stairs from library. These rooms always kept open—except Room 5, where photographic experiments continue to be conducted secretly, in addition to those in Photographic Building—but there is general understanding that rooms are domain of experimenters and assistants, and of course of the Wizard himself, who visits each room daily in order to observe progress of every experiment. Kistenmacher's invitation therefore highly

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unusual. At same time he had an air of deliberate air of mystery, which Kistenmacher clearly enjoying, as he took immense energetic strides and pulled himself forward with great swings of his absurd arms.

Room 8: Kistenmacher's room on second floor. On a table: parts of a storage battery and samples of what I supposed to be nickel hydrate. No sign of haptograph. This in itself not remarkable, for experimenters are engaged in many projects. Watched him close door and turn to me.

"Our interests coincide," he said, speaking in manner characteristic of him, at once direct and sly.

I said nothing.

"I invite you to take part in an experiment," he next remarked. An air of suppressed energy. Had sense that he was studying my face for signs of excitement.

His invitation, part entreaty and part command, shocked and thrilled me. Also exasperated me by terrible ease with which he was able to create inner turmoil.

"What kind of experiment?" I asked: sharply, almost rudely.

He laughed—I had not expected Kistenmacher to laugh. A boyish and disarming laugh. Surprised to see a dimple in his left cheek. Kistenmacher's teeth straight and white, though upper left incisor is missing.

"That," he said, "remains to be seen. Nine o'clock tomorrow night? I will come to the library."

Noticed that, while his body remained politely immobile, his muscles had grown tense in preparation for leaving. Already absolutely sure of my acceptance.

When I returned to library, found Wizard seated at his desk, in stained laboratory gown, gesturing vigorously with both hands as he spoke with a reporter from the *New York World*.

NOVEMBER 5. Will do my utmost to describe objectively the extraordinary event in which I participated on evening of November 4.

Kistenmacher appeared in library with a punctuality that even in my state of excitement I found faintly ludicrous: over fireplace the big clock-hands showed nine o'clock so precisely that I had momentary grotesque sense they were the false hands of a painted clock. Led me into stock room, where Earnshaw had been relieved for night shift by young Benson, who was up on a ladder examining contents of a drawer. Looked down at us intently over his shoulder, bending neck and gripping ladder-rails, as if we were very small and very far away. Kistenmacher removed from pocket a circle of keys. Held them up to inform Benson of our purpose. Opened door that led down to basement. I followed him through dim-lit cellar rooms piled high with wooden crates until we reached door of Box. Kistenmacher inserted key, stepped inside to activate electrical switch. Then turned to usher me in with sweep of his hand and a barely perceptible little bow, all the while watching me closely.

The room had changed. No glove: next to table an object that made me think of a dressmaker's dummy, or top half of a suit of armor, complete with helmet. Supported on stand clamped to table-edge. The dark half-figure studded with small brass caps connected by a skein of wires that covered entire surface. Beside it the cylinder machine and the copper-oxide battery. Half a dozen additional cylinders standing upright on table, beside machine. In one corner, an object draped in a sheet.

"Welcome to the haptograph," Kistenmacher said. "Permit me to demonstrate."

He stepped over to figure, disconnected a cable, and unfastened clasps that held head to torso. Lifted off head with both hands. Placed head carefully on table. Next unhooked or unhinged torso so that back opened in two wings. Hollow center lined with same dark silky material and glittery silver points I had seen in glove.

Thereupon asked me to remove jacket, vest, necktie, shirt. My hesitation. Looked at me harshly. "Modesty is for schoolgirls." Turning around. "I will turn my back. You may leave it you prefer."

Removed my upper clothing piece by piece and placed each article on back of a chair. Kistenmacher turned to face me. "So! You are still here?" Immediately gestured toward interior of winged torso, into which I inser my arms. Against my skin felt sill lining. He closed wings and hool in place. Set helmet over my he refastened clasps and cable. An op ing at mouth enabled me to breat At level of my eyes a strip of w mesh. The arms, though stiff, m able at wrists and shoulders. I st beside table, awaiting instructions.

"Tell me what you feel," Kiste macher said. "It helps in the beg ning if you close your eyes."

He threw switch at base of n chine. Cylinder began to turn.

At first felt a series of very fa pin-pricks in region of scalp. Grad ally impression of separate prickin faded away and I became aware o more familiar sensation.

"It feels," I said, "exactly as if yes—it's uncanny—but as though were putting a hat on my head."

"Very good," Kistenmacher sa "And this?" Opened my eyes lo enough to watch him slip cylinder fr its shaft and replace with new one.

This time felt a series of pin-pric in region of right shoulder. Quick resolved into a distinct sensation: hand resting on shoulder, then gi ing a little squeeze.

"And this?" Removed cylind and added another. "Hold out yo left hand. Palm up."

Was able to turn my armore hand at wrist. In palm became awa of a sudden sensation: a roundis smooth object—ball? egg?—seeme to be resting there.

In this manner—cylinder b cylinder—Kistenmacher tested thre additional sensations. A fly or othe small insect walking on right fore arm. A ring or rope tightening ove left biceps. Sudden burst of uncon trollable laughter: the haptograp had re-created sensation of finge tickling my ribs.

"And now one more. Please pa close attention. Report exactly wha you feel." Slipped a new cylinde onto shaft and switched on current.

After initial pin-pricks, felt a serie of pressures that began at waist an rose along chest and face. A clea tactile sensation, rather pleasant, ye one I could not recall having experi enced before. Kistenmacher listene intently as I attempted to describe. A

d of upward-flowing ripple, which
ved rapidly from waist to top of
lp, encompassing entire portion of
ly enclosed in haptograph. Like
ng repeatedly stroked by a soft en-
:ling feather. Or better: repeatedly
merged in some new and soothing
)stance, like un-wet water. As
inder turned, same sensation—
ne series of pressures—recurred
in and again. Kistenmacher's de-
led questions before switching off
rent and announcing experiment
l ended.

At once he removed headpiece
l set it on table. Unfastened back
torso and turned away as I extract-
myself and quickly began to put
shirt.

"We are still in the very early
ges," he said, back still turned to
e as I threw my necktie around
llar. "We know far less about the
:tile properties of the skin than we
about the visual properties of the
e. And yet it might be said that, of
the senses"—here a raised hand,
extended forefinger—"touch is
e most important. The good Bish-
Berkeley, in his *Theory of Vision*,
aintains that the visual sense
rves to anticipate the tangible.
ne same may be said of the other
nses as well. Look here."

Turned around, ignoring me as I
ıttoned my vest. From his pocket re-
oved an object and held it up for my
spection. Surprised to see a common
untain pen.

"If I touch this pen to your hand—
ınd, please!—what do you feel?"

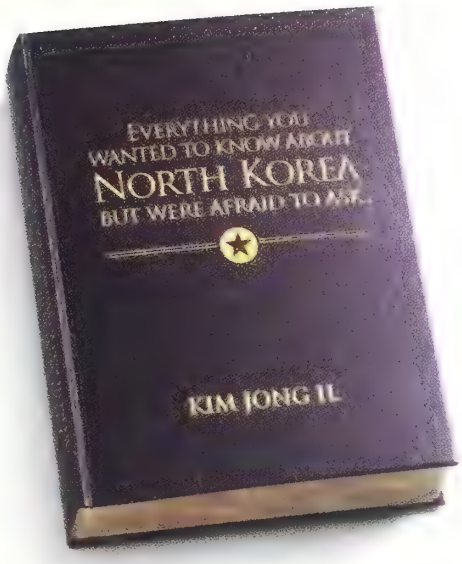
Extended hand, palm up. He pressed
ıd of pen lightly into skin of my palm.

"I feel a pressure—the pressure of
ıe pen. The pressure of an object."

"Very good. And you would say,
ould you not, that the skin is adapt-
l to feel things in that way—to iden-
fy objects by the sense of touch. But
ıis pen of ours is a rather large, coarse
bject. Consider a finer object—this,
)r example."

From another pocket: a single
ark bristle. Might have come from
paintbrush.

"Your hand, please. Concentrate
our attention. I press here—yes?—
nd here—yes?—and here—no? No?
recisely. And this is a somewhat
oarse bristle. If we took a very fine



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TEST

Subject: the First Amendment

INSTRUCTIONS: The following question has only one answer. Take as much time as you need:

(1) As conceived and ratified by the Founding Fathers, the free speech provision of the First Amendment guarantees Congress shall make no law abridging:

(a) the freedom, through the use of words, to advance political and social ideas in order to prevent governmental tyranny.

(b) the freedom to distribute photographic images of women and men engaged in various acts of prostitution.

Although the members of the United States Supreme Court have been tested, and repeatedly re-tested, on this issue over the course of five decades, they have never answered the question correctly. In fact, they have never even come close. And what is the result? An Internet rich with hard-core pornography that is freely available, anytime of the day or night, to the errant, unsupervised, and latch-key children of the poor and middle class.

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le, you would discover even more clearly that only certain spots [illegible] We have mapped out these [illegible] I touched one and then another, to indicate several combinations with [illegible]

He reached over to cylinders and [illegible] looking up, looking over to be continued. "It is a long and difficult process. We are at the very beginning." Turning cylinder slowly in his hand. "The key lies here, in this hollow. Backward tab on the haptogram. You see? The surface is covered with hard wax. Look. You can see the ridges and grooves. They control the flow of current. As the haptogram rotates, the wax pushes against this row of nickel rods: up here. Yes? This is clear? Each rod in turn operates a small rheostat—here—which controls the current. You understand? The current drives the corresponding coil in the glove, thereby moving the pin against the skin. Come here."

He set down cylinder and stepped over to torso. Unfastened back. Carefully pulled away a strip of lining.

"These little devices beneath the brass caps—you see them? Each one is a miniature electromagnet. Look closely. You see the wire coil? There. Inside the coil is a tiny iron cylinder—the core—which is insulated with a sleeve of celluloid. The core moves as the current passes through the coil. To the end of each core is attached a thin rod, which in turn is attached to the lining by a fastener that you can see—here, and here, and all along the lining. Ah, those rods!"

He shook his head. "A headache. They have to be very light, but also stiff. We have tried boar's bristle—a mistake!—zinc, too soft, steel, too heavy. We have tried whalebone and ivory. These are bamboo."

Sighing. "It is all very ingenious—and very unsatisfactory. The haptograms can activate sequences of no more than six seconds. The pattern then repeats. And it is all so very—clumsy. What we need is a different approach to the wax cylinder . . . more elegant solution to the problem of the overall design."

Pause—glance at sheet-shaped object. Seemed to fall into thought. "There is much work to do." Slowly reached into pocket, removed ring of keys. Stared at keys thoughtfully. "We know nothing. Absolutely nothing." Slowly running his thumb along a key. Imagined he was going to press up [illegible] my palm—my skin tingling with an expected touch—but as he stepped toward door I understood that our session was over.

NOVEMBER 7. Last night the Wizard shut himself up in Room 12: seven o'clock to three in the morning. Rumor has it he is still refining the automatic adjustment for phonograph cylinder. Hell-bent on defeating the graphophone. Rival machine produces a less clear sound but has great practical advantage of not requiring the wax cylinder to be shaved down and adjusted after each playing. The Wizard throws himself onto cot for two hours, no more. In the day, strides from room to room on second floor, quick, jovial, shrewd-eyed, a little snappish, a sudden edge of mockery. A university man and you don't know how to mix cement? What do they teach you? The quick sketch: fixed gaze, slight tilt of head. Try this. How about that? Acid stains on his fingers. The Phonograph Works, the electrical lab, the Photographic Building. Alone in a back room in chemical lab, a quick visit to Box, up to Room 5, over to 12. The improved phonograph, the moving photograph, the haptograph. Miniature phonograph for the speaking doll. Ink for the blind, artificial ivory. A machine for extracting butter directly from milk. In metallurgical lab, Building 5, examines the rock crushers, proposes refinements in electromagnetic separators. A joke in the courtyard: the Wizard is devising a machine to do his sleeping for him.

I think of nothing but the haptograph.

NOVEMBER 12. Not a word. Nothing.

NOVEMBER 14. Haptograph will do for skin what phonograph does for ear, kinetoscope for eye. Understood. But is comparison accurate? Like phonograph, haptograph can imitate sensations in real world machine of mimicry. Unlike phonograph, haptograph can create new sensations, never experienced before. The upward-flowing ripple. Any combination of touch-sp possible. Why does this thoug flood my mind with excitement?

NOVEMBER 17. Still nothing. Ha they forgotten me?

NOVEMBER 20. Today at a little p two, Earnshaw entered library. S him hesitate for a moment and l about quickly—the Wizard lo gone, only Grady from chemical in room, up on second gallery—l fore heading over to my desk. Ha ed me a book he had borrowed so weeks before: a study of the gelatin process in making phot graphic plates. Earnshaw's appet for the technical minutiae of phot raphy insatiable. And yet: has ne owned a camera and unlike most the men appears to have no desire take photographs. Have often teas him about this passion of his, e dently entirely mental. He once s in reply that he carries two came with him at all times: his eyes.

Touché.

"A lot of excitement out there, said. Sweeping my hand vaguely direction of Photographic Buildi "I hear they're getting smooth m tions at sixteen frames a second."

He laughed—a little uncomfo ably, I thought. "Sixteen? Impossib They've never done it under fort Besides, I heard just the opposit Jerky motions. Same old troubl sprocket a little off. This is for you."

He reached inside jacket a swept his arm toward me. Abrupt, little awkward. In his hand: a seal white envelope.

I took envelope, while studyi his face. "From you?"

"From"—here he lowered h voice—"Kistenmacher." Shrugge "He asked me to deliver it."

"Do you know what it is?"

"I don't read other people's mail!

"Of course not. But you might kno anyway."

"How should I know you've bee down there."

"You saw me?"

He told me."
Told you?"
That you'd been there too."
Too!"
ooked at me. "You think you're only one?"
I think our friend likes secrets." I ched for the brass letter-opener. ped it under the flap.
I'll be going," Earnshaw said, nodg sharply and turning away. fway to door when I slit open enope with a sound of tearing cloth.
Oh there you are, Earnshaw." A ce at the door.
Message read: "Eight o'clock torrow night. Kmacher."
t was only young Peters, an eximental assistant, in need of he zinc.

VEMBER 20, LATER. Much to think ut. Kistenmacher asks Earnshaw to iver note. Why? Might easily have trived to deliver it himself, or speak me in person. By this action there- e wishes to let Earnshaw know that m assisting in experiment. Very d. But: Kistenmacher has already d Earnshaw about my presence in m. Which means? His intention ist be directed not at Earnshaw but me: must wish me to know that he spoken to Earnshaw about me. But y? To bind us together in a brothood of secrecy? Perhaps a deeper tention: wants me to know that nshaw has been in room, that he assists in experiment.

VEMBER 21, 3:00 P.M. Waiting. A lk in the courtyard. Sunny but cold: ath-puffs. A figure approaches. Bareaded, no coat, a pair of fur-lined ves: one of the experimenters, procting his fingers.

VEMBER 21, 5:00 P.M. It is possible at every touch remains present in in. These buried hapto-memories pable of being reawakened rough mechanical stimulation. rgotten caresses: mother, lover. el of a shell on a beach, forty years o. Memory-cylinders: a history of uches. Why not?

VEMBER 21, 10:06 P.M. At two mines before eight, Earnshaw enters liary. I rise without a word and follow him into stockroom. Down stairway, into basement. Unlocks door of experimental room and leaves without once looking at me. His dislike of Box is clear. But what is it exactly that he dislikes?

"Welcome!" Kistenmacher watchful, expectant.

Standing against table: the dark figure of a human being, covered with wires and small brass caps. On table: a wooden frame holding what appears to be a horizontal roll of perforated paper, perhaps a yard wide, partially unwound onto a second reel. Both geared to a chain-drive motor.

A folding screen near one wall.

"In ten years," Kistenmacher remarks, "in twenty years, it may be possible to create tactile sensations by stimulating the corresponding centers of the brain. Until then, we must conquer the skin directly."

A nod toward screen. "Your modesty will be respected. Please remove your clothes behind the screen and put on the cloth."

Behind screen: a high stool on which lies a folded piece of cloth. Quickly remove my clothes and unfold cloth, which proves to be a kind of loincloth with drawstring. Put it on without hesitation. As I emerge from behind screen, have distinct feeling that I am a patient in a hospital, in presence of a powerful physician.

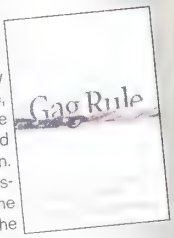
Kistenmacher opens a series of hinged panels in back of figure: head, torso, legs. Hollow form with silken lining, dimpled by miniature electromagnets fastened to silver points. Notice figure is clamped to table. Can now admit a man.

Soon shut up in haptograph. Through wire mesh covering eye-holes, watch Kistenmacher walk over to machine. Briskly turns to face me. With one hand resting on wooden frame, clears throat, stands very still, points suddenly to paper roll.

"You see? An improvement in design. The key lies in the series of perforations punched in the roll. As the motor drives the reel—here—it passes over a nickel-steel roller: here. The roller is set against a row of small metallic brushes, like our earlier rods. The brushes make contact with the nickel-steel roller only through the perforations. This is clear? The cur-

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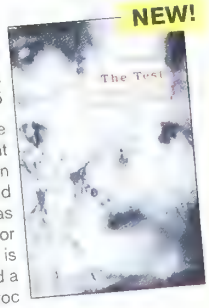


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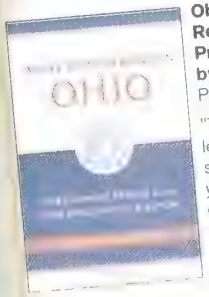
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circular section—of the
I roll. Tell me exactly what

ing drawn on over my left foot and
unwind, experience a similar but less exact sensation, mixed with prickles, on right foot and calf. Kistenmacher switches off current and gives source reel a few turns by hand, rewinding perforated paper roll. Switches on current. Repeats sensation of drawn-on socks, making small adjustment that very slightly improves accuracy in right foot and calf.

Next proceeds to test three additional tactile sensations. A rope or belt fastened around my waist. A hand: pressing its spread fingers against my back. Some soft object, perhaps a brush or cloth, moving along upper arm.

Switches off current, seems to grow thoughtful. Asks me to close eyes and pay extremely close attention to next series of haptographic tests, each of which will go beyond simple mimicry of a familiar sensation.

Close my eyes and feel an initial scattering of prickles on both elbows. Then under arms—at hips—at chin. Transformed gradually into multiple sensation of steady upward pushes, as if I've been gripped by 10 feet trying to lift me from ground. Briefly feel that I am hovering in air, some three feet above floor. Open my eyes, see that I haven't moved. Upward-tugging sensation remains, but illusion of suspension has been so weakened that I cannot recapture it while eyes remain open.

Kistenmacher asks me to close eyes again, concentrate my attention. At once the distinct sensation of something pressing down on shoulders and scalp, as well as sideways against ribcage. A feeling as if I were being shut up in a container. Gradually becomes uncomfortable, oppressive. Am about to cry out when suddenly a sensation of release, accompanied by feeling of something pouring down along my body—as though pieces of crockery were breaking up and falling upon me.

"Very good," says Kistenmacher. "And now one more."

Again a series of prickles, this time applied simultaneously all over body. Prickles gradually resolve themselves into the sensation—pleasurable enough—of being lightly pressed by something large and soft. Like being squeezed by an enormous hand—as if a fraternal handshake were being applied to entire surface of my skin. Enveloped in that gentle pressure, that soft caress, I feel soothed, I feel more than soothed, I feel exhilarated, I feel an odd and unaccountable joy—a jolt of well being—a stream of bliss—which fills me to such bursting that tears of pleasure burn in my eyes.

When sensation stops, ask for it to be repeated, but Kistenmacher has learned whatever it was he wanted to know.

Decisively moves toward me. Disappears behind machine. Unlatches panels and pulls them apart.

I emerge backwards, in loincloth. Carefully withdraw arms from torso. Across room see Kistenmacher standing with back to me. Yellowish large hands clasped against black suit-jacket.

Behind screen begin changing. Kistenmacher clears his throat.

"The sense of sight is concentrated in a single place—two places, if you like. We know a great deal about the structure of the eye. By contrast, the sense of touch is dispersed over the entire body. The skin is by far the largest organ of sense. And yet we know almost nothing about it."

I step out from behind screen. Surprised to see Kistenmacher still standing with back to me, large hands clasped behind.

"Good night," he says: motionless. Suddenly raises one hand to height of his shoulder. Moves it back and forth at wrist.

"Night," I reply. Walk to door: turn. And raising my own hand, give first to Kistenmacher, and then to the haptograph, an absurd wave.

NOVEMBER 22. Mimicry and invention. Splendor of haptograph. Not just the replication of familiar tactile sensations, but capacity to explore new combinations—pressures, touches, never experienced before. Adventures of feeling. Who can say what new sensations will be awakened, what unknown desires? Unexplored realm
the tangible. The frontiers of tou

NOVEMBER 23. Conversation w
Earnshaw, who fails to share my
citement. His unmistakable dislik
haptograph. Irritable shrug: "Le
well enough alone." A motto t
negates with masterful exactit
everything the Wizard represents.
yet: his passion for the slightest
vance in motion photography.
stinctive shrinking of an eye-man f
the tangible? Safe distance of si
Noli me tangere. The intimacy,
intrusiveness, of touch.

NOVEMBER 24. Another session in E
Began with several familiar sensatio
very accurate: ball in palm, sock, ha
shake, the belt. One new one, less
isfactory: sensation of being strok
by a feather on right forearm. Felt
first like bits of sand being sprinkled
my arm; then somewhat like a bru
finally like a piece of smooth wo
Evidently much easier for pins to ev
precise sensations by stimulat
touch-spots in limited area than
stimulating them in sequence alon
length. Kistenmacher took notes, f
dled with metallic brushes, adjuste
screw. Soon passed on to sensatio
of uncommon or unknown kind.
miscellaneous assortment of ripp
flutters, obscure thrusts and push
Kistenmacher questioned me close
My struggle to describe. Bizarre se
sation of a pressure that seemed
come from inside my skin and pr
outward, as if I were going to bu
apart. At times a sense of disconne
tion from skin, which seemed to
slipping from my body like clothes
moved at night. Once: a variation
constriction and release, accompani
by impression that I was leaving m
old body, that I was being reborn. In
mediately followed by sensation, las
ing no more than a few seconds, th
I was flying through the air.

NOVEMBER 26. Walking in courtyar
Clear and cold. Suddenly aware of m
overcoat on my shoulders, the grip
shoe-leather, clasp of hat about m
head. Throughout day, increased awar
ness of tactile sensations: the edges
pages against my fingers, door-handle i
palm. Alone in library, a peculiar sha

ession of individual hairs in my
), of fingernails set in their places
ids of my fingers. These sensations
l, though lasting but a short time.

EMBER 27. The Wizard's attention
easingly consumed by his ore-
rating machinery and miniature
hanisms of speaking doll. The toy
nograph—concealed within tin
)—repeatedly malfunctions: the
e wax cylinders break, stylus be-
es detached from diaphragm or
from its groove. Meanwhile, fly-
visits to the Box, where he adjusts
allic brushes, studies take-up reel,
inges back panels, sketches furi-
y. Leaves abruptly, with necktie
ched up over top of vest. Kisten-
her says Wizard is dissatisfied with
gn of haptograph and has proposed
fferent model: a pine cabinet in
ch subject is enclosed, except for
l, which is provided with a separate
ering. The Wizard predicts hapto-
)h parlor: a room of cabinet hap-
raphs, operated by nickel-in-slot
hanism. Cabinet haptograph to be
trolled by subject himself, by means
panel of buttons.

VEMBER 28. Another encounter
h Earnshaw. Distant. Won't talk
)ut machine. So: talked about
ather. Cold today. Mm hmm. But
too cold. Uh huh. Can't tell what
kes him more uncomfortable: that
iow he takes part in experiment, or
it he knows I do. Talked about
mes per second. No heart in it. Re-
ved to see me go.

VEMBER 29. Fourth session in Box.
stenmacher meticulous, intense.
n through familiar simulations.
)pped machine, removed roll, in-
ted new one. Presented theory of os-
lations: the new roll perforated in
:h a way as to cause rapid oscillation
pins. Oscillations should affect
iesthetic sense. At first an unpleas-
t feeling of many insects attacking
:n. Then: sensation of left arm float-
g away from body. Head floating.
)dy falling. Once: sensation of flying
rough air, as in previous session, but
ich sharper and longer lasting. My
iole body tingling. Returned to first
ll. Skin as if rubbed new. Height-
ed receptivity. Seemed to be pick-
ing up minuscule touches hidden from old skin. Glorious.

NOVEMBER 29, LATER. Can't sleep for excitement. Confused thoughts, sudden lucidities. Can sense a new world just out of reach. Obscured by old body. What if a stone is not a stone, a tree not a tree? Fire not fire? Face not face? What then? New shapes, new touches: a world concealed. The haptograph pointing the way. Oh, what are you talking about? Shut up. Go to bed.

NOVEMBER 30. Kistenmacher says Earnshaw has asked to be released from experiment—the Wizard refuses. Always the demand for unconditional loyalty. In it together. The boys. "Every man jack of you!"

Saw Earnshaw in courtyard. Avoiding me.

DECEMBER 1. This morning the Wizard filed a caveat with Patents Office, setting forth design of haptograph and enumerating essential features. A familiar stratagem. Caveat protects his invention, while acknowledging its incompleteness. In the afternoon, interviews in library with *Herald, Sun*, and *Newark News*. "The haptograph," the Wizard says, "is not yet ready to be placed before the public. I hope to have it in operation within six months." As always, prepares the ground, whets the public appetite. Speaks of future replications: riding a roller coaster, sledding down a hill. Sensations of warmth and cold. The "amusement haptograph": thrilling adventures in complete safety of the machine. The cabinet haptograph, the haptograph parlor. Shifts to speaking doll, the small wax cylinders with their nursery rhymes. In future, a doll that responds to a child's touch. The Wizard's hands cut through the air, his eyes are blue fire.

The reporters write furiously.

Kistenmacher says that if three more men are put on job, and ten times current funds diverted to research, haptograph might be ready for public in three years.

DECEMBER 2. Lively talk in courtyard about haptograph, the machine that records touch. Confusion about exactly what it is, what it does. One man

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under impression it operates like phonograph: you record a series of touches by pressing a recording mechanism [illegible] then play back touches by grasping machine. Someone makes a corset joke with a machine like that, else needs a woman? Laughter, some of it anxious. The Wizard can make anything. Why not a woman?

DECEMBER 3. Arrived early this morning. Heard voices coming from library. Entered to find Wizard standing at desk, facing Earnshaw. Wizard leaning forward, knuckles on desk. Nostrils flared. Cheek-ridges brick-red. Earnshaw pale, erect—turns at sound of door.

I, hat in hand: "Morning, gentlemen!"

DECEMBER 5. Fifth session in Box. Kistenmacher at work day and night to improve chain-drive mechanism and smooth turning of reels. New arrangement responsible for miracles of simulation: ball in palm, handshake, the sock, the hat. Haptograph can now mimic perfectly the complex sensation of having a heavy robe placed on shoulders, slipped over each arm in turn, tied at waist. Possible the Wizard's predictions may one day be fulfilled.

But Kistenmacher once again eager to investigate the unknown. Change of paper rolls: the new oscillations. "Please. Pay very close attention." Again I enter exotic realms of the tactile, where words become clumsy, obtuse. A feeling—wondrous—of stretching out to tremendous length. A sensation of passing through walls that crumble before me, of hurtling through space, of shouting with my skin. Once: the impression—how to say it?—of being stroked by the wing of an angel. Awkward approximations, dull stammerings that cannot convey my sense of exhilaration as I seemed to burst impediments, to exceed bounds of the possible, to experience, in the ruins of the human, the birth of something utterly new.

DECEMBER 6. Is it an illusion, a trick, played by haptograph? Or is it the revelation of a world that is actually there, a world from which we have been excluded because of the limitations of our bodies?

DECEMBER 6, LATER. Unaccustomed thoughts. For example. Might we be surrounded by immaterial presences that move against us but do not impress themselves upon the touch-spots of our skin? Our vision sharpened by microscopes. Haptograph as the microscope of touch.

DECEMBER 7. Ever since interview, the Wizard not once in Box. His attention taken up by other matters: plans for mining low-grade magnetite, manufacture of speaking dolls in Phonograph Works, testing of a safe alternating current. The rivalry with Westinghouse. Secret experiments in Photographic Building.

DECEMBER 8. My life consumed by waiting. Strong need to talk about haptograph. In this mood, paid visit to stockroom. Earnshaw constrained, uneasy. Hasn't spoken to me in ten days. I pass on some photographic gossip. Won't look me in the eye. Decide to take bull by horns. So! How's the experiment going? Turns to me fiercely. "I hate it in there!" His eyes stern, unforgiving. In the center of each pupil: a bright point of fear.

DECEMBER 9. There are documented cases in which a blind person experiences return of sight. Stunned with vision: sunlight on leaves, the blue air. Now imagine a man who has been wrapped in cotton for forty-five years. One day cotton is removed. Suddenly man feels sensations of which he can have had no inkling. The world pours into his skin. The fingers of objects seize him, shake him. Touch of a stone, push of a leaf. The knife-thrust of things. What is the world? Where is it? Where? We are covered in cotton, we walk through a world hidden away. Blind skin. Let me see!

DECEMBER 10. This afternoon, in courtyard, looked up and saw a hawk in flight. High overhead: wings out, body slowly dipping. The power of its calm. A sign. But of what? Tried to imagine hawkness. Failed.

DECEMBER 11. Long morning, longer afternoon. Picked up six books, read two pages in each. Looked out window four hundred times. Earnshaw's face the other day. Imprint of his ancestors: pale clerics, clean-cheeked, sharp-chinned, a flush of fervor in white skin. Condemning sinners to everlasting hellfire.

DECEMBER 12. A night of terrors and wonders. Where will it end?

Kistenmacher tense, abrupt, feverish, tired. Proceeded in his meticulous way through familiar mimicries. Repeated each one several times, entered results in notebook. Something of the functory in his manner. Or was it only me? But no: his excitement evident as he changed rolls. "Please. Tell me exactly." How to describe it? My skin delicately thrummed by haptograph, gave birth to buried powers. Felt again that blissful expansion of being—the sense of having thrown off old body and assumed a new. I was beyond myself, more than myself, un-me. In my body, could hold out my hand and grasp a pencil, a paperweight. In my body, could hold out my hand and grasp an entire room with all its furniture, an entire town with its chimneys and saltshakers and streets and oak trees. But more than that—more than that. In new skin I was able to touch directly—at every point on the body—any object that presented itself to my mind: a stuffed bear from childhood, wing of a hawk in flight, grass in a remembered field. As though my skin were chock-full of touch-like memories in the brain, waiting for a chance to leap forth.

Opened my eyes and saw Kistenmacher standing at the table. Staring ferociously at unwinding roll of paper. Hum and click of chain-drive motor, faint rustle of metallic brushes. Closed my eyes . . .

. . . and passed at once into wilder regions. Here, the skin becomes so thin and clean that you can feel the touch of air—of light—of dream. Here, the skin shrinks till it's no bigger than the head of a pin, expands till it stretches taut over the frame of the universe. All that is, flowing against you. Drumming against your skin. I shuddered and rang out like a bell. I was all new, a new creature, glistening, emerging from scaly old. My dull, clumsy skin seemed to break apart into separate points of quivering aliveness, and in this sweet cracking open, this radia-

olution, I felt my body melting, nerves bursting, tears streamed ig my cheeks, and I cried out in ter- and ecstasy.

A knock at the door—two sharp s. The machine stopped. Kisten- her over to door.

I heard a shout," Earnshaw said. nought—"

Fine," Kistenmacher said. "Every- ng is fine."

CEMBER 13. A quiet day, cold. Talk now. The sky pale, less a color than absence of color: unblue, ungray: water. Through the high arched dows, light traffic on Main. Creak vagons, knock of hooves. In library place, hiss and crackle of hickory s. Someone walking in an upper lery, stopping, removing a book m a shelf. A dray horse snorts in street.

CEMBER 14. A sense within me of h anticipation, mixed with anx- sness. Understand the anticipation, t why the other? My skin alert, tchful, as before a storm.

CEMBER 15. A new life beckons. A dow-feeling, an on-the-vergeness. ır sensations fixed, rigid, pre- table. Must smash through. Into hat? The new place. The there. We e off to one side, like paupers beside ailroad track. The center cannot here, among these constricting sen- tions. Haptograph as a way out. ver there. Where?

Paradise.

CEMBER 17. Disaster.

On evening of 16th, Kistenmacher me to fetch me at eight o'clock. Said hadn't been in Box for two days— last-minute snag in automatic ad- stment of phonograph required full tention—and was eager to resume ır experiments. Followed him down eps to basement. At locked door of ox he removed ring of keys. Inserted rong one. Examined it with expres- on of irritable puzzlement. Inserted rrect one. Opened door, fumbled out. Switched on lights. At this oint Kistenmacher emitted an odd und—a kind of terrible sigh.

Haptograph lay on floor. Wires pped loose from their fastenings stuck out like wild hair. Back panels torn off, pins scattered about. On the floor: smashed reels, a chain from the motor, a broken frame. Wires like entrails. Gashed paper, crumpled lumps. In one corner I saw the dark head.

Kistenmacher, who had not moved, strode suddenly forward. Stopped. Looked around fiercely. Lifted his right hand shoulder-high in a fist. Suddenly crouched down over haptograph body and began touching wires with great gentleness.

Awful night. Arrived at library early morning. Earnshaw already dismissed. Story: On night of December 16, about seven o'clock, a machinist from precision room, coming to stockroom to pick up some brass tubing, saw Earnshaw emerging from basement. Seemed distracted, fidgety, quite unlike himself. After discovery of break-in, machinist reports to Wizard. Wizard confronts Earnshaw. E draws himself up, stiff, defiant, and in sudden passionate outburst resigns, saying he doesn't like goings-on "down there." Wizard shouts, "Get out of here!" Storms away. End of story.

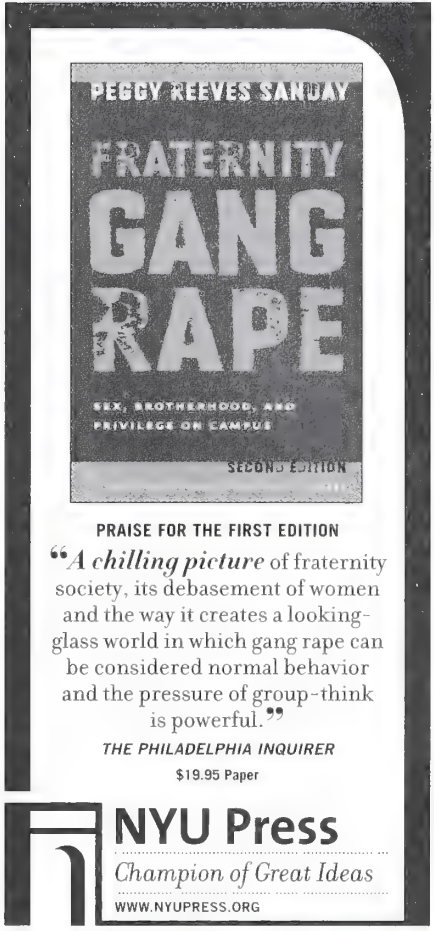
Kistenmacher says it will take three to five weeks to repair haptograph, perforate a new roll. But Wizard has ordered him to devote himself exclusively to speaking doll. The Wizard sharp-tempered, edgy, not to be questioned. Dolls sell well but are returned in droves. Always same complaint: the doll has stopped speaking, the toy phonograph concealed in its chest has ceased to operate.

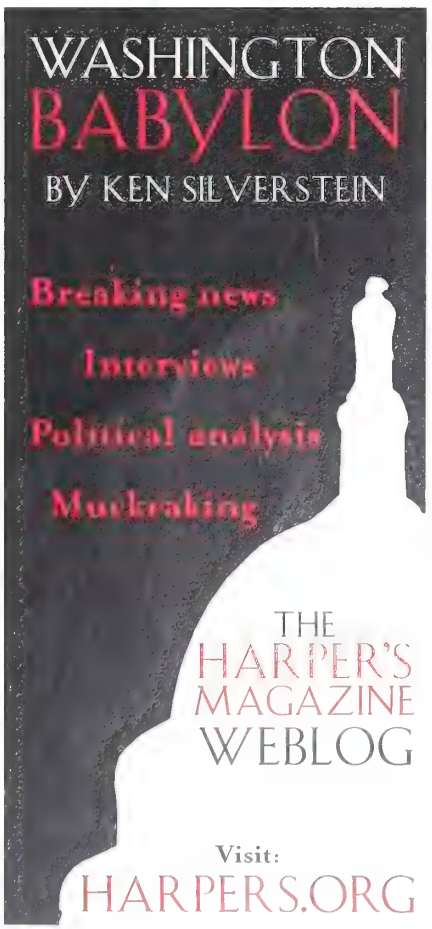
DECEMBER 18. No word from Kistenmacher, who shuts himself up in Room 8 with speaking doll.

DECEMBER 19. The Wizard swirling from room to room, his boyish smile, a joke, laughter. Go at it, boys! Glimpse of Kistenmacher: drooping head, a big, punished schoolboy. Can Wizard banish disappointment so easily?

DECEMBER 20. Earnshaw's destructive rage. How to understand it? Haptograph as devil's work. The secret room, naked skin: sin of touch. Those upright ancestors. Burn, witch!

DECEMBER 20, LATER. Saw Kisten-





[illegible] haptograph, [illegible]
[illegible]n't see me.

DECEMBER 20, LATER. [illegible]

DECEMBER 20, STILL LATER. Worried about fate of haptograph. Felt we [illegible] on the verge. Or what? A tremendous change. A revolution in sensation, ushering in—what, exactly? What? Say it. All right. A new universe. Yes! The hidden world revealed. The haptograph as adventure, as voyage of discovery. In comparison, the phonograph nothing but a clever toy: tunes, voices.

Haptograph: instrument of revelation.

Still no word.

DECEMBER 21. The Wizard at his desk, humming. Sudden thought: is that a disappointed man? The haptograph destroyed, Kistenmacher brokenhearted, the Wizard humming. A happy man, humming a tune. How could I have thought? Of course only a physical and temporary destruction. The machine easily reconstructed. But no work ordered. Takes Kistenmacher off job. Reign of silence. Why this nothing? Why?

Perhaps this. Understands that haptograph is far from complete. Protected by caveat. Sees Kistenmacher's growing obsession. Needs to wrest his best electrical experimenter from a profitless task and redirect his energies more usefully. So: destruction of machine an excuse to put aside experiment. Good. Fine. But surely something more? Relief? Shedding of a tremendous burden? The machine eluding him, betraying him—its drift from the practical, its invitation to heretical pleasures. Haptograph as seductress. Luring him away. A secret desire to be rid of it. No more! Consider: his sudden cheerfulness, his hum. Ergo.

And Earnshaw? His hostility to experiment serves larger design. By striking in rage at Wizard's handiwork, unwittingly fulfills Wizard's secret will. Smash it up, bash it up. Earnshaw as eruption of master's darkness, emissary of his deepest desire. Burn! Die! The Wizard's longing to be rid of haptograph flowing into Earnshaw's hatred of haptograph as wicked machine. Two wills in apparent opposition, working as one. Die! Inescapable conclusion: arm raised in fury against Wizard's work is the Wizard's arm.

Could it be?

It could be.

Kistenmacher entombed with speaking doll. The Wizard flies from room to room, busies himself with a hundred projects, ignores haptograph.

No one enters the Box.

DECEMBER 30. Nothing.

FEBRUARY 16, 1890. Today in courtyard overheard one of the new men speak of haptograph. Seemed embarrassed when I questioned him. Had heard it was shaped like a life-sized woman. Was it true she could speak?

Already passing into legend. Must harden myself. The experiment has been abandoned.

Snow in the streets. Through the high windows, the clear sharp jingle of harness bells.

Perhaps I dreamed it all?

Have become friendly with Watkins, the new stockroom clerk. A vigorous, compact man, former telegraph operator, brisk, efficient, humorous; dark blond side-whiskers. His passion for things electrical. Proposes that, for a fee, the owner of a telephone be permitted to listen to live musical performances: a simple matter of wiring. The electric boot, the electric hat. Electric letter-opener. A fortune to be made. One day accompanied him down to storeroom, where he searched for supply of cobalt and magnesium requested by an assistant in electrical lab who was experimenting on new storage battery. Saw with a kind of sad excitement that we were approaching a familiar door. "What's in there?"—couldn't stop myself. "Oh that," said Watkins. Takes out a ring of keys. Inside: piles of wooden crates, up to ceiling. "Horns and antlers," he said. "Look: antelope, roebuck, gazelle. Red deer. Walrus tusks, rhino horns." Laughter. "Not much call for these items. But heck, you never can tell."

A dream, a dream!

No: no dream. Or say, a dream, certainly a dream, nothing but a dream, but only as all inventions are dreams: vivid and impalpable presences that haunt the mind's chambers, escaping now and then into the place w[illegible] they take on weight and cast sh[illegible]ows. The Wizard's laboratory a dre[illegible] garden, presided over by a mage. W[illegible] did he abandon haptograph? Bec[illegible] he knew in his bones that it was c[illegible] mercially unfeasible? Because it [illegible] too far short of perfected phonogr[illegible] the elegant promise of kinetosc[illegible] Was it because haptograph had [illegible] come a terrible temptress, a forbid[illegible] delight, luring him away from u[illegible] practical projects? Or was it—is it [illegible] sible—did he sense world not yet r[illegible] for his haptograph, that danger[illegible] machine which refused to limit it[illegible] to familiar feel of things but prom[illegible] an expansion of the human into [illegible] and terrifying realms of being?

Yesterday the Wizard spent [illegible] hours in metallurgical lab. Adjustme[illegible] in ore-separator. "It's a daisy!" Exp[illegible] it to revolutionize the industry. Br[illegible] in a handsome profit.

The haptograph awaits its time [illegible] a year—ten years—a century—[illegible] will return. Then everyone w[illegible] know what I have come to kn[illegible] that the world is hidden from us[illegible] that our bodies, which seem to br[illegible] us the riches of the earth, preve[illegible] the world from reaching us. For t[illegible] eyes of our skin are closed. Brig[illegible]ness streams in on us, and we can[illegible] see. Things flow against us, and cannot feel. But the light will con[illegible] The haptograph will return. Perha[illegible] it will appear as a harmless toy in [illegible] amusement parlor, a playful rival [illegible] the gustograph and the odoroscop[illegible] For a nickel you will be able to fee[illegible] ball in the palm of your hand, a h[illegible] sitting on your head. Gradually t[illegible] sensations will grow more com[illegible]plex—more elusive—more darin[illegible] You will feel the old body slippi[illegible] off, a new one emerging. Then yo[illegible] being will open wide and you will r[illegible]ceive—like a blow—like a rush [illegible] wind—the in-streaming world. Th[illegible] hidden universe will reveal itself lik[illegible] fire. You will leave yourself behin[illegible] forever. You will become as a god.

I will not return to these notes.

Snow on the streets. Bright blu[illegible] sky, a cloud white as house-pain[illegible] Rumble of dynamos from the ma[illegible]chine shop. Crackle of hickory log[illegible] a shout from the courtyard. An un[illegible] remarkable day.

EW BOOKS

y John Leonard



ou couldn't have written for a living in New York during the last third of the twentieth cen-y without having heard of—and obably from—Leo Lerman. The arded and ebullient features editor *Vogue* was forever on the freelance one, putting out a fire or starting one. ne Polish Pope had wowed Protes-nt-American farmers, and Leo want-you to explain how by Thursday lat-t. Or else an article had dropped out his next issue, he had to substitute a & A with Jorge Luis Borges, and he eeded six hundred words overnight lling readers why they should care out literature or Argentina. He ap-aled to your professionalism (writers rite, never mind on what) and your allet (why not, for once, top dollar?). nd when he wasn't on the phone, he as discovering something marvelous or eeting someone sexy at the ballet, the neater, the opera, or the "Fashion and Surrealism" exhibit at the Fashion Institute of Technology. And if he stayed home, he read Proust: "Why I read anything but Proust, I can't understand."

Not that THE GRAND SURPRISE: THE JOURNALS OF LEO LERMAN (Knopf, $37.50) is a threat to *Remembrance of Things Past*. But Lerman—born poor in Spanish Harlem; raised ambitious in Jackson Heights, Queens; done with classrooms after high school, a graduate instead of fashion magazines, émigré salon culture, and a 1930s New York underground of drag clubs and homosexual speakeasies; Jewish, gimpy, autodidactic, and "queer" (his word); a quick study and a glad hand, with his Turkish cap, purple sheets, and "royalist fantasies"—this Leo embodied upward mobility, class transgression, and theatrical reincarnation. Everywhere he went, genius, mimicry, and disguise were passports and equalizers. And for more than half a century, from his first *Vogue* assignment in 1941 to his deathbed in 1994, he kept brilliant notes on what Beauty and Legend looked like before vulgarians stormed the glam gates.



Naturally, when some of your best friends are Maria Callas, Marlene Dietrich, and Truman Capote, the gossip is salacious. Naturally, if you invite Imogene Coca, Lionel Trilling, and Anaïs Nin to the same party in 1946, or Robert Motherwell, Leontyne Price, and Si Newhouse in 1964, or Martha Graham, Woody Allen, and Lillian Hellman in 1976, some chairs will be broken, and some hearts too. Perhaps only Leo could have introduced Yukio Mishima to Graham Greene at Sardi's. (Then again, before committing harikari, Mishima got around all right on his own; cruising the streets near some Manhattan baths, he picked up Tennessee Williams before either of them even knew the other was a writer.)

But what's most striking about *The Grand Surprise* is its melancholy disappointment. To have worked for so many decades for Condé Nast, to have been given at last a shot to edit one of their monthlies, the resurrected *Vanity Fair*, all by yourself, and then to find that not only are you too old, at sixty-nine, to whore after the latest hot flash but you were temporary anyway, a relief pitcher for seven months between Richard Locke and Tina Brown, is to be obliged to ask unnerving questions about your career and your identity. As it happens, I quit the *New York Times* for *Vanity Fair* in 1983, and lasted half as long as Leo. I have written elsewhere that we entered the halls of Condé Nast as the little children had followed Stephen of Vendôme south

gy to the Spanish Republic No. 34, by Robert Motherwell © Albright-Knox Art Gallery/CORBIS/Dedalus Foundation, c./Licensed by VAGA, New York City. Photograph of a ball at the Hotel Pierre © Inge Morath/Magnum Photos



Andre Schiffrin never let the matter of profit to Pantheon's A POLITICAL EDUCATION: COMING OF AGE IN PARIS AND NEW YORK (Melville House, $24.95), the snowy memoir of a cultured child of high European culture as well as a clear-eyed fighter for unblinkered consciousness, devoted to a Russian Jewish father who was an editor at the publishing house of Gallimard and a mother Andre Malraux had called the most beautiful woman in Paris, cuddled Aldous Huxley and André Gide, asked his professional opinion of various children's books, he was five years old when the Nazis arrived. If not for Varian Fry and his rescue mission, the Schiffrins would never have made it out of France, first to Casablanca, finally to New York. The Gallimard they left behind pretended they had never been, that no Schiffrin had created their immensely profitable children's list nor dreamed up the idea of Pléiade editions of French classics.

In New York, the young Andre never appreciated the depths of his father's despair, even as the elder Schiffrin published Gide, Malraux, and Louis Aragon. Nor did Andre appreciate his mother's loneliness, which persisted despite the maternal efforts of such émigré friends as Jacques Maritain and Kurt Wolff, who invented Andre's father to form Pantheon Books. After a brief stint at Columbia's Teachers College, Andre moved to Paris, where he studied linguistics with Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, and married Catherine Dubois, a fellow student. Returning to New York in 1962, he worked briefly at Grove Press, then at Random House, where he published Jean Genet's *The Balcony* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Words*. Then, in 1965, he joined Pantheon, which was then a subsidiary of Random House, and began to publish books by Eqbal Ahmad, Noam Chomsky, Eldridge Cleaver, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Régis Debray, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-tung, Amilcar Cabral, Ernesto Cardenal, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz, Leopoldo Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, Breyten Breytenbach, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Léopold

ERLIN STORIES

ıe caustic energy of Weimar art

' *Francine Prose*

ussed in this essay:

ter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s, edited by Sabine Rewald. ale University Press. 304 Pages. $65.



Christian Schad's disturbing, confrontational portraits challenge you to a staring contest, a face- that you are inevitably going to e. The paintings are executed in a le suggesting an improbable amal- m of Netherlandish and Florentine d Masters, Latin American magical alism, and Indian billboard art, and e eyes of his subjects take aim at you, ring you to look away. At the same ne, you feel that Schad's grimly se-

ancine Prose is a contributing editor of ırper's Magazine. *Her most recent book is* :ading Like a Writer: A Guide for People ho Love Books and for Those Who ant to Write Them.

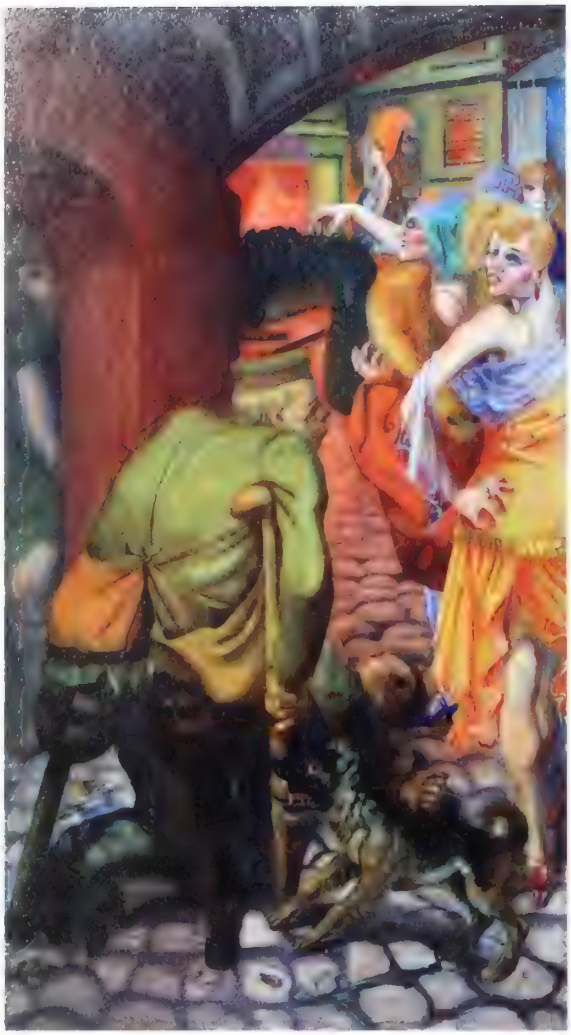
rious men and women are monitoring your responses, provoking you either to acknowledge or to ignore certain other things—subplots, as it were—transpiring elsewhere in the painting.

Schad was the most interesting of the artists involved with the Neue Sachlichkeit, or New Objectivity, movement, a loosely connected group that included, among others, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Rudolf Schlichter, Karl Hubbuch, and Georg Scholz—painters who worked mostly in Berlin between the First and Second World Wars, during the Weimar Republic; artists who managed simultaneously to savage and celebrate the manners and morals of their time. As Alexandra Richie writes in her history of Berlin, *Faust's Metropolis*, "The new realism was imbued with a longing for something whole and with an enthusiasm for things as they are rather than as they should be. It was as if Germans had finally given up the search for an identity informed by *völkisch* tales of ancient dark forests or misty mountains and had decided to place themselves in the real world, with all its industry, its toughness and its urban ugliness.... By the mid twenties *Neue Sachlichkeit* was being applied to everything from film to theater, from cabaret to painting." Germany in the Twenties was, as is well known, an extraordinarily fertile time and place for artists. The playwrights, directors, writers, architects, and composers whose works cross-fertilized one another's included Arnold Schoenberg, Walter Gropius, Bertolt Brecht, Fritz Lang, Thomas Mann, Alban Berg, and Alexander Döblin, among countless others.

Collected in *Glitter and Doom*, a recent book that was published last fall to coincide with an exhibition by the same name at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the flashy and unsettling images that these painters created make you wonder (even as you can guess) why German art's fascinating detour into realism en route from Expressionism to Anselm Kiefer is not more widely celebrated, and why the startlingly original Schad is less known to the general public than his gifted but more predictable contemporaries. Perhaps because their grotesqueries and exaggerations continue to seem like accurate representations of their political moment, Dix and Grosz are the Weimar artists who are most often reproduced and most frequently mentioned in discussions of their era; unless, that is, you happen to be speaking to contemporary painters, who are more likely to think of Schad's haunting and unsettling work as a secret that they alone have managed to discover.

In Schad's 1927 *Self-Portrait*, the artist is awkwardly posed on the edge of a rumpled bed, on which reclines a dark-haired vamp, naked but for pink stockings. Running down one side of her face is a long, jagged scar that presumably refers to the brilliant technique that jealous lovers in Naples (where Schad lived briefly) devised to prevent their mistresses from straying. But neither the scar nor the woman quite explains the sitter's extreme discomfort—the expression of someone who is, as they say, about to jump out of his skin. Could some of his anxiety have to do with his outfit? The artist wears a tight, see-through green shirt, fitted with a stand-up collar, laces, and a jaunty little tassel, beneath which you can see his nipples and a patch of curly black chest hair. It's hard to say exactly what dissonant minor chord

f-Portrait, by Christian Schad © Private Collection/Galerie Brockstedt, Hamburg/ARS, w York City/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Benjamin Hasenclever, Munich



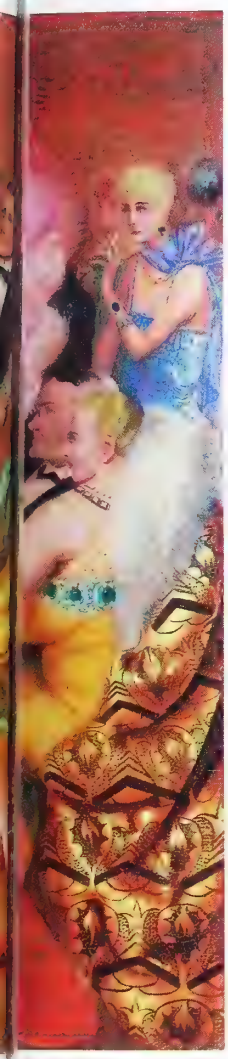


(gender confusion? fetishism? masochistic exhibitionism?) has been struck, and it is equally hard to deny that the diaphanous, parrot-green shirt is among the most perverse and creepy fashion statements in all of art history, which is saying quite a bit.

Another of Schad's double portraits, this one from 1929, depicts two sideshow performers, *Agosta the "Winged One" and Rasha the "Black Dove,"* both exuding a pure steady stream of confidence and bravado. Rasha, a beautiful African woman, her bodice decorated with cowrie shells and the whites of her eyes tinged with red, gazes out at us, as if to judge how we are reacting to her companion, Agosta—a pale haughty fellow, rather handsome if we choose to overlook his congenital deformity, an upside-down rib cage that turns his naked chest into a matched set of wings poised on the brink of taking off and flying out of his body.

Schad, the son of a privileged family, was a pacifist who spent the First World War in Switzerland; his background and experience made him an exception among the New Objectivity artists, many of whom fought in the war and were profoundly affected by their memories of combat. The trenches must have seemed like a chasm between the Weimar years and everything that had gone before, just as the word "peace" must have struck them as a grotesque misnomer for what the soldiers discovered upon their return home. The dark, furious energy—the anger and cynicism and disgust—that animates so many of their paintings seems like a direct outgrowth of the experience of battle and defeat, just as the fascination with disfigur injury and bloody crime (such as t subject of Rudolf Schlichter's *L Murder*) evokes the gore and butc ery to which these men were routi ly exposed, the mutilation and redu tion of the body to its limbs and pa (Arguably, the most shocking aspect these willfully scandalous images is t loathing of the body—and the fema body in particular—that suffuses the it's hard to think of another painti so steeped in revulsion for so many v rieties of female flesh as Otto Di *Three Wenches*, a trio of nudes rangi from the emaciated to the obese.)

The aftermath of the war and th sufferings of its veterans are comm themes, and the wounded and their i juries are often represented with quasi-clinical relish. Otto Dix's *Sk Players* portrays a trio of legless, hideou





naimed and disabled ex-combat-
s, each of whom has exactly enough
in and body left to enable him to
y cards. The scarred faces in sever-
f Dix's drawings and watercolors
ostitute and War Wounded, In Mem-
of the Glorious Time*) have the
ged, clumsily stitched-together look
a junior-high sewing project, and
gravely injured—a blind man and
ar cripple—inspire two of George
sz's atypically tender drawings.
The artists' sympathy deserts them,
wever, when they are portraying
se responsible for the suffering. At
1925 "New Objectivity: German
nting Since Expressionism" exhi-
ion in Mannheim (this was the
w that christened the movement),
osz's 1921 painting *Gray Day* ap-
ared under the title *Municipal Wel-
Officer for Disabled Veterans*. In its foreground is a bureaucrat who, with his black suit, stand-up collar, and briefcase, appears exactly as competent, thoughtful, and sympathetic as the cross-eyed, mustachioed, soft-boiled egg that his face so closely resembles. A brick wall (no one could accuse these artists of having a light touch with the symbolic) separates the petty official from those whose welfare he is supposed to care about: a workman carrying a shovel and an emaciated soldier, hunched, missing a hand, leaning heavily on his cane as he stalks the grisly industrial cityscape.

The war was only the first of the catastrophes that these artists and their society endured. Between the end of the fighting and the Mannheim exhibition (which was organized by art critic and curator Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub), Germany underwent a series of cataclysmic social upheavals: the November 1918 revolution that overthrew the Kaiser, the Spartakist uprising of 1919 and its brutal suppression by the right-wing paramilitary Freikorps, and the Treaty of Versailles, which added the burden of humiliation to the weight of defeat. Random homicides and targeted political assassinations turned the streets of Berlin into what George Grosz called "wild ravines haunted by murderers and cocaine pedlars, their emblem a metal bar or a murderous broken-off chair leg." As the popular sentiment, along with the wheels of justice, turned toward the right, the number of politically motivated killings increased. In *Faust's Metropolis*, Alexandra Richie reports that "of the twenty-two murders committed by the left, seventeen of the perpetrators were severely punished, ten with the death sentence; but of the 354 murders committed by the right between 1918 and 1922, only one was punished. Vigilante groups made up of unemployed ex-officers and criminals continued to occupy the capital, murdering at will, clubbing and beating people accused of 'unpatriotic' activities."

In 1923, due to a truly unfortunate series of events—the Allies' demand for reparations payments, the French occupation of the Ruhr—hyperinflation succeeded in further destabilizing the social order. Paper money lost all value; life savings vanished overnight. As Sebastian Haffner describes in his memoir, *Defying Hitler*:

> The old and unworldly had the worst of it. Many were driven to begging, many to suicide. The young and quick-witted did well. Overnight, they became free, rich, and independent. It was a situation in which mental inertia and reliance on past experience were punished by starvation and death, but rapid appraisal of new situations and speed of reaction were rewarded with sudden, vast riches. The twenty-one-year-old bank director appeared on the scene, and also the high school senior who earned his living from the stock-market tips of his slightly older friends. . . .

As Haffner goes on to report, the widespread suffering engendered, among the young, a febrile appetite for pleasure, a determination to celebrate life

their elders had endured:

> Amid all the misery, despair, and poverty there was an atmosphere of lightheaded youthfulness, licentiousness, and carnival. Now, for once, the young had money and the old did not. Moreover, [illegible] had claimed. It [illegible] —[illegible] few hours. It [illegible] never before or since; and not on the things old people spend their money on.
>
> Bars and nightclubs opened in large numbers. Young couples whirled about the streets of the amusement quarters. . . . Everyone was hectically, feverishly searching for love and seizing it without a second thought. Indeed, even love had assumed an inflationary character.



Instituted in 1924, the Dawes Plan stabilized currency and ushered in an economic boom. But for ordinary Germans, as well as for the artists of the New Objectivity movement, it was already too late to dispel the gathering lawlessness, to quiet the lethal conflict between the Nazis and the Communists, or to counter the shock of discovering that the bedrock beneath their feet had been, all along, the thinnest crust of ice. To comprehend the prevailing mood in Germany during that period, it may help for us to recall the chaos, the rumors, the fears and uncertainty that characterized the immediate aftermath of September 11 and to imagine that unsettled state

enduring for well over a decade. Likewise, to understand why painters were drawn to portraiture, we need only to remember how, in those final months of 2001, the eye contact that one made with strangers on the street often outlasted the few seconds to which city dwellers are normally accustomed; it was as if we were searching our



neighbors' faces to see how human beings still looked—how we looked—and how drastically we had been changed by our brush with disaster.

As Sabine Rewald tells us in her lucid and informative introduction to *Glitter and Doom*, the New Objectivity movement "encompasses two wings: the right, conservative and tending toward classicism, and the left, Verism. . . . The Verists painted the demimonde, individuals on the margins of society, as well as the professional class. . . . We see emancipated women in nightclubs, lesbians, effeminate homosexuals, cocaine-addicted performers, anonymous cripples and prostitutes, and among the members of the demimonde, a number of aristocrats."

Centered mostly in Berlin, the Verists (as their name would suggest) were committed to painting accurate and unflinching depictions of the life around them—without adornment, obfuscation, or romanticization. To many observers, the resultant work

furious, pitiless, fueled by a determ
tion to locate the grotesque in ever
urban life and in the faces of th
spectable and the criminal alik
might seem to lack that lofty det
ment. What's undeniable is the h
sincerity with which these men
lieved that they were holding a m
up to the world around them



funhouse mirror that would prese
more truthful reflection than the n
dispassionate photograph.

The New Objectivity painters fo
themselves to be in competition v
the increasingly popular portrait p
tographers of their era. In a 1955
terview, Otto Dix still "referred to p
tographs as snapshots that lacked
psychological depth of pain
portraits." Indeed, the entire leng
painting-versus-photography deb
could be encapsulated by compar
the New Objectivity paintings w
People of the 20th Century, Aug
Sander's photographic encyclopedi
his country, a monumental project t
took decades to complete; by the t
the Nazis destroyed his plates, which
cluded Jews and Gypsies and other n
Aryan faces in his group portrait of
German nation, Sander (whose b
known photo is of three "Young Far
ers" on their way to a dance) had p
duced more than 10,000 negatives

Published here in a seven-volu
set, *People of the 20th Century* is a m
terpiece—the sort of work to wh

[illegible] "Young Farmers, 1914," by August Sa
[illegible] Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto/Fridgeman Art Library. ARS VG Bild-K

an devote hours, or days, search-
he faces of Sander's subjects for
they have to tell us about the mys-
and the variety of human nature.
formally posed men and women
n almost every case identified
by their occupation: "Railway Of-
," "Secretary at West German Ra-
or, more simply, "School Girl."







can play a sort of guessing game, ig-
ng the titles and seeing how much
can intuit about the subjects' sta-
s in life by studying their faces and
details of their self-presentation.
what's interesting is that, unless
are actually shown with the tools
heir trade, you may not guess cor-
ly all that often. Sander set out to
tograph types and wound up cap-
ng the appearance and (just as the
nitive fear of photography warned)
souls of individuals.
By contrast, the Verists emphasized
se physical features and aspects of
racter that made their neighbors
l acquaintances not merely unique
peculiar, and they delighted in
nonstrating their own disregard for
us and social position. Whereas
ider posed his subjects to retain the
ximum personal dignity, the Verists,
many cases, preferred to challenge
vanity of their sitters and to mock
whole notion of self-regard and
-respect. Among the most hilari-
and nightmarish images in *Glitter*
Doom are those of the physicians
who suggest a team of Doctor Caligaris,
mad scientists with a professional in-
terest in mayhem and sadistic experi-
mentation. No reproduction can quite
capture the otherworldly effect pro-
duced by the thickly painted eyes, like
two pieces of unappealing hard candy,
in Dix's portrait of Dr. Heinrich Stadel-
mann, a Berlin oddball who believed
that Dada was a species of social disease
and whose own psychiatric researches
involved hypnotism. In another Dix
work, the respected and reputedly kind-
ly urologist and art dealer Dr. Hans
Koch brandishes a menacing syringe
and a length of rubber tubing as he sur-
veys the torture implements and re-
straints of the horror chamber that pass-
es for his treatment room.

It's tempting to assume that these
portraits are gross overstatements un-
til we see the photographs of their sub-
jects included in *Glitter and Doom*, as
well as in an earlier book, *New Objec-
tivity*, by Sergiusz Michalski, published
in 2003—documentary evidence of the
extreme eccentricity so passionately
cultivated and displayed by Weimar
Berliners. As painted by Otto Dix, Jo-
hanna Ey, a corpulent art dealer with
owlish spectacles, wears a lavender robe
trimmed with black fur and a skewed
gold tiara; she stands before a red cur-
tain evoking a Velázquez or a Car-
avaggio. But the photos reveal that, al-
though the regal paraphernalia may
have been added for theatrical effect,
the real-life model was just as unlike-
ly looking as the woman in the paint-
ing. In a 1927 photograph, the poet
Max Herrmann-Neisse, with his out-
sized, oddly shaped head, large ears,
and claw-like hands, looks ever so
slightly more like Murnau's Nosferatu
than he does in the two portraits by his
friend George Grosz.

All of which brings to mind what
Ian Buruma notes, in one of
the essays in *Glitter and Doom*:
"Hannah Arendt recalled viewing
Grosz's drawings 'not as satire but as
realistic reportage; we knew these types;
they were all around us.'" There are
indeed eras (our own may be one of
them) in which what at first appears to
be satire rapidly and dismayingly proves
to be reportage. "The Leaning Tow-
er," a story by Katherine Anne Porter,
who visited Berlin in 1931, offers a vi-
sion of the city, the era, and the gap be-
tween the maimed poor and the
porcine middle class that echoes and re-
inforces the vision of the New Objec-
tivity painters. "Those blinded or oth-
erwise mutilated in the war wore a
certain band on their sleeves to prove
that they had more than any others
earned the right to beg, and merited
special charity." But charity is only
rarely forthcoming from the "enormous
waddling women with short legs and ill-
humored faces, and round-headed men
with great rolls of fat across the backs
of their necks," whom Porter's hero

titute and War Wounded, by Otto Dix © LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Muenster/Sabine Ahlbrand-
nseif/ARS/VG Bild-Kunst; *The Writer Max Herrmann-Neisse*, by George Grosz © Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim/Estate
eorge Grosz/VAGA; Photograph of Max Herrmann-Neisse and his wife, Leni. Courtesy Yale University Press

shop selling toy and candy pigs, "in a trance of pig worship, gazing with eyes damp with admiration and appetite . . . their late medieval faces full of hallucinated malice and a kind of sluggish but intense cruelty that worked its way up from their depths slowly through the layers of helpless gluttonous fat." New Objectivity's "realistic reportage" ranged beyond the destitute and the gluttonous to focus on the droves of war widows and hapless older women (like the one in Dix's *Lady with Mink and Veil*) driven into prostitution during the Weimar years. Whores, along with their customers, are an obsessive motif in these works, as is the colorful population of Berlin's vibrant art scene and its transgressive demimonde.

Persuasively, Buruma argues that "for those of us born after World War II," the face "that best conjures up the spirit of Berlin about 1930" belongs to "Joel Grey, master of ceremonies and androgynous host of the Kit Kat Club in





the 1972 film *Cabaret*." But Dix's portrait of *The Dancer Anita Berber*—who, in fact, looks a bit like the Grey character—instantly (that is, the instant we see it) supplants him in our memory as an iconic symbol of the period. Redheaded, draped in a bandage-tight scarlet gown, and posed provocatively against a scarlet background, her ghoulishly pale face painted with green eye shadow and pursing her crimson bow mouth, Berber—a bisexual nightclub performer and actress equally notorious for her nude dancing and her ultimately fatal addictions to drugs and alcohol—seems an exotic nocturnal creature, theatrical, self-destructive, and perverse, one of those artists who are their own most fantastic creations.

Clubs such as the one that proved so ruinous for the lovesick professor in the 1930 Emil Jannings film, *The Blue Angel*, appear in paintings such as Dix's *To Beauty*, in which the artist glares at us f
the center of a dance floor swirling
mannequin-like merrymakers a
heavily caricatured black drummer
an American-flag pocket handkerc
Rudolf Schlichter's own fetishistic
cination with women in high-he
boots makes its way into paintings
as *Meeting of Fetishists and Maniacal*
gellants. The riotously polymorph
sexuality for which Weimar Berlin
famous is both parodied and admire
Dix's portraits of the wasp-waisted,
dified jeweler Karl Krall and the
bian journalist Sylvia von Harden, v
with her monocle and mannish
may make you think of the severe
Farbissina of the Austin Powers fil

Finally, though, what impresses
haunts you about every one of th
portrait subjects is not their freakish
so much as the force and comple
of their personalities, the proud, def
theatricality of their self-presentat
Even the most "unflattering" liken
es exude a vivid admiration for
rogue genetic material that could h

The Poet Iwan von Lucken, by Otto Dix. © Berlinische Galerie, Landesmuseum für Moderne K
Fotografie und Architektur, Berlin. ARS NY. Gefild Kunst. *The Eclipse of the Sun*, by G
Courtesy The Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, Huntington, N.Y. Estate of George Grosz/V

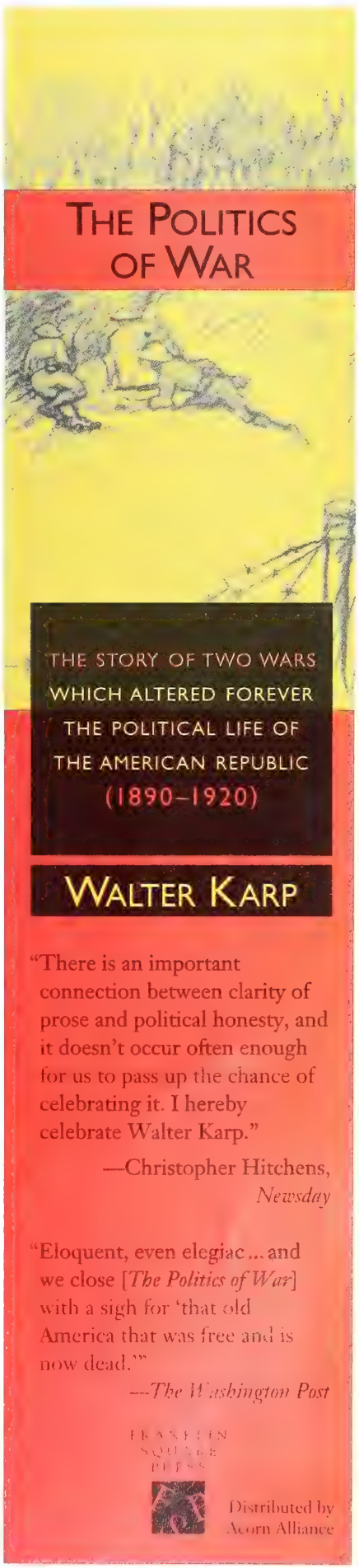
ed a figure like Herrmann-Neisse's, he character that shaped a mourn- vaguely simian face like that of the ealer Alfred Flechtheim, and for the gy that must have gone into the ion of a persona like that of the bon nt aristocrat Count St. Genois neaucourt, whom Christian Schad s between a butch countess and a brated transvestite, both wearing sparent gowns.

's hard to say precisely how these ntings would look if we had no wledge of their historical context could consider them apart from gathering shadow of National So- sm, which was steadily gaining po- al influence through this period, which was ideologically committed ne elimination of essentially all the ple—homosexuals, Jews, "degener- artists, defective physical speci- ns—whose portraits grace *Glitter Doom*. Seen from that perspec- , the portraits assume an elegiac er, at once celebrating and com- norating individuals or, in the is' view, types who were just about lisappear from these artists' lives. e of the loveliest portraits in the w is Dix's painting of the failed t Iwar von Lücken; the tentative, erly, shabbily dressed beanpole be- gs to a different species than the ming, golden boys who would soon ch in front of Leni Riefenstahl's nera. In 1933, the year Hitler came ower, Bertolt Brecht, who appears e in an attractive and sympathetic trait by Rudolf Schlichter, left Ger- ny. Many of his colleagues and peers owed suit, though Christian Schad able to fly under the Nazi radar, haps because his work sold so poor- hat he was never taken seriously ough to be classified as an artist, de- nerate or otherwise.

These artists saw the worst coming, did Sebastian Haffner and Stefan eig and so many memoirists of the iod, though no one could have pre- red how bad it would get. The po- cal nightmares of the moment, as ll as the men dedicated to making se evil dreams come true, are at the ter of Grosz's *The Pillars of Society* d *The Eclipse of the Sun*. Both paint- s, from 1926, are sinister and chill- : one of the "pillars," a bureaucrat, ars a swastika tiepin, grips a fencing sword, and has a cavalry officer on horseback rising from inside his neatly sliced-open cranium. The fact that these are, in some ways, among the more predictable and less resonant paintings in the exhibition leads you to ponder (uncomfortably, as always) the question of how rarely the most didactic art attains the status of a masterpiece. It may be the problem that Chekhov wryly cites in one of his letters: the difficulty of combining art with a sermon. And it may have something to do with the simple fact that a polemic seems to have (and to want to tell us) all the answers, whereas art raises, and invites us to contemplate, the unanswerable questions.

No contemporary artists are painting like the Verists, and no one would suggest that they should be. Who wants to see a new version of Rudolf Schlichter's fetishes and Otto Dix's hatred of women? Who wants to see an update of Grosz's *Pillars of Society* with lobbyists and lawmakers in place of his bureaucrat and cleric? In any case, no one wants to risk having a career like Schad's, who by the outbreak of World War II "had managed to sell a total of four paintings privately." It's interesting to consider the fact that Schad, the best of these artists, should have had the least success. We know that his paintings disturb us, but the source of that disturbance is much harder to locate than it is when we look at Dix's portrayals of hideously wounded veterans. We only intuit the melancholy and the profound anger that underlies Schad's vision; he expresses (and cloaks) those raw emotions with images that cannot be explained or reduced to ideas or words.

Nobody now seems quite so angry as the Neue Sachlichkeit painters were. The dark stew of emotion burbling out of these works makes John Currin's most wicked takes on our current moment look as milky as a Botticelli; they reduce Elizabeth Peyton's portraits to fashion spreads. Damien Hirst begins to seem, by comparison, squeamish. The paintings most like Christian Schad's tend to come from the third world; years ago I saw a Schad-like Haitian painting of "Baby Doc" Duvalier in drag, holding a nasty pistol and wearing a white wedding gown.



rule of lawlessnes

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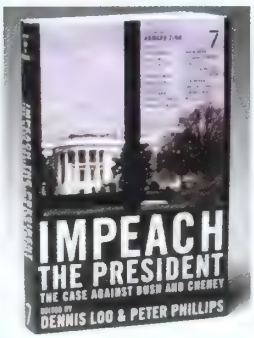
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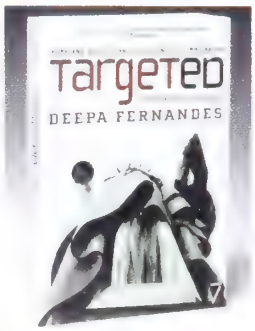


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SEVEN STORIES

Only a very few of the paintings in *Glitter and Doom* move us as great paintings do, yet they something in common with great which is the ability to make the d reveal itself as another manifesn of the artist's vision. Spend some with *Glitter and Doom*, then spend y in any American city or town, you see those Weimar faces everyce. It's probably unwise to look at s portraits of doctors the night beyour annual checkup; you start ıg reality through these painters' , whether you want to or not.

ne evening, after I'd spent the day ing at Weimar art, I happened to on the TV news. The lead story, ıt the fact that three hundred ple had been killed in Iraq in the two days, was immediately fol-ed by another report—this one ıt the shopping frenzy that caused near-riots in stores on the annual so-called Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving. One minute, an Iraqi woman was scrabbling in the dirt and throwing sand in her own face in an agony of grief. A minute later, a woman was nearly trampled by people struggling with boxes of flat-screen TVs.

It was what, I suppose, might be called a Weimar moment, an unfortunate proximity that the New Objectivity artists would have instantly grasped: the wounded passing right alongside the gluttonous patrons of the pork store. I wondered who might have been watching that particular journalistic segue, if perhaps there was an artist somewhere responding to, and transforming, those incongruent images—if there was an attentive, observant guest at the cabaret who had the rage, the desire, and the talent to show the future what our moment looked like. ■

HE WANDERING YEARS

berto Bolaño's nomadic fiction

Siddhartha Deb

ussed in this essay:

ant Star, by Roberto Bolaño. Translated by Chris Andrews. New Directions. 49 pages. $14.95 (paper).

Night in Chile, by Roberto Bolaño. Translated by Chris Andrews. New Direcons. 130 pages. $13.95 (paper).

Evenings on Earth, by Roberto Bolaño. Translated by Chris Andrews. New Directions. 224 pages. $13.95 (paper).

ulet, by Roberto Bolaño. Translated by Chris Andrews. New Directions. 184 ages. $21.95.

Savage Detectives, by Roberto Bolaño. Translated by Natasha Wimmer. Farar, Straus and Giroux. 592 pages. $27.

At the age of twenty, an aspiring writer goes back to his home country to "help build social-," an ideal that comes to a premaend with a right-wing coup. After rief period of imprisonment, the ng man begins a wanderer's exisce, crossing countries and continents, finding fellow exiles scattered in large cities and provincial towns, gathering moments of existential qualm that are transmuted into fiction. His stories are full of wine and tobacco smoke, fittingly so for an author often photographed pondering over a cigarette. At fifty, just when he begins to make a reputation as a writer, he dies in exile, waiting for a liver transplant.

It sounds, at first, like a thumbnail sketch from some lost age of literature, closer to the world of Parisian exiles and the International Brigades than the world we know, but the Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño was born just over half a century ago. Considerably younger than the celebrated writers of the Latin American "boom"—Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa—Bolaño died in Barcelona in 2003, so that what initially seems anachronistic about his life is nothing other than the disorientation created by literary circumstances that we in the West are no longer quite familiar with. These include the idea that writing, and the life within which such writing is shaped, must often function without a safety net; that literature must engage with politics even when politics has foreclosed literature; and that a writer will often have to subvert established forms in order to capture the nature of contemporary reality.

These are not new perspectives, but they seem to have been abandoned over the past twenty years, especially in the sphere of Anglo-American letters. Here, writers as diverse as Rick Moody, Jonathan Franzen, and Zadie Smith tend to guide readers along a cultural superstructure that might offer occasional glimpses of politics but in fact rises far above it, displaying an exuberance of style that suggests an exuberance of lifestyle. Bolaño's life, by contrast, doesn't seem to offer a model worth celebrating; this is a writer who was so short of money and hygiene during his wandering years that he had lost most of his teeth by the end of his travels.

Still, Bolaño's life would not, by itself, be capable of shaking up our received ideas of literature and forcing us to reconsider what we have come to accept as the limits of fiction. If we perceive strange, asynchronous notes in his biographical details, they are really reverberations of the sound one hears in his work, satisfying and disturbing in equal measure. Reading *Last Evenings on Earth*, a translated volume of Bolaño's stories compiled from two separate collections, one might come away with the impression of uniformity. Many of the stories are narrat-

hartha Deb is the author of The Point eturn *and* An Outline of the Republ-Ecco).

tional stand-in of Bolaño's who goes [illegible] name of Arturo Belano or B. [illegible]y are largely about literature and [illegible] literature, and the characters who populate the pages are usually members of a forgotten diaspora of left-wing Latin Americans afloat on their own continent or in Europe.

Yet this impression of obviousness, of an author belaboring a point, is an illusion. The range of Bolaño's stories



is remarkably fluid, from thirty pages summing up an entire adult life to pieces that are almost sketches, in which alphabets denote characters and the action is traced in swift, engulfing sentences. ("Two days later I went to his boarding house to look for him and they told me he had gone up north"; "Over dinner with a Chilean couple, B discovers that U has been committed to a psychiatric hospital after having tried to kill his wife.") But it is Bolaño's characters who are especially beguiling, from the minor Spanish poet who descends into the world of paranoid UFO sightings in "Enrique Martín" to the errant teenager who strikes up a friendship with a Mexican gunfighter in "The Grub." We are inundated with details of their lives, and yet in the end they are not much more than silhouettes glimpsed in the fog and rain of Barcelona or Mexico City. When the characters bow out of the story, our understanding of them is never quite equal to their mystery.

"Mauricio ('The Eye') Silva," for instance, is about an encounter in Berlin between two acquaintances. The narrator knows The Eye from the mid-Seventies, when they were part of the Chilean diaspora that had ended up in Mexico after the overthrow of Salvador Allende's democratic socialist government. Many years have passed when the narrator comes across The Eye again, sitting in a Berlin square near the narrator's hotel. They go out drinking, carrying on "a confessional and melancholic dialogue" about how they have coped with the years and the distance. The Eye, whose homosexuality made him an outsider even among the exiled left-wingers, abandoned Mexico to work as a freelance photographer. He drinks more than he used to, the narrator says, but in other ways he remains "stoic and amiable." It gets late and they walk back toward the hotel, heading for what might be the point of closure in a more conventional short story.

Instead, The Eye begins to talk about an experience of his in India, when he rescued two boys from a cult that had castrated one of them as a sacrifice to some unknown, malevolent deity. The dialogue becomes a monologue, and a crack appears, separating the narrator's account from that of The Eye:

> He sat down on the very bench as before, I swear, as if I still hadn't arrived, as if I hadn't yet started to cross the square and he was still waiting for me and thinking about his life and the story that he was compelled, by history or destiny or chance, to tell me. He turned up the collar of his coat and began to talk. I remained stan[illegible] and lit a cigarette.

The circular temporality, the [illegible] that they are undertaking a re[illegible]tion (but with a slight variat[illegible] owes something to Borges. It [illegible] evokes a variation on the ph[illegible] that the Germans call *Platzangst*[illegible] illusion that one has made [illegible] progress at all while attempti[illegible] cross a vast, unending square. [illegible] most of all, The Eye's story and [illegible] way it is brought into the larger [illegible] rative show that Bolaño's ex[illegible] characters frequently encount[illegible] strain of *Platzangst* no matter w[illegible] they go. They repeat the same ge[illegible] ous impulses and face similar, h[illegible] fying outcomes, so that even as [illegible] Eye emphasizes how strange I [illegible] was for him, the reader begins to [illegible] that it was not very different f[illegible] Chile; that as a nonviolent man [illegible] ning away from the violence o[illegible] country, The Eye was only runn[illegible] toward another realm of upheava[illegible]

The story within a short sto[illegible] repeating, embellishing, clarify[illegible] or obscuring the main theme—i[illegible] unusual choice, but it tells us so[illegible] thing about Bolaño's use of na[illegible] tive. It shows us, and the o[illegible] pieces in *Last Evenings* reinforce [illegible] display, that the short story can h[illegible] capacious a form as the novel. It [illegible] pause or diverge, and even pick [illegible] subplot or two along the way. In B[illegible] laño's hands, the short story o[illegible] needs to do so: his narrators are [illegible] sessive storytellers, handling [illegible] abundance of material and offer[illegible]

Illustration by Richard [illegible]

own version of *Platzangst* in the they seem unable to traverse the idless tracts of fiction.

Anne Moore's Life," one of the est pieces in *Last Evenings*, es across thirty years, has an itin- that includes the United States, ico, and Spain, and brings in two n characters. The progression of any elements is so relentless that reatens to derail our understand- were it not for how the accretion etails is at the very heart of the y. People cut loose from their rings, whether by choice or des- are often seen as traveling light. in other ways, Bolaño suggests, carry such weight and collect so h experience that sometimes an external observer can discern ttern in their chaotic lives. This ue of the way Anne is presented s, as a Sixties flower child whose ng of relationships comes per- sly close to self-abuse, and who n seems far too absorbed in im- iate predicaments to reflect upon life in its entirety.

ut Anne's life comes to have a e of sorts in the hands of the nar- r, a man who devours her diaries absorbs the details of her adven- s, converting formless experience a narrative with design and in- ion. Like the figure in the Berlin are listening to The Eye, the nar- r in "Anne Moore's Life" is a nec- ry adjunct to the protagonist, a fig- whose storytelling and pattern- cing is so compulsive that it can ge the protagonist's gaps in self- wledge. And because this story- ng is constantly on the lookout for erial, it is sensitive even to the ex- iences residing inside peripheral racters. At the end of "Anne ore's Life," therefore, when the nar- r goes to Anne's old attic room in ona to see if there are any traces of , he meets a Russian who could eas- urn into another narrative fulcrum, who is kept to the margins of the y only with some effort:

A very old man came to the door, valking with great difficulty and the id of a spectacular oak stick, which ooked a bit like it had been designed or ceremonial occasions or combat. He remembered Anne Moore. In fact he remembered almost all of the



SOLUTION TO THE MARCH PUZZLE

NOTES FOR "GONNA BUILD A MOUNTAIN":

*Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov. Note: * indicates an anagram.*

				A	H	I	L	L	O	F	B	E	A	N	S					
			G	R	E	E	N	W	A	X	K	I	D	N	E	Y				
		S	T	R	I	N	G	V	A	N	I	L	L	A	R	E	D			
	C	O	F	F	E	E	P	I	N	T	O	H	A	R	I	C	O	T		
	G	A	R	B	A	N	Z	O	M	U	N	G	F	A	V	A	L	I	M	A
S	N	A	P	B	U	T	T	E	R	C	O	C	O	A	S	O	Y	N	A	V	Y
C	H	I	L	I	B	R	O	A	D	J	E	L	L	Y	C	O	W	R	U	N	N	E	R

CLUES: A. (bra)Zen(ly), hidden; B. J-a-b(randy); C. a-b(L)y; D. fan-NY; E. n-once; F. Chas.-E.; G. incher*; H. H(a-van)a; I. ja(1-lb-I)r-(improve)d; J. riffraff, F-far-F-fir (rev.); K. unsavory*; L. parallel, hidden; M. G-arg(0)yle; N. wind-fall; O. yell(ow)ing; P. O.B.-serving; Q. knowledge, hidden; R. hams-T-ring; S. zoo(m)-logical; T. xenophobia*; U. back-stretch, two mngs.; V. suffocation*; W. counter-Vail; X. a(b[ake]-bre[ad])viation; Y. laundrywoman*; Z. transparency*; AA. d(a-guerre)o-type; BB. v(ale-D.)ictorians; CC. ex-communication, pun.

The instructions for "Gonna Build a Mountain" specified that "each letter of the alphabet except Q starts at least one answer." This should have read "except M and Q." We apologize for the error.

[illegible] ted, was beside the point.

If a short story by Bolaño can be traced to the work of a novelist, his novels can also aspire to the condition of other forms. The short story, the prose poem, the dramatic monologue: these are all possibilities that come to mind when reading the three novels that have been translated into English by Chris Andrews. *By Night in Chile*—the first of these translations, is narrated as the deathbed confessional of Father Sebastián Urrutia Lacroix, a Jesuit priest and literary critic. An extended monologue of more than a hundred pages in which the only paragraph break comes before the final sentence, it contains bit roles for Augusto Pinochet (keeping his dark glasses on even when indoors); Ernst Jünger (discussing evil in occupied Paris while pouring out cognac from a silver hip flask); and Pablo Neruda ("reciting verses to the moon").

The novel is at once a feverish recollection on Father Urrutia's part, a final bid to wrest a semblance of meaning from a life lived deceitfully, and a narrative superbly modulated by Bolaño, introducing an aside, a shift of scene, or an almost self-contained vignette just as the narrator's obsession gets unbearably claustrophobic. *Distant Star*, an earlier work (but one that came later into the hands of anglophone readers), is simpler in some ways, grafting a story about fascism and art onto the structure of a detective novel. Set for the most part in the psychotropic nightmare of Pinochet's Chile, it reconstructs the career of a minor poet named Carlos Wieder. An untalented if mysterious figure before the coup, Wieder is elevated to a position of importance by the Pinochet regime, writing poetry in the sky from a Nazi-era fighter aircraft—verses that are larger than life and yet evanescent in the wind.

In the stories, the intersection between politics and art serves as a backdrop, as a kind of nagging memory borne by the figures stranded in Europe. In the novels, however, which are set for the most part in Latin America, politics and art are magnetic poles that create a field of stress, laying down an axis of disturbance along which the human protagonist quivers and then goes still. *By Night in Chile*'s Father Urrutia, caught in the torque of politics and art, decides to ignore politics entirely, taking recourse in Greco-Roman classicism when confronted with the possibility of dissidents being tortured in basements; in *Distant Star* Carlos Wieder enjoys the tension so much that he replicates the domination and terror of the political system in his art. Wieder is the poet coming at the reader in jackboots, truncheon in hand, a Chilean version of the artists F. T. Marinetti envisioned in his Futurist manifesto:

> We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap. . . . We will sing of . . . the sleek flight of planes whose propellers chatter in the wind like banners and seem to cheer like an enthusiastic crowd.

This artist—the one who instead of challenging a repressive political system chooses to become its storm trooper—seems to have haunted and fascinated Bolaño in equal measure, so much so that he envisaged an entire body of right-wing literature in the novel *Nazi Literature in the Americas* (which will be published next year), a work to which *Distant Star* is meant to be an appendix or coda. The idea may appear outdated to us, sounding, once again, that anachronistic note we heard before: Who takes artists, even fascist artists, so seriously anymore? But art, for Bolaño, is a belief system that comes into its own in the Americas, stirring into anarchic life in Mexico City and Santiago long after it has been domesticated and neutered in Europe. It functions just like politics and religion in Latin America, engendering a special kind of fervor, producing mythologies and creating deities and saints, devotees and heretics.

Amulet, the third of Bolaño's novels to be translated into English, is unusual in that it is built around an artistic fervor that nurtures rather than destroys. Centered loosely around the student protests of 1968 in Mexico, it is a curiously joyful novel that delights in its storyte[illegible] even as it struggles with the que[illegible] of how art might be sustained u[illegible] conditions resolutely opposed t[illegible] when an authoritarian state squ[illegible] out dissent, when the economy [illegible] ginalizes art, and—this perhaps [illegible] hardest and most familiar cond[illegible] of all—when an individual wh[illegible] committed to art appears inc[illegible] quential even to other artists.

The figure around whom all t[illegible] factors converge is Auxilio La[illegible] ture, the female narrator of *Am*[illegible] who calls herself the "mother of M[illegible] ican poetry." It is an unusual [illegible] description, made all the more [illegible] her marginal position among the [illegible] ducers of Mexican poetry. An il[illegible] Uruguayan migrant in Mexico [illegible] self-appointed cleaner at the hous[illegible] famous poets, and part-time assis[illegible] at the university's Faculty of Ph[illegible] ophy and Literature, she is [illegible] outsider among outsiders, a "fe[illegible] Don Quixote."

Lacouture's particular act of qu[illegible] ic courage at the beginning of the [illegible] el is to remain in the women's b[illegible] room when the riot police break [illegible] the university to evict all profe[illegible] and students. She stays there for [illegible] ly two weeks, without food, rec[illegible] poetry to herself. When she fi[illegible] emerges, her act will become pa[illegible] the collective memory of 1968 in M[illegible] ico (which involved, among o[illegible] things, the killing of as many as [illegible] hundred student protesters in Tlat[illegible] co square on October 2):

> Often I would hear my story told by [illegible] ers, who said that the woman who [illegible] gone without food for thirteen days [illegible] in the bathroom, was a medical stu[illegible] or a secretary from the administr[illegible] building, not an illegal alien [illegible] Uruguay, with no job and no place [illegible] own to lay her head. Sometim[illegible] wasn't even a woman but a m[illegible] Maoist student or a professor with [illegible] trointestinal problems.

The protest in the women's b[illegible] room is not merely a dramatic epi[illegible] or the encapsulation of a theme, [illegible] taining ideas to be expanded or ec[illegible] in the rest of the novel; it also f[illegible] tions as a shared act of resistance [illegible] tween Lacouture and the readers. S[illegible] the entire novel is narrated from [illegible]

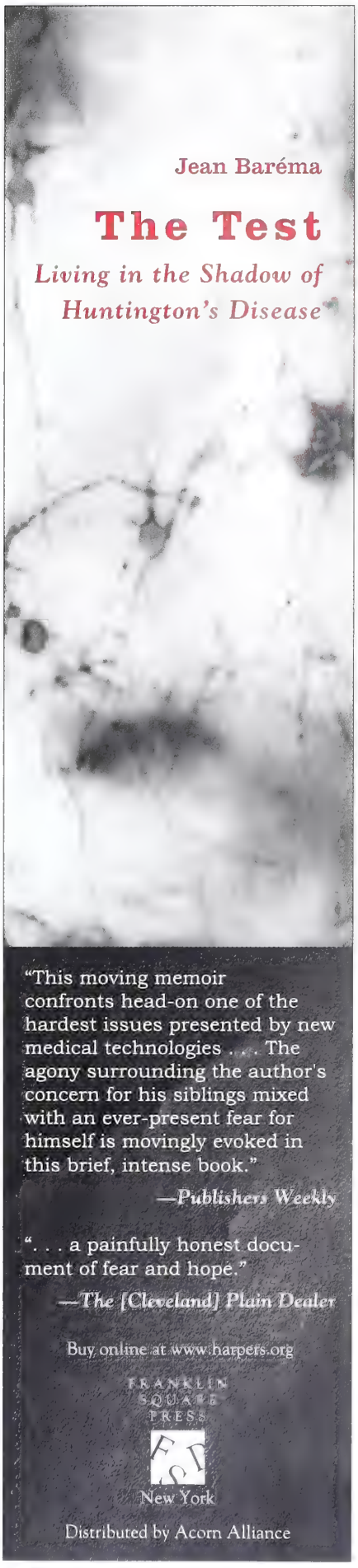
age point of Lacouture's confine-
, her stream of consciousness
ng into the future as well as the
the reader is forced to share her
ceration. Our point of view, too,
woman's stall, the toilet paper,
ained mirror, and the moon trac-
atterns on the tiles. Only through
uture's recollections of the past
ier visions of the future can we ex-
nce the streets and cafés of Mex-
City, though we are never entire-
e which events have taken place
which have been imagined.

many ways, such a narrative
ce creates a coherence that
es *Amulet* the obverse of *The*
ge Detectives, a magnum opus of
l narration and collective testi-
y that features dozens of voices
outure's included), hundreds of
ts, and various settings in Mexi-
Los Angeles, Paris, Barcelona,
Aviv, and Liberia. A work that
olished Bolaño's reputation in
Spanish-speaking world as a suc-
or to Borges, García Márquez,
Julio Cortázar, this 600-page
el has finally been published in
ish in a translation by Natasha
mer. Although it lacks the inti-
y of *Amulet*, it is an extraordi-
work; obsessive, uneven, and
nificent, *The Savage Detectives* is
caresque of late capitalism that
ands utter submission from the
er as it presents an account in
iple voices of the adventures of
uro Belano and Ulises Lima,
nders of a short-lived poetry
ement called "visceral realism."
stensibly about a quest by Be-
and Lima for a mythical woman
from the 1920s, *The Savage De-*
ves is a hustler of a book. It is not
rising that the two poets are also
pushers, supplying the artistic
les of Mexico City with Acapul-
Gold marijuana, and that their
eral realist movement is less no-
e for the writing it produces than
the destabilizing effect it has on
ually everybody who comes into
tact with it. By contrast, Lacou-
's unheroic, feminine incarcera-
in *Amulet* binds us to her even
he story spirals outward, driven
a sense that such narrative play
a perspective, temporality, and
re is the only possible way to
fashion art under repressive conditions. "This is going to be a horror story," Lacouture says in the first line of *Amulet*, and although she immediately qualifies herself, her suggestion shows us that one way of writing about reactionary terror is to exploit popular genres.

It is not hard to see how realism and the equanimity of the conventional bourgeois novel might falter when the everyday world includes disappearances, killings, prisons, torture chambers, and assassinations. But the reference to popular genres is not an attempt to simplify this horrific world into a formula or to ratchet up the register of the prose. It is a declaration that the writer intends to demolish the usual walls between the past and the present, the imagined and the experienced, the conscious and the subconscious. So we have the story of the King of the Rent Boys, one of the many episodes in *Amulet* that releases us momentarily from the women's bathroom and the soldiers waiting outside, only to propel us into a world with the characteristics of a dream.

As Lacouture foresees it—for the episode takes place in 1974, well after the siege of 1968—the event begins with the return of Arturo Belano from his journey to Chile and his brief imprisonment there. At a bar where Belano has just been toasted for his escape from Chile's "Horror Zone," a young poet called Ernesto San Epifanio asks for Belano's help. San Epifanio has slept with the "King of the Rent Boys in Colonia Guerrero, a guy known as the King, who had a monopoly on male prostitution," and has thus entered into an unending bondage. San Epifanio believes that Belano can persuade the King to release him. With Lacouture following behind, the two writers make their way to a rundown hotel at the Colonia Guerrero. In a room upstairs, the King and his heavies are counting cash, while on a bed behind them lies another of the King's boy victims. The King, surprisingly, backs down before Belano. He releases San Epifanio from his servitude, and the writers leave, taking the unknown boy with them.

It is an episode that possesses greater power than what is suggested by the



edy realism of Mexi-
fairy-tale element, a com-
n captured perfectly in the
King of the Rent Boys." To this
Bolaño adds the suggestion that there
is another, more horrifying story about
Chile and torture that cannot be told
here, and yet manages to direct a sordid
tale of violence and sexual exploita-
tion toward a more hopeful ending.
And the episode is powerful in other
ways as well, a resonant echo of some-
thing we have come across before. For
the story of the King of the Rent Boys
is another version of The Eye's account
of rescuing the boys in India. It con-
tains a similar convergence of homo-
sexuality, love, criminality, and third-
world urban spaces, but whereas the
modest, self-effacing Eye was the char-
acter on the run in the short story, here
it is Belano on the run with the mod-
est, self-effacing Lacouture as narrator.

It can get dizzying, this endless re-
flection and overlap of stories and
themes, but it also explains Bolaño's
attraction to popular genres, which
depend on fundamental tropes like
the murder, the killer, and the detec-
tive. In telling a similar story in dif-
ferent ways, Bolaño is in some sense
working over the unsolved case of
Latin American violence, suggesting
several versions of the crime in order
to get closer to the truth. This affini-
ty for popular genres is accompanied
by a feel for the older, deeper struc-
tures of storytelling contained in
mythology and folktales. The poet
visiting the King of the Rent Boys,
or The Eye traveling to an Indian
brothel, is also Orpheus journeying
to the underworld, hoping to rescue
the beloved with no more than a few
songs at his disposal.

Even without political repression,
the modern world is indifferent
to the writer's craft, to the way
the writer salvages material from times
past and present, from places near and
far, and is driven, as it were, to grasp
everything human lives are made of.
It is not a heroic profession, at least
not as characterized by Roberto Bo-
laño. Auxilio Lacouture in *Amulet* is
the most self-effacing of storytellers,
denying any authorial ambition, cov-
ering her mouth with her hand when
she speaks so as to hide her missing
teeth, saying to herself in a "tiny little
voice" that she's "had it with adven-
tures." But she cannot close herself off
from the world and the people she
loves, or from the work they create,
which is why she will follow each of her
demurrals by showing us another com-
bination of artistic ambition, sexual
desire, and political repression. She
will go on being the mother of Mexi-
can poetry, a surrogate mother to Ar-
turo Belano, and, in the final mystical
vision that provides the climax of the
novel, mother to an entire generation
of Latin America's "ghost-children,"
who are marching toward annihilation.

The stories in *Last Evenings* take place
at a greater distance from such holo-
causts, but the struggle of the writer is
no less poignant for that. In "Sensini,"
the narrator enters into a correspon-
dence with an Argentine writer whose
son (named Gregorio in homage to Kaf-
ka's Gregor Samsa) is one of the many
"disappeared." Both the narrator and
Sensini are exiled in Spain, and their
friendship begins when they win prizes
at a literary competition, leading to a
correspondence between them that re-
volves partially around the subject of lit-
erary contests. It is characteristic of Bo-
laño that he should take this most banal
aspect of literature for his subject and
still succeed in slashing open the veins
of a writer's life. Sensini and the narra-
tor are not untalented or superficial
writers, but the quality of their craft or
the pain of their exile is of little rele-
vance to their entries. The stories, when
sent out to the municipal councils, cred-
it unions, and railway companies spon-
soring the contests, inevitably become
something other than art. They enter a
world in which a writer submitting a
story is like a traveling salesman offer-
ing a low-grade product. Even success,
in this world, will bring no more than
a minor reward.

This unflinching account of the dis-
crepancy between the various aspects
of a writer's existence is made bear-
able only by the friendship between
the two characters, by the ability of
each to perceive in the other the
promise of literature. For Bolaño, this
also seems to mean the promise of be-
ing human. Although the act of writ-
ing estranges, or leads practitioners
like Father Urrutia and Carlos Wieder
to embrace the "Horror Zone," i
allows people to know one an
and keep on living. "Dentist," p
the finest story collected in
Evenings, offers such a redempti
sion of writing, with its long,
what shapeless, and slightly fe
account of the narrator's visi
provincial Mexican town, whe
stays with a dentist friend. The
is depressed, maybe because
death of an old Mexican-In
woman at a cooperative medical
ic where he volunteers. But the
other possible reasons for his d
sion, if we can trust the narrator,
himself is burdened by the break
a relationship. The dentist t
strange story about being insulte
threatened by an artist whose
he admired. The dentist might b
and reluctant to admit it. The d
could be in a relationship w
teenage Indian boy who lives o
outskirts of town, in a darknes
yond an "unreal landscape" that
like "a cross between a garbage
and an idyllic picture postcard o
Mexican countryside."

In a way, "Dentist" is a story a
the collapse of ideals, of love,
most of all, of art. Both the nar
and his friend agree, during o
their interminable barhopping ses
that their "insatiable appetite for
ture" has been exhausted, with
mouthful leaving them "poorer,
ner, uglier, and more ridiculous
before." Yet the two characters ar
ridiculous, in spite of their ineffe
posturing and their hopeless ex
sions into a city that, when no
crepit, is remarkably sad. They
José Ramírez, the Indian boy. H
apparently a writer, and the de
claims that he is better than a
Mexico's famous writers. One ex
this drunken claim to be dispelled
it isn't. At the Indian's dwelling,
narrator reads one of the boy's st
"The story was four pages long; m
that's why I chose it, because it
short, but when I got to the end,
as if I had read a novel."

That, of course, is the effect of
of Bolaño's stories. But what is stri
is that Bolaño doesn't attempt to
plain how it is possible that in

Continued on page

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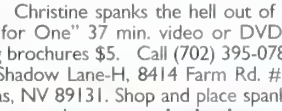
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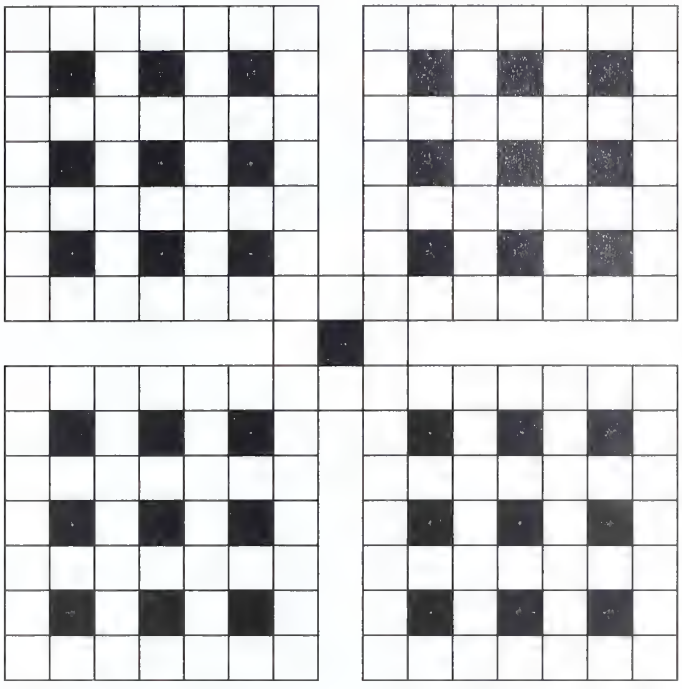
Continued from page 104

large-scale entropy of culture, ... Indian can be one of the best ... in Mexico. And Bolaño doesn't ... to explain, because there is no ... in the experience of reading the ... that makes one suspect he is ... using Ramírez to make a political ... and to render explicit the oppos... between modern and premo... wealth and poverty, fame and ... rity. The Indian and his genius se... inextricable part of the world B... has created, a product of the ... strange vision that has given ... forlorn narrator, the depressed d... and the uncanny provincial city ... they meet.

That artistic promise should ... on the same plane as cultural ex... tion can seem like a trite conclu... But Bolaño makes "Dentist" g... yond such obviousness, primaril... cause the world he has created is ... Kafka's, perfectly logical in its str... ness, quite believable even thoug... can never see where its horizon li... story that reads like a novel ab... story that reads like a novel natu... resists boundaries. It inevitably ... into Bolaño's other works, and ... astonishing to think how much of ... work is still unknown to us. Hi... translated oeuvre spans essays, p... short stories, and six novels, inclu... the thousand-page *2666* that w... published next year in English, a ... el that refers back to *The Savage ... tectives* by beginning its story a... place where Belano and Lima ... their quest.

"We never stop reading, altho... every book comes to an end, ju... we never stop living, although dea... certain," says the narrator in "I... tist." As each translated book app... in our hands, offering new pers... tives on characters and episode ... may have already encountered, ... possible that we will begin to feel ... Bolaño's narrators, starting afresh ... story whose end we thought we k... seeking patterns and correspond... in work that is both familiar ... strange. Books and lives end, but ... act of storytelling goes on. It is o... the pleasures we can depend on ir... state of exile.

PUZZLE



QUO VADIS?

By Richard Maltby Jr.

Each of the four quadrants in the diagram includes six interlocked seven-letter words. The quadrants themselves are linked by four fifteen-letter words. Solvers are to determine which quadrant is which, and where each of the answers is to be placed. To insure there is only one correct configuration, Clue 9 is a down clue.

No clue answers are proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 101.

FIFTEEN-LETTER WORDS

1. Deceptive quality valued in certain pitchers?
2. Doctor, doctor! Consider looting!
3. Many a celebrity wants this nicety—I go with Brazil nuts
4. Toscanini and Bernstein were ones making fast movements irresistible!

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

QUADRANT A

5. I'm wearing prize ribbon; I sliced food
6. Reappraising was void—take it back
7. Half of pork we dry to be cured and pulverized
8. Subterranean creeper might make him zero
9. International group elements rise up to get free, in a way
10. Stuffed pasta into opera violinist?

QUADRANT B

11. Dirty diapers feel really bad
12. Go left, literally? It's what's not done!
13. Put together Spanish rice with a Chinese accent? Delicious (at first)
14. What a bouncer does with a drip?
15. Sick leave, returning with cold—almost nonsense
16. Arrange license covering innocent

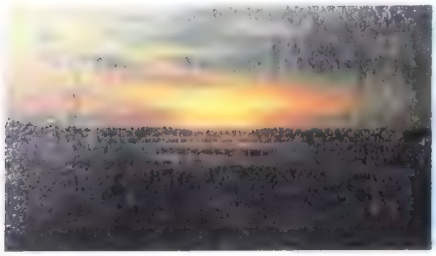
QUADRANT C

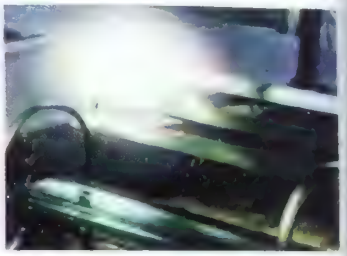
17. Doctor has duty during dry spell
18. Hundred-tank helicopter
19. Minimalist composer they disemboweled, getting sense of fulfillment
20. Before club steak, having run-in with layers of fat
21. Former writer's English fee
22. Material from the heart, e.g., added to the Twenty-Sixth article

QUADRANT D

23. Wine that couldn't be nastier? Hardly!
24. Languages spoken with half spasm?
25. Annie Oakley performance, very tight
26. Love following California city in dog races joined together
27. *Mayflower* traveler's impertinent talk, back at stern
28. Ends interim mismanagement

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Quo Vadis?," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the February puzzle, "Theme and Variations," are Jerry Hughes, Arlington, Massachusetts; M. M. Josephson, Stratford, Connecticut; and David Read, Minneapolis, Minnesota.





FINDINGS

Norway unveiled plans for a new doomsday seed archive of the world's 1.5 million crop varieties; the archive, to be known as the Svalbard International Seed Vault, will be stored in a bunker at the end of a 120-meter tunnel bored into the center of a mountain on an island near the North Pole. Researchers in Brazil successfully lured bats into a devastated rain forest using fake fruit in the hope that the bats will leave "seed rain" (also known as "excrement") behind in the ruined landscape. Climate experts proposed creating a fleet of cloud-seeding yachts that will pump water vapor into the atmosphere to thicken global cloud cover, thereby reflecting more sunlight, in order to counteract the effects of global warming. A new study revealed that an estimated 26,600 gallons of oil from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill continues to pollute Prince William Sound in Alaska. British scientists found that culling badgers to reduce the spread of bovine tuberculosis among British farm cattle might in fact make the problem worse, because lonely badgers tend to travel more. UNICEF announced that Dutch children are the happiest in Europe.

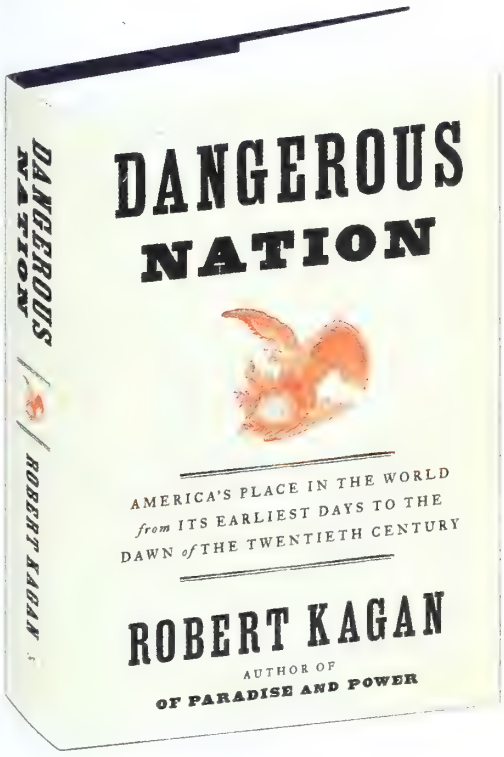
A biologist found that the giant palm salamander, which possesses a tongue that can generate 18,000 watts of power per kilo of muscle, is nearly twice as strong as the Colorado river toad, hitherto the world's strongest animal. European scientists concluded that greater noctule bats eat migrating songbirds, and new evidence suggested that ancient chimpanzees used stone tools. Physicists at Harvard succeeded in capturing a light pulse by beaming it into an extremely cold cloud of sodium atoms; they then transferred some of the atoms into another cloud and shot it with a laser beam, whereupon the light pulse reappeared. Cosmologists using a "braneworld" model of the early universe called Dirac-Born-Infeld inflation said that a new satellite might be able to detect the shadow of extra dimensions in the cosmic microwave background, thus providing the first experimental evidence for string theory. Scientists speculated that the Large Hadron Collider might not simply produce microscopic black holes; it might also make a "black Saturn," a spinning black hole surrounded by a spinning black ring.

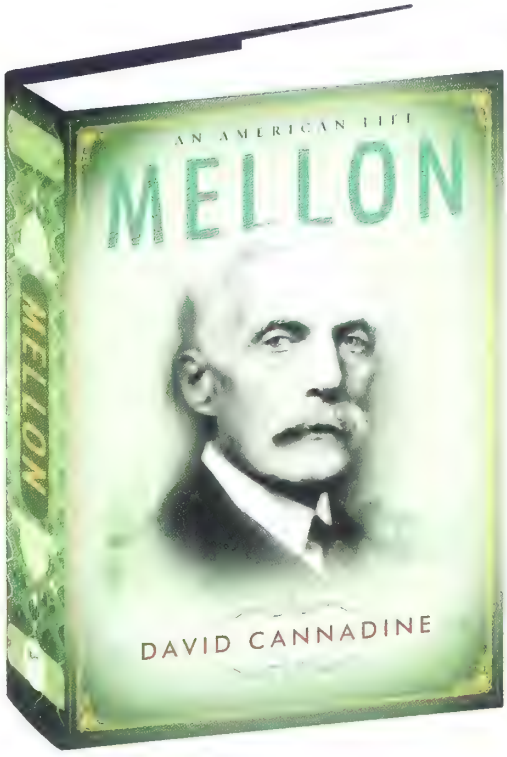
Scientists announced that stroke victims who suffer an injury in the insula, a prune-sized part of the brain near the ear, can instantly break a smoking habit. People who take naps are less likely to die of heart disease, as are women who can convince their mates to snuggle with them. Men apparently derive little benefit from snuggling. Primatologists revealed that male chimpanzees frequently beat their mates with branches in order to punish promiscuity. Lonely people are more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, which has now been linked to the herpes virus. French researchers claimed that HIV likes to hide in men's testicles. Children who grow up near freeways risk developing serious respiratory diseases later in life, and a Canadian study found that babies conceived using in vitro fertilization have an increased risk of birth defects. Women who become pregnant in the spring are more likely to have a premature baby. Playing video games can improve your eyesight. Scientists said that bullying is genetic. New video footage showed that rats can manipulate their whiskers independently in order to feel their way through space in the dark. A woman with a bionic arm can now sense her missing fingers in her chest. ■

Blur #5 *(detail), a painting by Robert Schmid.*
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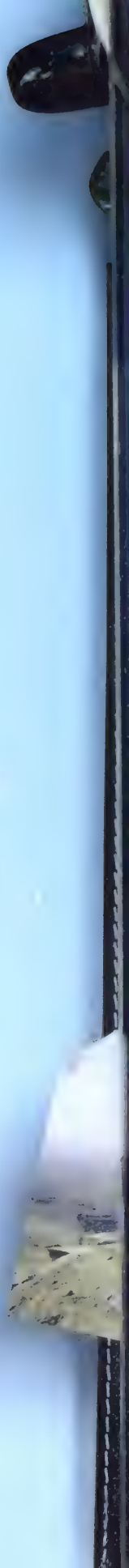
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LETTERS

Voter Submission

From Ken Silverstein's March report, "Parties of God," we learn that the foreign affairs chief of Hezbollah enjoys a berry smoothie, but in an article that argues for the necessity of understanding the true face of Islamic democracy, we surprisingly learn nothing about the actions of Hamas either before or since their ascension to power in elections held early last year. Could it be that Hamas's actions are too unwieldy for an essay that also suggests that electoral "participation requires negotiation, compromise, and moderation"? To tell the story of Islamic democracy without considering the group that came to power in what Silverstein calls "a vote among the freest ever seen in the Middle East" is to tell the story incompletely. I agree that a less prejudiced understanding of Islamic democracy is necessary, but I fail to see how one selectively arranged set of facts is preferable to another.

Mark Asch
New York City

Harper's Magazine *welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters,* Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

Ken Silverstein failed to ask thoi interviewed for "Parties of God" pointed questions as: Does your m ment support the complete separa of state and religion? Does it sup freedom of speech and religious be Does it support equal rights for w en? Silverstein avoided the crux of problem posed by Islamism. Den racy could theoretically exist in a lamic nation, but it would not be same as secular democracy, which tects broader concepts of human rig including civil liberties and equa for all citizens.

Lorna Salzman
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Impieties

In his March review, "Arms the Poet," Rafil Kroll-Zaidi wri that Augustus considered the *Aen* his commission and Virgil his po whom he charged with writing But this is misleading. The t knew each other from a time wh the future of Augustus could har have been imagined, and they e joyed sincere mutual esteem. Aug tus was a sophisticated lover of lit ature, with good taste, minor tale and even a self-deprecating sense humor. The *Aeneid* is not the pro uct of a quid pro quo, much le an imperative.

dditionally, the substitution by *per's* of the poet's full Latin e at the start of the review con- ls the fact that Fagles (like H. Auden) spells the name "Vir- whereas the magazine insists on rgil." The tide has turned nst the pedantic standardizers would impose their "correct" lling on the English-speaking ld. "Virgil," sanctioned by long ge, remains the choice of the bet- translators and leading scholars. gil, whose wit pervades his work, uld likely be amused to know that are forever doomed to cross- exing and duplicative Googling.

ert L. Cowdrey
nbridge, Mass.

py On

was delighted to read Jonathan hem's argument for less anxiety out one's influences ["The Ecstasy Influence," Criticism, February], I must correct his assertion that my plagiarized *New York* denunci- on of plagiarism I "intended to nonstrate, through ironic exam- , how bricolage such as [my] own s ipso facto facile and unworthy." the contrary, what I assembled in out an hour was intended as a goof, riod. I also wanted to see how long took, once the piece was posted on e Internet, for it to be denounced a despicable fraud (about fifty min- es). My ideas about bricolage—my n and others'—are considerably re complicated.

wid Edelstein
ew York City

As a student of copyright law, I pport Jonathan Lethem's proposi- on that "any text that has infiltrat- l the common mind . . . inexorably ins the language of culture." In ct, until recently, precisely such a rm prevailed under U.S. copyright w. Throughout most of American istory, an author had a perpetual ght to his or her creations under common law." That right, however, as forfeited upon publication, at hich time statutory rights became ne sole right, if any, to which the uthor was entitled, and the author's ideas were effectively merged with those in the public domain. The threshold between common law and statutory copyright was shifted from the moment of a work's publication to the moment of its fixation into any tangible form by the Copyright Act of 1976. The act also broadened both the scope and duration of statutory copyright protection, allowing authors to prevent not only unauthorized copying but also a broad range of "derivative" uses.

It is perhaps no accident that so many of the recent cases in which satirists, parodists, and appropriationists have been sued for copyright infringement involve characters and creations that have become permanent fixtures of our public culture. These cases involve Mickey Mouse, most notoriously, but also the Cat in the Hat and Barbie—characters that each of us individually brought to life as children. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* has enshrined a particular history of the Old South, perhaps more



…of any other work. Long under copyright law its status as private property was unquestioned. So when Houghton Mifflin announced that it would publish Alice Randall's unflattering parody of the novel, the Mitchell estate sued. But why should copyright law serve to protect Mitchell's literary property from criticism or even ridicule? Why should it extend to Mitchell or her heirs a private license to censor public discourse?

Lethem writes that new media and technology expose the immorality of copyright's constraints on creativity and expression. But they do more than that. They enable the proliferation and dissemination of ideas, expression, and exchange. They also encourage the pluralization and democratization of authorship, interpretation, revision, and renovation. Culture is produced not simply by the generosity of authors as gifted as Lethem but by our collective and reciprocal investments.

Sherally Munshi
New York City

Hi, Robot

Steve Featherstone's sampling of the robotic delivery systems of America's future armed forces ["The Coming Robot Army," Report, February] would have been more disconcerting had he dwelt even briefly on the foregone eventuality of our enemies' acquisition of these fighting machines. If today's suicide bombers are sent to their detonations with some doubt as to whether they will carry out their mission of annihilation, in the future there will be no such indecision. "This robot here has no fear." The technology with which these robots of death will be produced promises to be eminently divertible, and it is only a matter of time before the world's conventional armed forces will face a far more insidious and elusive enemy. It is naive to think that there will be no trafficking in these evolving tools of combat.

Rob Stinson
Haydenville, Mass.

The desire to reduce war's risks to oneself and one's compatriots through technology is hardly surprising. Featherstone incompletely considers the consequences of such a strategy succeeding. Whereas defensive actions such as IED neutralization justify the use of machines rather than men, the elimination of soldier casualties during offensive military action also eliminates restraints that derive from fear and risk. In building an army of robots, we are also building an infrastructure for the perpetual waging of wars of aggression.

Fred Drumlevitch
Tucson, Ariz.

Irony Lost and Found

Thank you for mentioning the clinical DCA in the March Finding. In Canada, patients with cancer do not have access to the treatment, and a lack of funding has stalled any trials. I have been trying to learn more about DCA because I have a family member with lung and brain cancer. I appreciate you giving it some credibility by discussing it in *Harper's*.

Janie Percival
Victoria, B.C., Canada



ıe mention of DCA in the
:h Findings is so vague as to be
ıally meaningless, because
ıloroacetate" does not refer to a
ue chemical substance. The la-
night refer to the negatively
ged dichloroacetate anion re-
l to dichloroacetic acid or the
itself. It could also refer to one
ıe many derivatives of the acid
v as esters, such as methyl di-
oracetate or phenyl dichloroac-
e. The information relating to
lethal properties of DCA to-
l cancer cells requires further
nical elaboration to make sense.

M. W. Scott
ohn's, Nfld., Canada

he March Findings suggested that
neral cure for cancer is potentially
lable, and that it may not be test-
nd introduced because there is lit-
nope that pharmaceutical compa-
will profit from it. Although I don't
me that the often amusing tidbits in
dings have the veracity of peer-
ewed publications, *Harper's* might exercise some caution in reporting a possible cure for a disease that evokes so much desperation. You might consider the serious known side effects of therapeutic use of DCA before including it as just another drive-by irony.

W. S. Mitchell
Boston

Interrobang?!

The Chicago Manual of Style may insist that a question mark and an exclamation point cannot end a sentence together ["Stet Offensive," Readings, February], but there was actually a movement in the middle of the twentieth century to combine these two marks to create an "interrobang," with the "bang" coming from printers' slang for an exclamation point. I remember occasionally seeing the mark in print, but it was never taken up by the majority. I, however, still make my own interrobangs—when the situation calls for them.

Gray Standen
London

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NOTEBOOK

Time Travel

By Lewis H. Lapham

: to know what happened before one : born is always to be a child.

—Cicero

Two months before he died, in nhattan on February 28 at the e of eighty-nine, Arthur M. hlesinger Jr. published what ved to be his last word on the ding and writing of history, an erprise he classified as "doomed" one to which he had given the ole of his long and prolific life. e op-ed essay appeared in the *w York Times* on January 1 under e heading "Folly's Antidote," and was his custom, the author began h the bringing of the past to bear the present:

> Many signs point to a growing historical consciousness among the American people. I trust that this is so. It is useful to remember that history is to the nation as memory is to the individual. As persons deprived of memory become disoriented and lost, not knowing where they have been and where they are going, so a nation denied a conception of the past will be disabled in dealing with its present and its future.

Arthur consulted libraries in the ay that sailors consult a compass or chart, and to read his books or to ten to him talk was not to be astonished or bemused by what had nk below the horizon three or ree hundred years ago but to beome aware of what was likely to show up with the lifting of tomorrow morning's fog. I first met him at a New York dinner party in 1962, among the company then traveling in the entourage of President John Kennedy, and over the next half century I probably ran across him at least once or twice a year—in a Broadway theater, on a lawn at Newport, Rhode Island, in the Century Club dining room, on the stage of a university auditorium. Occasionally he wrote an article or a review for *Harper's Magazine*, but our conversation seldom touched upon the manuscript that in any event he was intending to improve or correct and therefore not yet worth the trouble of tiresome discussion. What interested him was the news he had just that day received from a dead letter or an old book—something Teddy Roosevelt had said to William Howard Taft at the Republican Convention in Chicago in the summer of 1912, a heretofore unknown message that Franklin Roosevelt had sent to Winston Churchill in the winter of 1942—and with the missing piece of the puzzle unexpectedly come to hand, he was caught up in the excitement of wondering where and how it might be made to fit the character of a president or the portrait of an age.

His enthusiasms were communicable, in part because he knew, as does the financier Sir John Templeton, that the four most expensive words in the English language are "This time it's different," but also, and more to his purpose, because he believed, as did Oscar Wilde, that "the one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it." For Arthur the study of history was akin to playing with a kaleidoscope, a perpetual work in progress carried forward under the headings of the provisional and therefore doomed never to reach a final verdict or discover the lost gold mines of imperishable truth. "Problems will always torment us," he once wrote, "because all important problems are insoluble: that is why they are important. The good comes from the continuing struggle to try and solve them, not from the vain hope of their solution."

Over the course of the last sixty years Arthur published twenty-odd books, among them *The Age of Jackson* (1945), *The Vital Center* (1949), *The Age of Roosevelt* (three volumes 1957–60), *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (1965), *The Disuniting of America* (1991), *War and the American Presidency* (2004), and always he was at pains to construe history as a means rather than an end, the constant making and remaking of the past intended to revise the present in order to better imagine the future. Some things change, others don't, but absent a knowledge of which is which, where then do we find our bearings in the drift of time, and how do we not become orphans, marooned on the islands of the dream-ridden self?

For proofs of what can happen to a nation that loses touch with its history—"deprived of memory," "disoriented and lost"—Arthur could look to any morning's news reports

wis H. Lapham is the National Correondent for Harper's Magazine *and the edir of the forthcoming* Lapham's Quarterly.

from Baghdad. The Bush Administration's repetition of the mistake made thirty years ago in Vietnam he thought "unforgivable," but as an historian he knew it to be in keeping with the sensibility shaped by the film and electronic media and matched to the comprehension of children—an attitude of mind formed in the floating world of timeless fantasy, impatient and easily bored, less at ease with a stable story line than with the flow of brand-name images in which nothing necessarily follows from anything else. Just as the fifteenth-century printing press made possible the overthrow of a settled aesthetic and political order, so also in the twenty-first century the revolutionary forms of high-speed communication—television, computers, the Internet, cell phones—give rise to new structures of feeling and thought.

Narrative becomes montage, and our ministers of state forget why and how men go to war. Our news broadcasts bring us the world in twenty-two minutes. Hollywood markets its product to audiences assigned an average age of sixteen and believed to be happily at play in the bathtubs of the Everlasting Now. Celebrities come and go like fireflies, their life spans measured out at the length of a gossip-column item. The candidates campaigning for next year's presidential nominations present themselves as contestants on *American Idol*. In the House of Representatives the politicians stage a "debate" about the "war" in Iraq deserving the continued "support for the troops," which might be welcome news for all concerned (the American soldiers in Anbar province as well as the mullahs of Najaf) if the operative words referred to anything other than the same sort of virtual reality sold under the labels of the "war on terror." More often than not the "debate" takes the form of prerecorded public-service announcements, similar in design to a beer commercial, delivered by each member in turn to an empty chamber and a C-Span television camera. Like the Israeli containment of the Palestinians, the "war" in Iraq is the suppression by force of restive civilians, police work as opposed to a maneuvering of armies. The notion of continuing "support for the troops" implies a level of prior or current support that didn't and doesn't exist.

"When I am particularly depressed," Arthur wrote in the *Times*, "I ascribe our behavior to stupidity—the stupidity of our leadership, the stupidity of our culture." The explanation he knew to be insufficient, and when he wasn't depressed (which, at least on my own recognizance, was more often than not) he attributed the failures to get the words straight to a way of thinking oblivious to the connections between cause and effect. The separations of the then from the now produce "delusions of omnipotence and omniscience," which Arthur diagnosed as the illness afflicting the Bush Administration and one likely to lead to the death of the American idea unless treated with the "antidote" of history. Children unfamiliar with the world in time become easy marks for the dealers in fascist politics and quack religions. The blessed states of amnesia cannot support either the hope of individual liberty or the practice of democratic self-government.

Although Arthur was careful to say that "many signs" point to reviving interest in history among the American people, I'm not sure his reading of those signs was as hopeful as he might have wished. Certainly it's true that the country is rich in its stores of first-rate historians and that many of their books reach the bestseller lists; it's also true that thousands of people in Union and Confederate uniforms travel to Pennsylvania every summer to reenact the Battle of Gettysburg, that the cable channels abound with programs advertising the joys of the British Empire and the sorrows of Nazi Germany. But soap opera dressed up in a Roman toga or Marie Antoinette's wig is still soap opera. The Department of Education estimates the number of American illiterates at 30 million, and at last report the teaching of history in grades K–8 has been sharply reduced in two thirds of the nation's public schools because the federal No Chi[ld] Behind Act allocates the bul[k] money and oversight to instr[uction] in reading and math. Histor[y] can't be made to fit standard guidelines deemed politically [correct] by all the interested parties—p[a]rents, administrators, school [b]oard, town council, local newspaper, [state] legislature, Department of [Home]land Security.

Assume that we have nothing with which to build the future [e]xcept the lumber of the past, and [the] loss of historical consciousness cheats us of our inheritance. [Only] who cannot draw on three thousand years is living hand to mouth, said Goethe, and so suggested a return to the deal that Satan offers Faust. It isn't with magic that men make their immortality; they do it with what on the long journey across the frontiers of three millennia they can salvage from the death of time and the wreck of empires, recording the record left to them in the form of casualty reports and quadratic equations, on ships' logs and bronze coins, as epic poems and totem poles and painted ceilings and confessions voluntary and coerced, as proclamations, prophecies, [and] prayers, in five-act plays and three-part songs.

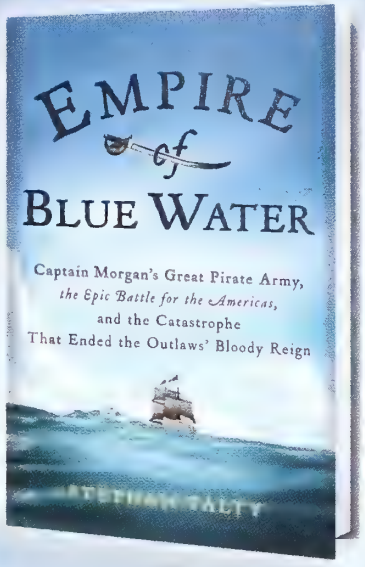
My acquaintance with the past is by no means as extensive as Arthur's, but I notice that the reading of history instills a sense of humor and makes possible the reflection against what G. K. Chesterton once called the "small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about." When I see Rudy Giuliani being bundled around the United States in a flutter of media consultants fitting words into his mouth, I think of the make-up artists adjusting the ribbons in the Emperor Nero's hair before sending him into a Roman amphitheater to sing with a chorus of prostitutes, and if I'm given a scale of measurement with which to assess the weight of the mayor's self-infatuation. About the methods of pacifying cities bloodied by civil war, I learn more from Machiavelli's *Discourses* or the memoirs of William Tecumseh Sherman than from the editorials in the

Street Journal or the commen-
on Fox News.
ot being a scholar, I escape the
gation to accept the boundaries
veen the late Renaissance and
early Baroque, or to spin and
nd the insults ("old, bald, blind,
rulous, toothless, crippled")
ught against President John
ms in the anti-Federalist news-
ers prior to the election of 1800.
so happens that I come across
espondents reporting from dif-
nt centuries at more or less the
e map coordinates (Herodotus
ng of the Scythians of Central
a that it is the custom "for every
lier to drink the blood of the first
n he kills," T. E. Lawrence ob-
ing that among the desert Arabs
ır upon rebellion is messy and
v, like eating soup with a knife,"
vard Luttwak describing three
nths ago in this magazine the fe-
ity of the Iraqi resistance to for-
n occupation), I begin to under-
nd what the physicists have in
nd when they talk about the con-
uum of space and time.
Because I look for traits of charac-
apt to walk onstage under cir-
nstances roughly equivalent, I
n't much care if the *mise en scène*
eventeenth-century China or last
ek in Washington. I see President
orge W. Bush suffering the "delu-
ns of omnipotence and omni-
ence" that invariably accompany
e concentration of great power in
o small a space (Arthur tactfully
ln't footnote the remark with spe-
ic reference to the president's
nd), and I think of the last Ming
nperor, enfolded in the cocoon of
s concubinate, believing that he
us the Son of Heaven, informed by
s corps of eunuchs that he could
mmand the oceans with a gentle
catching of his vermilion pencil or
by subtle movements
of his yellow parasol.

My understanding of politics
borrow from informed sources
oth ancient and modern, but it is
om the authors who have survived
ie misfortunes of clumsy transla-
on as well as the passage from one
ntury to another that I learn why
lling observations of the human
condition don't become obsolete. Cicero in the first century B.C. forges the strength of Roman history into a weapon with which to defend the Republic against Sulla's rage, Pompey's vanity, Antony's lust, and Caesar's legions. "Life is not merely a matter of breathing," said the great orator in one of his last philippics against tyranny. "The slave has no true life. All other nations are capable of enduring servitude—but our city is not." Cicero's eloquence failed in its assaults on the enemies of what was left of the Roman constitution—his severed head displayed in the Forum, his right hand nailed to the Speaker's Platform, his tongue torn out and pierced with hairpins—but in the essays and speeches that compose his doomed enterprise, he formulates a prose style bequeathed to Montaigne and Edward Gibbon, gives voice to the ideals that nearly two thousand years later breathed life into the American Declaration of Independence.

For Cicero as for Arthur Schlesinger, history was not a nursery rhyme. Actions have consequences, one thing leads to the next, and sooner or later somebody's head shows up on a scaffold or a coin. Children don't see why they should be bothered to work out either the logic or the mechanics of the problem. Why take the trouble to remember what happened yesterday on channels 5 through 9 when tomorrow is available on channels 12 through 24? The national shortage of adult minds suits the purposes of a government that defines its task as a form of child-rearing and guarantees the profits of the consumer markets selling promises of instant relief from the pain of thought, loneliness, doubt, experience, envy, and old age. A country so favored by fortune is one in which no childhood gets left behind. A self-regarding electorate asks of its rulers what the rich ask of their servants: "Comfort us." "Tell us what to do." The wish to be cared for replaces the will to act, and in the event of bankruptcy or rain, travelers stranded on the roads from here to there can send an owl with a message to Harry Potter. ■

Discover the true story behind the legendary pirate who shaped empires.

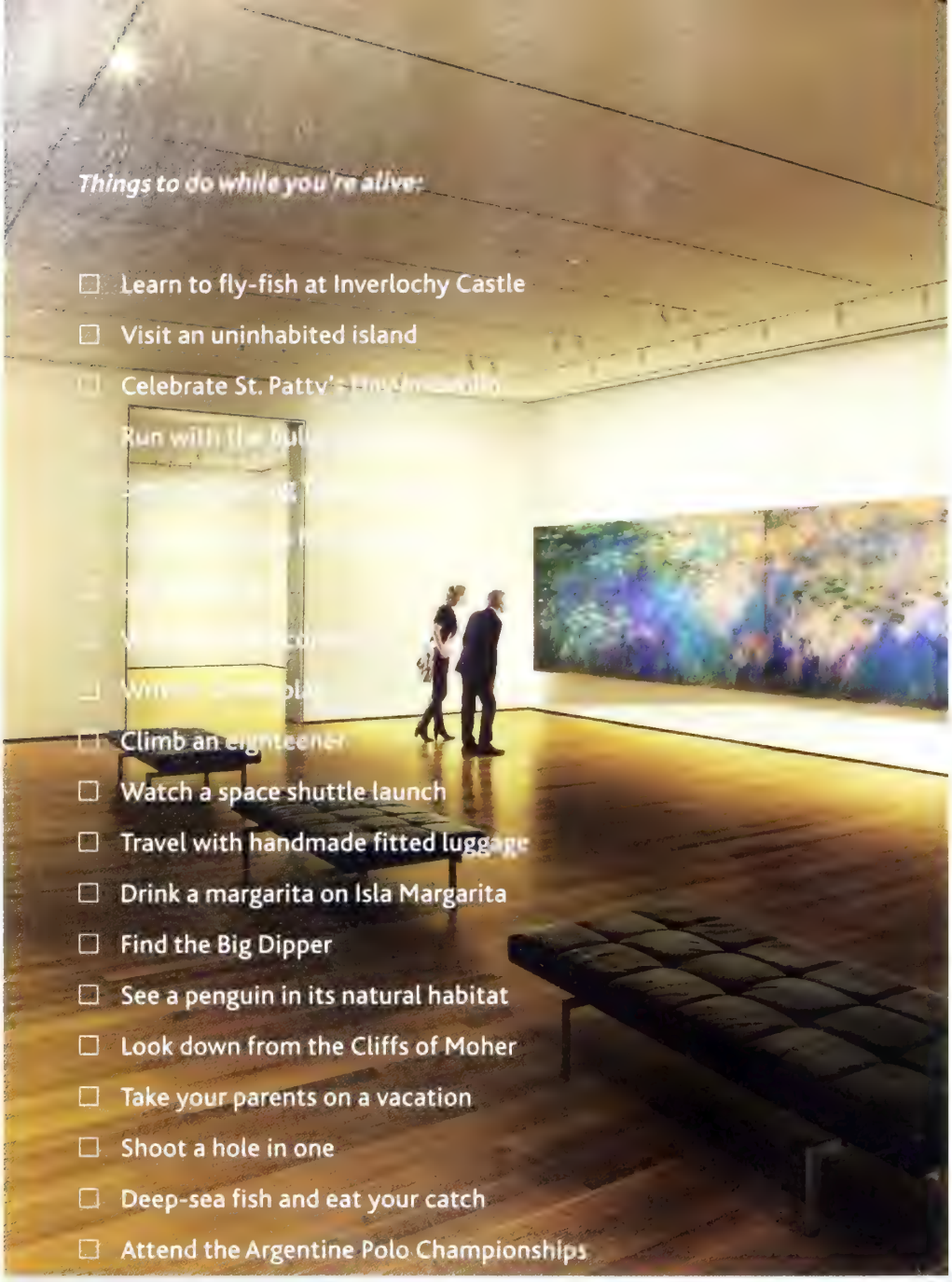


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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage of Pakistanis and Indonesians who say that attacks on civilians are sometimes justified to defend Islam : 8
Percentage of Americans who say that attacks on civilians are sometimes justified : 24
Number of magnetic "Support Our Troops" ribbons sold by the leading manufacturer in 2004 : 4,000,000
Number sold last year : 48,000
Percentage of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have filed for disability with the VA : 27
Percentage of soldiers given medical discharges in 2001 who were given permanent disability benefits : 10
Percentage in 2005 who were : 3
Chances that an American thinks the United States has a "mainly positive influence" on the world : 2 in 3
Chances that a Russian thinks that Russia does : 4 in 5
ercentage of top Soviet officials under Mikhail Gorbachev who were drawn from the armed forces or security services : 5
centage of top Russian officials who have been under Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, respectively : 47, 78 (see page 15)
'eeks after losing his Senate seat that Rick Santorum joined a think tank to start a program called America's Enemies : 9
mber of cases brought by U.S. Attorneys between 2002 and 2004 that the Justice Department listed as terror-related : 3,279
Percentage of these that had no evidence linking them to terror activity, according to an internal audit : 47
Number of suits filed against Rudy Giuliani between 1994 and 2001 by the New York Civil Liberties Union : 34
rcentage of Americans in February who said they would be unlikely to vote for a candidate who has been divorced twice : 26
Percentage who said they would be unlikely to vote for a 72-year-old : 58
Percentage who said they would be unlikely to vote for an African American or a smoker, respectively : 6, 21
Total donations that Barack Obama has received from tobacco companies since 2000 : $0
mount that Alan Greenspan reportedly received for the February 26 speech in which he warned of a recession : $150,000
Total value that U.S. stock markets lost the next day, partly as a result of his warning : $632,000,000,000
mber of L.A. branches of Bank of America that now offer credit cards to customers without Social Security numbers : 51
Minimum number of new U.S. anti-immigration groups formed since January 2005 : 305
Ratio of American Mormons to non-American Mormons worldwide in 1980 : 5:2
Ratio today : 4:5
Number of different Hindu rituals that Saranam.com will perform on one's behalf at temples in India : 104
Price for the most expensive ritual, the three-hour Chandi Homam : $630
Price from Costco.com, including standard shipping, of an "In God's Care Casket" : $924.99
Percentage of U.S. Catholic dioceses that say they have had incidents of embezzlement during the last five years : 85
Rank of money and God, respectively, among "the very best thing[s] in the world" to British children under 10 : 1, 10
Rank of Britain among twenty-one rich countries the U.N. ranked this year for "child well-being" : 21
Rank of the United States : 20
Portion of all Iranians who are under the age of 30 : 3/5
Denomination in rials of Iran's new largest banknote, which features a nuclear-power symbol on its back : 50,000
Percentage of Egyptian women under the age of 50 who have undergone genital mutilation : 96
Percentage of these operations that are now carried out by medical professionals : 75
Number of British men last year who had cosmetic surgery to reduce the size of their breasts : 177
Amount the British military spent in 2002 researching whether psychics could find terrorist hideouts : $35,000
Chance that a psychic it tested could, blindfolded, identify some portion of the contents of a sealed envelope : 1 in 3
Chance that a psychic fell asleep during the test : 1 in 6

Figures cited are the latest available as of March 2007. Sources are listed on page 86.
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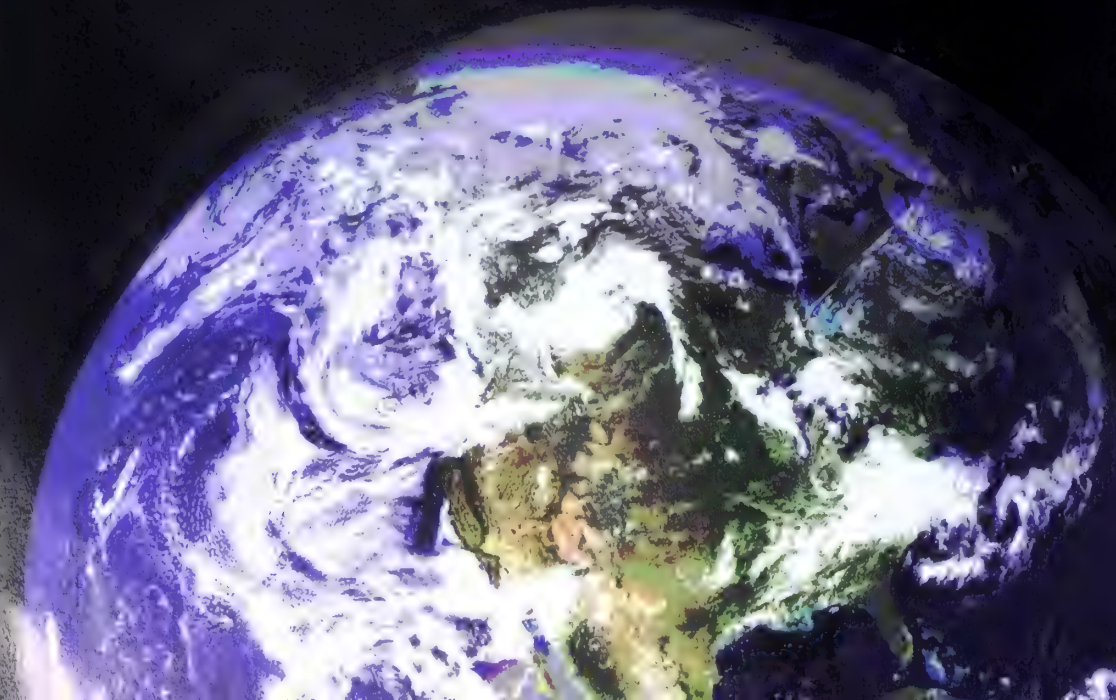
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READINGS

[Essay]

JUST THE SAME CAPITALISTS AS YOU

By Perry Anderson, from "Russia's Managed Democracy," in the January 25 issue of the London Review of Books. *His most recent work is* Spectrum: From Right to Left in the World of Ideas.

Under lowering skies, a thin line of mourners stretched silently outside the funeral hall. Barring the entrance, hulking riot police kept them waiting until assorted dignitaries had paid their respects. Eventually they were let in to view the corpse of the murdered woman, her forehead wrapped in the white ribbon of the Orthodox rite, her body, slight enough anyway, diminished by the flower-encrusted bier. Around the edges of the mortuary chamber, garlands from the media that attacked her while she was alive stood thick alongside wreaths from her children and friends, the satisfied leaf to leaf with the bereaved. Filing past them and out into the cemetery beyond, virtually no one spoke. Some were in tears. People dispersed in the drizzle as quietly as they came.

The authorities had gone to some lengths to divert Anna Politkovskaya's funeral to a dreary precinct on the outskirts of Moscow. But how necessary was the precaution? The number of mourners was not large, perhaps a thousand or so, and the mood of the occasion was more sadness than anger. A middle-aged woman, bringing groceries home from the supermarket, shot at point-blank range in an elevator, Politkovskaya was killed for her courage in reporting the continuing butchery in Chechnya. An attempt to poison her had narrowly failed two years earlier. As she was eliminated, she had another article at press on the atrocities of the Kadyrov clan that now runs Chechnya for the Kremlin. She lived and died a fighter. But she was buried with resignation, not fury or revolt. Her death, the official media explained, was either an unfathomable mystery or the work of enemies of the government vainly attempting to discredit it. The president remarked she was a nobody whose death was the only news value in her life.

It is tempting to see in that casual dismissal no more than the ordinary arrogance of power. All governments deny their crimes, and most are understanding of one another's lies about them. Bush and Blair, with still more blood on their hands—in all probability, that of over half a million Iraqis—observe these precepts as automatically as Putin. But there is a difference that sets Putin apart. On the evidence of opinion polls, he is the most popular national leader alive today. Since he came to power six years ago, he has enjoyed the continuous support of over 70 percent of his people, a record no other politician approaches. By comparison, Chirac now has an approval rating of 38 percent, Bush of 36 percent, Blair of 30 percent.

Such eminence may seem perverse, but it is not unintelligible. Putin's authority derives, in the first place, from the contrast with the ruler who made him. From a Western standpoint, Boris Yeltsin's regime was by no means a failure. By ramming through a more sweeping privatization

[illegible] than any carried out in Eastern Europe, and maintaining a facade of competitive elections, it laid the foundations of a Russian capitalism for the new century. In the eyes of most Russians, on the other hand, Yeltsin's administration set loose a wave of corruption and criminality, stumbled chaotically from one political crisis to another, presided over an unprecedented decline in living standards and collapse of life expectancy, humiliated the country by obeisance to foreign powers, destroyed the currency, and ended in bankruptcy.

Any new administration would have been hard put not to do better. Putin, however, had the good luck to arrive in power just as oil prices took off. The country has been the largest single beneficiary of the world commodities boom of the early twenty-first century. For ordinary Russians, though average real wages remain very low, less than $400 a month, they have doubled under Putin. To relative prosperity Putin has added stability. Cabinet convulsions, confrontations with the legislature, lapses into presidential stupor, are things of the past. Administration may not be that much more efficient, but order—at least north of the Caucasus—has been restored. Last but not least, the country is no longer "under external management," as the pointed local phrase puts it. Freed from foreign debt and diplomatic supervision, Russia is an independent state once again.

Prosperity, stability, sovereignty: the national consensus around Putin rests on his satisfaction of these primordial concerns. That there may be less in each than meets the eye matters little, politically speaking, so long as their measure is memories of the abyss under Yeltsin. But the stratospheric polls reflect something else as well—an image of the ruler. Putin cuts a somewhat colorless, frigid figure in the West. In cultures accustomed to more effusive styles of leadership, the sleek, stoat-shaped head and stone-cold eyes offer little purchase for affective projection. In Russia, however, charisma wears another face. When he came to power, Putin lacked any trace of it. But possession of the presidency has altered him.

Once installed in the office, Putin has cultivated two attributes that have given him an aura capable of outlasting it. The first is the image of firm, where necessary ruthless, authority. Historically, the brutal imposition of order has been more often admired than feared in Russia. Rather than his portrait suffering from the shadow of the KGB, Putin has converted it into a halo of austere discipline. In what remains in many ways a macho society, toughness—prowess in judo and drops into criminal slang are part of Putin's kit—continues to be valued, and not only by men: Putin's most enthusiastic fans are often women. But there is another, less obvious side to his charisma. Part of his chilly magnetism is cultural. He is widely admired for his command of the language. Here, too, contrast is everything. Lenin was the last ruler of the country who could speak an educated Russian. Stalin's Georgian accent was so thick he rarely risked speaking in public. Khrushchev's vocabulary was crude and his grammar barbaric. Brezhnev could scarcely put two sentences together. Gorbachev spoke with a provincial southern accent. The less said of Yeltsin's slurred diction the better. To hear a leader of the country capable once again of expressing himself with clarity, accuracy, and fluency, in a more or less correct idiom, comes as music to many Russians. In a strange way, Putin's prestige is thus also intellectual, and an apparent union of fist and mind has captured the popular imagination.

The actual regime over which Putin presides, however, although it has involved important changes, shows less of a break with Yeltsin's time than might appear. The economy that Yeltsin left behind was in the grip of a tiny group of profiteers, who had seized the country's major assets in a racket—called "loans for shares." The president and his extended "Family" (relatives, aides, hangers-on) naturally took their own share of the loot. It is doubtful whether the upshot had any equivalent in the entire history of capitalism. The leading seven oligarchs to emerge from these years ended up controlling a vast slice of the national wealth, most of the media, and much of the Duma. Putin was picked by the Family to ensure that these arrangements did not come under scrutiny later on. His first act in office was to grant Yeltsin immunity from prosecution, and he has generally looked after his immediate entourage.

But if he wanted a stronger government than Yeltsin's, he could not afford to leave the oligarchs in undisturbed possession of their powers. After warning them that they could keep their riches only if they stayed out of politics, he moved to curb them. The three most ambitious magnates were broken: two fleeing into exile, and the third, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, dispatched to a labor camp. A fourth has opted for residence abroad. Putin has taken back under state control parts of the oil industry and created out of the country's gas monopoly a giant conglomerate. The public sector's share of GDP has risen modestly, by about 5 percent, but for the time being, the booty capitalism of the 1990s has come to a halt. The balance of power has shifted away from extraordinary accumulations of private plunder toward more traditional forms of bureaucratic management.

These changes are a focus of some anxiety in the Western business press, where fears are often expressed of an ominous statism that threatens the liberalization of the 1990s. In reality, the Russian state has been strengthened as an economic agent, but not with any socializing intent, simply as a quarry of political power. Neoliberalism is safe



An electron-microscope photograph of a dead insect found on a car, by Volker Steger, from a series that appeared last year, in Süddeutsche Zeitung.

enough in Russia today. The president has made this clear to all who are interested. On a visit to Germany in October, brushing aside questions about the death of Politkovskaya, he told his hosts: "We do not understand the nervousness in the press about Russia investing abroad. Where does this hysteria come from? It's not the Red Army that wants to come to Germany. It's just the same capitalists as you."

The political system put together since Yeltsin's departure is a similar mixture of novelty and continuity. It is now de rigueur for Western journalists to deplore the muzzling of the media, the neutering of parliament, and the decline of political freedoms under Putin. These realities, however, all have their origins under Yeltsin, whose illegalities were much starker. No act of Putin's compares with the bombardment of the parliament by tanks, or the fraudulent referendum that ensued, imposing the autocratic constitution under which Russia continues to be ruled. Yet because Yeltsin was considered a pliable, if somewhat disreputable, utensil of Western policies, the first action was applauded and the second ignored by virtually every foreign correspondent of the time. Nor was there much criticism of the brazen manipulation of press and television, controlled by the oligarchs, to engineer Yeltsin's reelection. Still less attention was paid to what was happening within the machinery of state itself. Far from the demise of the U.S.S.R. reducing the number of Russian functionaries, the bureaucracy had—few post-Communist facts are more arresting—actually doubled in size by the end of Yeltsin's stewardship. Not only that. At the topmost levels of the regime, the proportion of officials drawn from the security services or armed forces soared above their

Putin

[World]

THE SPY WHO SHOVED ME

W

they should realize that he is a judo master. His judo-

corruption as an instrument of state

democracy, the Kremlin's political

munism—liberalism has already

Corruption is built into any such connubium

achieved, this time under the dominance of politics.

instruments of coercion and jurisdiction have been centralized. The budget of the FSB—the post-Communist successor to the KGB—has tripled, and the number of positions in the federal administration that personnel brought from the agencies has continued to rise. In jovial spirit, Putin allowed himself to quip to fellow veterans, "Comrades, our strategic mission is accomplished—we have restored power." Still, these developments are mainly accentuations of what was already there. Institutionally, the more striking innovation has been the integration of the economic and political pillars of Putin's system of command. The new regime is dominated by a web of Kremlin staffers and ministers with "security profiles" who also head the largest state companies quoted on the stock market. The oligarchs had mixed business and politics flamboyantly enough. But these were raids by freebooters from the first into the second domain. Putin has turned the tables on them. Under his system, a more organic symbiosis between the two has been

between profits and power. By general consent, it is now even more widespread than under Yeltsin, but its character has changed. There appears to be little active indignation at the corruption rife at all levels of society. A common attitude is that an official who takes bribes is better than one who indiscriminately, a change to which Brezhnev's "era of stagnation" since the end of the terror, Johnsonian people. In this climate, Putin—so far, at least, lacking the personal greed that characterized Yeltsin—

—will use corruption as an instrument of state policy, operating it as a system of rewards for those who go with him, and of blackmail for those who might resist. The presidential party, United Russia, and its parliamentary allies, with no more seats, prefects than are needed to support the Duma, control about 70 percent of the votes in the Duma, enough to rewrite the constitution if that

—democracy, the Kremlin's political technicians are now putting together an opposition party designed to play the Bolshevik role of anti-Communism—liberalism has already

—the political agenda and

—the governing

—parliament.

The result has been stymied in the running sore of corruption that so disfigured the West

—Russia. Either liberalism is

—of development

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might be implicated in whatever is amiss can be excluded. The U.S. ambassador to Moscow in the late 1980s, Jack Matlock, has explained why: "Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev, in effect, cooperated on a scenario, a plan of reforming the Soviet Union, which was defined initially by the United States. The plan was devised by the United States but with the idea that it should not be contrary to the national interests of a peaceful Soviet Union." Gorbachev "adopted the U.S. agenda, which had been defined in Washington, without attribution, of course, as his own plan." Adult supervision—the term once employed by another U.S. envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad of Kabul and Baghdad, to describe his country's relations with the world at large—was even closer under Yeltsin. By these lights, if anything goes wrong, the progenitors are certainly not to blame. See Iraq today.

At Politkovskaya's funeral, the three principal forces behind Yeltsin's regime were all on hand. Two of them, hypocrisies obliging: the West, in the persons of the American, British, and German ambassadors; and the oligarchs *par personne interposée*, in the figure of Anatoly Chubais, vice premier under Yeltsin and an architect of privatization, to most Russians more odious, as their procurer, than the oligarchs themselves. The third, in authentic grief, waiting outside: the tattered conscience of the liberal intelligentsia. In 1991, of all domestic groups, it was mainly this stratum that helped Yeltsin to power, confident that in doing so it was at last bringing political liberty to Russia. Clustered around the presidency in the early 1990s, when it occupied many policy-making positions, it supplied the crucial democratic legitimation of Yeltsin's rule to the end. Not since 1917 had intellectuals played so central a role in the government.

Fifteen years later, what has become of this intelligentsia? Economically speaking, much of it has fallen victim to what it took to be the foundation of the freedom to come, as the market has scythed through its institutional supports. In the Soviet system, universities and academies were decently financed; publishing houses, film studios, orchestras, all received substantial state funding. These privileges came at the cost of censorship and a good deal of padding. But the tension bred by ideological controls also kept alive the spirit of opposition that had defined the Russian intelligentsia since the nineteenth century—and for long periods been its virtual raison d'être. With the arrival of neoliberalism, this universe abruptly collapsed. Budgets for higher education were slashed to one twelfth of their late Soviet level. In the press and publishing worlds, which had seen an explosion of growth in the years of perestroika, circulation shrank remorselessly after 1991, as paper costs soared and readers lost interest in public affairs.

All this was demoralizing enough for the intelligentsia, but there was a further alteration. For the first time in its history, money became the general arbiter of intellectual worth. To be needy was now to be a failure, evidence of an inability to adapt creatively to the demands of competition. In these conditions, as the common values that once held it together corroded, the sense of collective identity that distinguished the traditional intelligentsia has been steadily weakened. The term itself is now repudiated by those for whom it smacks too much of a common identity and a revolutionary past in favor of the neologism *intellektual*, of healthier American origin, to denote the new independent-minded individual, distinct from the collective herd of old. Such dissociations themselves have a long history, but the events of 1991, not those of 1905–7, constituted the first revolution liberals could call their own.

Hostility—often, in private, verbally extreme hostility—to Putin's regime is widespread. But of public opposition there is little. The reason is not only fear, though that exists. It is also the knowledge, which can only be half-repressed, that the liberal intelligentsia is compromised by its own part in bringing to being what it now so dislikes. By clinging to Yeltsin long after the illegality and corruption of his rule was plain, in the name of

[Poem]

BOLSHEVESCENT

By Peter Gizzi, from the Winter issue of Tin House. *The poem appears in Gizzi's collection* The Outernationale, *published this spring by Wesleyan University Press.*

You stand far from the crowd, adjacent to power.
You consider the edge as well as the frame.
You consider beauty, depth of field, lighting
to understand the field, the crowd.
Late into the day, the atmosphere explodes
and revolution, well, revolution is everything.
You begin to see for the first time
everything is just like the last thing
only its opposite and only for a moment.
When a revolution completes its orbit
the objects return only different
for having stayed the same throughout.
To continue is not what you imagined.
But what you imagined was to change
and so you have and so has the crowd.



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defense against a toothless Communism, it destroyed its credibility in the eyes of much of the population, only to find that Yeltsin had landed it with Putin.

The distance between the frayed, precarious fabric of private lives—of a people now, in the words of Georgi Derluguian, "profoundly tired and resistant to any public mobilizing"—and the global canvas on which the destiny of the Russian state is written seems enormous. Yet there is one traumatic knot that ties them together. In just five years, from 1990 to 1994, the mortality rate among Russian men soared—in peacetime—by 32 percent, and their average life expectancy plummeted to under fifty-eight years, below that of Pakistan. By 2003 the population had fallen by more than 5 million in a decade; it is currently losing 750,000 lives a year. When Yeltsin took power, the total population of Russia was just under 150 million. By 2050, according to official projections, it will be just over 100 million. So many were not undone by Stalin himself.

Official demographers hasten to point out that high mortality rates were already a feature of the Brezhnev period, while low fertility rates are after all a sign of social advance, in syntony with Western Europe. The combination of a mortmain from the past and an upgrade from the future has been unfortunate, but why blame capitalism? Against these apologetics, Eric Hobsbawm's judgment that the fall of the U.S.S.R. led to a "human catastrophe" stands. The starkness of the break in the early 1990s is not to be gainsaid. As AIDS, TB, and skyrocketing rates of suicide are added to the list of traditional killers—alcohol, nicotine, and the like—public health care has wasted away, on a share of the budget that is no more than 10 percent: below that of Bolivia. A sense of the sheer desolation of the demographic scene is given by the plight of women—more protected from the catastrophe than men. There are now 15 percent more women alive in this society than men. Virtually half of them are single. Such is the solitude of those who, relatively speaking, are the survivors.

In power-political terms, a relentless attrition of Russia's human stock has obvious consequences for its role in the world, the subject of urgent addresses to the nation by Putin. What will remain of the greatness of the past? Foreign diplomats were fond of describing the U.S.S.R. as "Upper Volta with rockets." From one angle, Russia today looks more like Saudi Arabia with rockets, although against the waxing of its oil revenues must be set the aging of its missiles. That the country, even if it has now regained a certain independence, has so come down in the world haunts not only its governing class but many of its writers. The possible spaces of empire—past or future, native or alien—have become a leitmotif not only of its political discourse but of its literary imagination.

In the leading example of the "imperial novel," now an accepted form, Pavel Krusanov constructs a counterfactual history of the twentieth century. His bestseller *Ukus Angela* ("Bite of the Angel") recounts a Russia that has never known a revolution and, instead of contracting in size, expands to absorb the whole of China and the Balkans, under the superhuman command of Ivan Nekitaev ("Not-Chinese"), a tyrant of Olympian freedom from all morality. Vladimir Sorokin inverts the schema in his latest novel, *Den' Oprichnika* ("The Day of the Oprichnik"). By the year 2027, the monarchy has been restored in a self-enclosed Russia, surrounded by a Great Wall and run by a reincarnation of Ivan IV's corps of terrorists, under the thumb of China, whose goods and settlers dominate economic life, and whose language is the preferred idiom of the tsar's children themselves.

The extravagance of these dreamlands of imperial recovery is an indication not of any feasible ambition but of a psychology of compensation. The reality is that Russia's rank in the world has been irreversibly transformed. It was a great power continuously for three centuries: longer—this is often forgotten—than any single country in the West. In square miles, it is still the largest state on earth. But it no longer has a major industrial base. Its economy has revived as an export platform for raw materials, with all the risks of overreliance on volatile world prices familiar in first and third world countries alike—overvaluation, inflation, import addiction, sudden implosion. Although it still possesses the only nuclear stockpile anywhere near the U.S. arsenal, its defense industry and armed services are a shadow of the Soviet past. In territory, it has shrunk behind its borders at the end of the seventeenth century. Its population is smaller than that of Bangladesh. Its GDP is less than that of Mexico.

More fundamental in the long run for the country's identity may be the drastic alteration in its geopolitical setting. Russia is now wedged between a still expanding European Union and a vastly empowered China. Historically speaking, this is a sudden and total change in the relative magnitudes flanking it on either side. Few Russians have yet quite registered the scale of the *ridimensionamento* of their country. To the west, just when the Russian elites felt they could at last rejoin Europe, where the country properly belonged, after the long Soviet isolation, they suddenly find themselves confronted with a scene in which they cannot be one European power among others (and the largest), as in the nineteenth century, but face a vast, quasi-unified continental bloc, from which they are formally—and, to all appearances, permanently—excluded. To the east, there is the


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rising giant of China, overshadowing the recovery of Russia but still utterly remote to the minds of most Russians. Against all this, Moscow has only the energy card—no small matter, but scarcely a commensurate counterbalance.

These new circumstances are liable to deal a double blow to Russia's traditional sense of itself. On the one hand, racist assumptions of the superiority of white to yellow peoples remain deeply ingrained in popular attitudes. Long accustomed to regarding themselves as—relatively speaking—civilized and the Chinese as backward, if not barbaric, Russians find it difficult to adjust to the spectacular reversal of roles today, when China has become an industrial powerhouse towering above its neighbor, and its great urban centers are exemplars of a modernity that makes their Russian counterparts look small and shabby by comparison. The social and economic dynamism of the People's Republic, brimming with conflict and vitality of every kind, offers a painful contrast, for those willing to look, to the numbed apathy of Russia—and this, liberals might gloomily reflect, without even the deliverance of a true post-Communism. The wound to national pride is potentially acute.

Worse lies to the west. Catherine the Great's famous declaration that "Russia is a European country" was not so obvious at the time, and has often been doubted since, by foreigners and natives alike. But its spirit is deeply rooted in the Russian elites, who have always—despite the urgings of Eurasian enthusiasts—mentally faced west, not east. In many practical ways, post-Communism has restored Russia to the "common European home" Gorbachev liked to invoke. Travel, sport, crime, emigration, dual residence, are letting better-off Russians back into a world they once shared in the *Belle Epoque*. But at state level, with all its consequences for the national psyche, Russia—in being what cannot be included in the Union—is now formally defined as what is not Europe, in the new, hardening sense of the term. The injustice of this is obvious. Inconvenient though it may be for the ideologues of enlargement to acknowledge, Russia's contribution to European culture has historically been greater than that of all the new member states of the E.U. combined. In the years to come, it would be surprising if the relationship between Brussels and Moscow did not rub.

Few peoples have had to undergo the variety of successive shocks—liberation, depression, expropriation, attrition, demotion—that Russians have endured in the last decade and a half. Even if these are so far only a brief aftermath of the much vaster turbulences of the last century, it is no surprise that the masses are "profoundly tired and resistant to any public mobilizing." What they will eventually make of the new experiences remains to be seen. For the moment, Pushkin's closing line applies—"*narod bezmolvstvuet*." The people are silent.

[Chastisement]

THE $50,000 QUESTION

From a February 27 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the nomination of Missouri businessman Sam Fox to be U.S. ambassador to Belgium. During the 2004 presidential race, Fox donated $50,000 to Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, a 527 group that tried to discredit Senator John Kerry's military service in Vietnam.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: I assume you believe that truth in public life is important.

SAM FOX: Yes, sir.

KERRY: And might I ask you your opinion of the politics of personal destruction?

FOX: I am very concerned about the amount of money that's going into politics and even more concerned about the fact that politics has become mean and destructive. Let me say this, I'm against 527s. I think they've hurt a lot of good, decent people. I very much respect your dedicated service to this country, Senator Kerry. You're a hero, and there isn't anybody or anything that's going to take that away from you. But 527s tried. By the same token, on the other side of the aisle, one 527 went so far as to compare the president to Adolf Hitler.

KERRY: I'm not looking for anybody to call me a hero, Mr. Fox. I think most of the heroes died. But notwithstanding the comments you made, you did see fit to contribute a very significant sum of money to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. Given what you said about how bad 527s are, why would you do that?

FOX: My wife, Marilyn, and I have lived the American dream, there's no question about it. My father came here with only the clothes on his back. Because we're blessed financially now, when people ask us for money, we give. Especially if we know who's asking.

KERRY: Well, who asked you to give to the SBVT?

FOX: I don't remember.

KERRY: You have no recollection why you gave away $50,000?

FOX: I gave away $50,000 because I was asked to.

KERRY: A 527, as you said, is mean and ugly and not accountable. Why would you give $50,000 to a group for whom you have no sense of accountability?

FOX: Because if 527s were banned, then they would be banned for both parties. So long as they're not banned—

KERRY: So two wrongs make a right? Is that the judgment you would bring to the ambassadorship?

FOX: No, I didn't say that two wrongs make a right, sir.

KERRY: Why did you do it then?



COURTESY ARNDT & PARTNER, BERLIN/THE SAATCHI GALLERY, LONDON

Internal Renovations, *by Jules de Balincourt, whose work was on view this winter at Ars Libri, in Boston.*

FOX: I did it because politically it's necessary if the other side is doing it.

KERRY: So as an individual citizen, you don't think you have any responsibility not to support that kind of politics. Do you think this should matter to me?

FOX: I'm sorry?

KERRY: Do you think this should matter to me?

FOX: Yes, I do. I think it's disgraceful. I think it's terrible. But that's the world we live in. I think the best way to change it is to restrict the amount of money that can go into 527s and regulate them.

KERRY: Well, we've been trying to do that for the twenty-two years I've been here, and one of the most effective ways to do it would be for people like yourself to know what they're giving to and care about it. There's a question here, obviously, about judgment. I'm not trying to be unreasonable about it. Sometimes you go to these hearings and senators rant and rave and scream. I'm not a screamer. I know your family is here. I'm sure they're sitting there thinking, "Why's he giving my dad a hard time right now?" I understand that. I'm sympathetic to it. This is not going to make a difference to my outcome, but it's important to the future.

[Instructions]

EMERGENCY PARKING ONLY

From "Rough Presentation for Gas Limos Project," among files presented in London last fall in the case of Dhiren Barot, an Al Qaeda operative born in India and raised in England. The files, written by Barot and discovered on a computer seized in Pakistan in July 2004, detailed his plans for a series of coordinated attacks in the United Kingdom and the United States. Barot pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life in prison.

The gas cylinder project has the potential to be very good. I have applied methods I learned from senior planners: use what is at your disposal, bending it to suit your needs, rather than wasting valuable time becoming despondent over that which is not within your reach.

It is important to have a basic understanding of flammable limits and stoichiometry, since it is with mathematics that you will know how to cause the largest amount of damage. To ignore this would be foolish—"a shot in the dark." In the

[Testimony]

INTO THE OBLIVION

From remarks by undertaker, poet, and essayist Thomas Lynch to the President's Council on Bioethics, which met last June to discuss organ procurement. Lynch is the author of The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade.

My experience with bodies and the parts of bodies over the past thirty-five years has taught me that our dead are precious to us because ours is a species for better or for worse, that has learned to deal with death, the idea of the thing, by dealing with our dead, the thing itself. It casts my imagination back to forty or fifty thousand years ago, when the first human widow awakened in that cave to the dead lump of protein next to her and said, "My, he's very quiet this morning," or words to that effect. Depending on the season and the weather, sooner or later she would begin to sense—actually, she'd begin to smell—that this stillness was a different stillness than she had ever experienced before. She knew she'd have to do something about it. She knew she'd have to leave the cave to him, in which case, I suppose, it would become his tomb. Or maybe she thought she'd drag him out by the ankles and kick his sorry self over the cliff, in which case we could call him "consigned to the elements," or maybe she'd build a fire and burn his body, or she'd scratch a hole in the ground and tip him into it.

Whatever she did, whatever oblivion she consigned him to, the questions that quickened in her looking onto that void became, I think, the signature of our species, what separates us from rock bass and mud dimples and sucker spunds and other dying things that die. Looking into whatever oblivion she consigned that first dead thing to, she posed the standard questions. I hear them posed by widowed people today: "Is that all there is? Is that it? Is that all there is to me? Why is it cold? What comes next?" The dead do not care. I've spent a considerable amount of time around widows, corpses, dead neighbors, dead friends and family and never once has one of them said anything like, "I want to be buried in striped suit in the dining cabinet at the mummies' picnic." They say nothing. They are unmoved by our concerns. The dead don't care. You can read to the book. But the dead do matter. The meaning of anything is what we're talking about the

parts of bodies of dead gangsters, buried maybe in Milford, Michigan, where last month they went digging for whatever is left of Jimmy Hoffa at Hidden Dreams Farm, or whether we are looking for our dead at the Fresh Kills landfill site, where their bodies are commingled with those of their murderers on September 11, the dead are with us. We are all haunted, properly and happily in some cases, not only by their memories but also by their remnants.

There are distinctions to be made between the notions of medical death or metabolic death, social death, spiritual death, and actual death as far as your family is concerned. I might know, for example, that after a cremation, we end up with, say, fourteen pounds of bone fragment and dessicated tissue that we can put in a box and hand to the family, but when you see the elderly sister come to claim the ashes of a sister whose own children couldn't come and get her, when she bears that box like viaticum, when she walks out the door, flips the button to open the trunk, and then reconsiders and goes to the back door and opens it up, and then thinks better of it and closes it again, when she goes to the front-seat passenger door, opens it up, places the box on the front seat, and then clicks a seat belt around it, you can see that whether we are remnant or icon or relic is not up to you or me. It's up to the living who bear us in their memory and, in fact, bear our mortality, because we are humans, tied to this humus, this layer of earth from which our monuments and our homes and our histories rise up.

The market, the retail event of organ and tissue procurement, is something that may have medical consequences, but to most families it remains a mystery, tied up in issues of personhood, not parts. There's this "just a shell" theory of how we should relate to dead human bodies. You hear a lot of it from young clergy and old family friends, well-intentioned in-laws, folks who are unsettled by the fresh grief of others. You hear it when you bring a mother and a father in for the first sight of their dead daughter killed in a car wreck or left out to rot by some mannish violence. It is proffered as a kind of comfort in the teeth of a comfortless situation, consolation to the inconsolable. Between the inhale and exhale of the bone-racking sob such hurts produce, some frightened and well-meaning ignoramus is bound to give out with, "It's okay, it's not her. That's just a shell."

I once saw an Episcopalian deacon nearly decked by the swift slap of a mother of a teenager dead of leukemia to whom he had tendered this counsel. "I'll tell you when it's just a shell," the woman said. "For now and until I tell you otherwise, she's my daughter." The woman was asserting the long-standing right of the living to declare the dead dead. Just as we declare the living alive through baptisms and lovers in love by nuptials, funerals are the way we close the gap between the death that happens and the death that matters. It's how we assign meaning to our little histories. And the rituals we devise to conduct the living and the beloved and the dead from one status to another have less to do with performance than they do with meaning. In a world where "dysfunctional" has become the operative adjective, a body that has ceased to work has, it would seem, few useful applications beyond those we are talking about here this morning. It's dysfunction more manifest than the sexual and familial forms that fill our tabloids and talk shows. A body that doesn't work is, in the early going, the evidence we have of a person who has ceased to be, and a person who has ceased

[Anecdote]

SWEET CHARIOT

By Bert Keizer, from his essay "Rites of Departure," in the Spring issue of The Threepenny Review. *Keizer works at a chronic-care facility in Amsterdam and is the author of several books, including* Dancing with Mister D.

A little while ago I attended a funeral where the relatives had decided on homemade gestures for their final goodbye. I was standing with the other mourners near the entrance of the cemetery, and we commiserated in mute despair about the suicide of the young colleague we were to bury that day: he was forty-two, the father of a boy of three and a girl of six. As I was waiting for the sound of the black hearse rolling slowly past us, with its characteristic sound of crunching pebbles under the tires, my eye was caught by a woman riding a bicycle, to which had been attached a two-wheeled cart carrying a brightly colored coffin. I was taken aback at first, not realizing what I was looking at, and then when it slowly dawned on me, I was in for a further shock: on top of the coffin, the dead man's little boy sat playing at "driving a car." The whole scene struck me as a desperate attempt at saying "Howdy!" to Death, whom I happen to know as a gentleman of the Old School who likes to keep his distance. I'm afraid this type of familiarity can breed contempt, this time the other way round, and Fate might be tempted to exact a measure of vengeance as a compensation for such gross behavior. We're merely humans, after all, and should know our place.

[illegible] as compelling a prospect as it was when the first Lamanid dug holes for his dead and set our species apart from the others.

So I encourage you, as you wrestle with these difficult issues, to consider the traffic between the living and the dead, because in most of these situations, there is no medicine or math, no bottom line or Bible verse, that will explain the mystery we behold when we behold someone we love dying or dead. I know this not only because of my professional and personal experience but because I also sense it in the lives of people all around me. The bodies of the newly dead are not debris or remnant, nor entirely icon or essence. They are rather changelings, incubates, hatchlings of a new reality that bear our names and dates, our images and likenesses, as surely in the eyes and ears of our children and grandchildren as did words of our birth in the ears of our parents and their parents. It is wise to treat such new things tenderly, carefully, and with honor.

[Vocation]

DEATH BE NOT PLUSH

From the website of Huggable Urns, a company that sells cremation urns in the form of stuffed animals and pillows. In 2005, the company introduced a new line of teddy bear–shaped urns wearing T-shirts with the logos of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Alexandra, the founder of Huggable Urns, is passionate about maintaining the loving connections between the living and loved ones who have moved on. "Our society doesn't deal well with the dying process," she says, "and this can make it very hard for people who are grieving and are forcibly separated from the remains of their loved one. When my own father died, his ashes were put into a plastic urn, which was stored in my mother's closet. All I wanted to do was hold him again, but the urn was hard and impersonal."

Alexandra's search for a way to be able to hug and feel close to him led her to develop these unique urns, extremely soft and comforting to the touch, perfect for holding, and discreet and stylish enough to keep visible in the home without causing discomfort or embarrassment to visitors.

"I just love to sit and hold my father," she says. "Even though I know that he has moved on, it gives me great comfort to know he is physically close and a part of my life, instead of being hidden away in a closet or scattered somewhere."

Huggable Urns has become Alexandra's life passion. She hopes that Huggable Urns will help break down the mystery and fear surrounding the natural process of death and grieving. Anything that can give a little comfort when you need it most has to be a good thing!

[Contest]

TOO MUCH OF WATER HAST THOU

From the January 12 airing of Morning Rave *on KDND 107.9 FM, a radio station in Sacramento, California, that bills itself as The End. The program held a contest, "Hold Your Wee for a Wii," in which eighteen contestants were asked to drink large quantities of water without urinating or vomiting in order to win a Nintendo Wii video-game console, which retails for $250. Jennifer Strange, a twenty-eight-year-old mother of three, agreed to accept second prize, a pair of tickets to a Justin Timberlake concert, after all but one other contestant had been eliminated. After taking the day off work, she was found dead at her home, reportedly of water intoxication. KDND canceled* Morning Rave *and fired ten employees, including the on-air personalities Lukas, Maney, Fester, Carter, and Trish. Portions of the broadcast were released by the* Sacramento Bee.

LUKAS: How much water you think you can drink before you have to wee? We're gonna be drinking 'til like—

FESTER: I did like two gallons, I think.

ALL: Two gallons!

LUKAS: Aw, dude—

TRISH: Can't you get water poisoning and, like, die?

LUKAS: [*Laughing*] Your body is 98 percent water, why can't you take in as much water as you want?

TRISH: I don't know—

FESTER: How much did he drink, that poor kid in college?

LUKAS: Yeah, well, he was doing other things.

TRISH: Maybe we should have researched this beforehand.

FESTER: Next thing you know, I break out in hives, and I'm in an ambulance.

LUKAS: If it gets dangerous for somebody, their body will automatically throw it up. And if you throw up the water, you're out of the contest.

EVA, A CALLER: Those people that are drinking all that water can get sick and possibly die from water intoxication.



"Homo Ergaster," by Hiroshi Sugimoto, whose work was on view this spring at Fraenkel Gallery, in San Francisco.

LUKAS: Yeah, we're aware of that.

MANEY: They signed releases, so we're not responsible. It's okay.

LUKAS: And if they get to the point where they have to throw up, they're going to throw up, and they're out of the contest before they die. So that's good, right?

EVA: Aw, that's mean! I suppose so.

LUKAS: How come you guys didn't do it?

EVA: Because we don't want to die.

LUKAS: Oh, okay. Let me ask Carter if anybody's dying. Hey Carter, is anybody dying in there?

CARTER: Uh, we got a guy who's just about to die. [*Everyone laughs.*]

MANEY: Oh, good, make sure he signs the release!

LUKAS: I like that we laugh at that. Get the insurance on that, please!

LUKAS: Right down to the final two! Oh, my. Two people puked. One person watched the other person puke, and there was a chain reaction.

CARTER: I can't hear you guys. It's chaos in here. Come over here, ladies. It's two chicks.

JENNIFER STRANGE: Hello?

LUKAS: Hi, who's this?

STRANGE: Jennifer.

LUKAS: Congratulations on making it to the final two. How are you feeling?

STRANGE: I don't have to go pee, but my stomach is, like, really, really full.

LUKAS: Is it all the way back up to your neck?

STRANGE: It looks like I'm pregnant again. It's pretty funny, I'm kind of entertained.

MANEY: How much longer do you think you could go, Jennifer?

STRANGE: Um, I think as long as my stomach will continue to let me. Maybe a couple more bottles.

LUKAS: Jennifer, what's the situation about Justin Timberlake tonight?

STRANGE: I don't want to—I want the Wii.

LUKAS: You do want the Wii?

[redacted]

FAMILY MEANS NOTHING TO ME

[redacted] Jennifer Strange's piece, "Family Means Nothing to Me and I Dislike Children," which appeared this summer in Soon Curtiss's first book, Eternity, Or and 9 Other Tales of Love and Money, now published in full by HarperCollins.

I have two nephews and two nieces, whom I find odious—especially the nieces. I have had pets in the past, and liked them at first, but whenever I break up with a boyfriend, I make him keep the pet. I've been told I am shy, but never in bed. I sometimes tell jokes, but have never been described as witty. I crave physical affection, but am mostly too scared to give it. In my free time, I sit at home alone and accomplish little. I am not more passionate or sensual than anyone else I know; however, I would have no way of knowing, since I have no idea how to measure passion. I like sex very much, and what I like best is unprotected sex; though if you ask, I will tell you I have only had it with one other person, or maybe two. As for my persona, a few physical facts will do: I have an ugly face. I am short and have hairy arms and a mustache (which I bleach). I have freckles all over my body. My hair is brown, my eyes are brown, and my skin is pink. I do not like to say my age, though rest assured I am not young. I love food and often eat too much. I am not religious and have no idea what it means to be a Jew. I am not Jewish. I have never traveled outside the United States and have little desire to do so; unless someone were to pay for everything and make all my reservations in advance; and then they would also have to arrange for me to take time off from work and repay me the money I lost from the time when I should have been working. In this case, I would like to travel outside of the United States. My idea of a perfect first date is that I do not have to talk, because you like me so much that you have the immediate urge to fall asleep with me, you pay for everything, by the way, and it is expensive. As for my faults, I have few. I snore, but no more than most women; I steal blankets in the night, but no more than most women. I have never met anyone as smart as I am, though I admit that I am not very smart. I am ready to love someone. I would treat him well, though how well would depend on how he treated me, and if he treated me too well, I am afraid that I might treat him badly in response. My past relationships have all been excellent.

STRANGE: I was tempted. I was really, really tempted, and everyone's gonna hate me forever

[redacted]: I got a pair of tickets, lower level, Justin Timberlake 2007 FutureSex Love show live, Arco Arena, tonight, and I will throw them away if you do not want to take them

STRANGE: He's gonna throw 'em away if I don't take 'em.

LUKAS: Trust me, we're not gonna throw 'em away.

STRANGE: I'm gonna have to say—

[redacted]: Three—two—

STRANGE: God, this really sucks.

[redacted]: —one—

STRANGE: No deal.

[redacted]: No deal!

LUKAS: Jennifer, I heard you're not doing too well.

STRANGE: My head hurts. They keep telling me that it's the water, that it'll tell my head to hurt, and then it'll make me puke.

LUKAS: Who told you that, the intern?

STRANGE: Yeah. It hurts, but it makes you feel light-headed, so I'm not sure if I'm just, like—

LUKAS: This is what it feels like when you're drowning. There's a lot of water inside you!

STRANGE: Oh, it hurts.

LUKAS: We want to get you out of your misery. We would like to offer you again, one more time, and the last time, Justin Timberlake tickets for tonight because it seems like Lucy has a big bladder and she's not going anywhere.

STRANGE: You know, they laughed at me for turning them down the first time, so I'm not gonna turn them down again, I'll take 'em.

LUKAS: All right, bring 'em in. Bring everybody in. Jennifer is gonna take it.

LUKAS: Aw, she looks sick. [*Laughs.*] Oh my gosh, look at her belly! Are you pregnant? [*Everyone laughs.*]

TRISH: No, she said it looks like her belly when she was pregnant! Look, it's totally sticking out!

LUKAS: Oh my gosh, look at that belly!

TRISH: That is so funny!

LUKAS: That's full of water!

TRISH: You look probably three months pregnant.

UNIDENTIFIED: She's a mother of three.

TRISH: I know, she's a little tiny thing, too!

LUKAS: Come on over, Jennifer. You okay? You want to lie down?

TRISH: She can't even walk.

LUKAS: You gonna pass out? Too much water?

STRANGE: I could probably drink more if you guys could pick me up.

UNIDENTIFIED: Give her another bottle!

STRANGE: You want me to?

LUKAS: No.

STRANGE: What could I get?

LUKAS: No, I don't think so. Well, you're going to Justin Timberlake tonight.

[Story]

THE POOR GIRL

By Sigrid Nunez, from McSweeney's, *issue 22. Several stories in the issue, by various authors, are based on ideas from the notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald for stories he never wrote. Nunez chose "Girl marries a dissipated man and keeps him in healthy seclusion. She meanwhile grows restless and raises hell on the side." Nunez is the author of five novels, most recently* The Last of Her Kind.

She was a pretty girl, and everyone knew her story. Calvin Trent had discovered her in one of his favorite hunting grounds: Central Park. She came from some shabby New England town, and she was an orphan. That part of her story—how she'd lost both parents—was never much talked about and remains obscure to me. The people who had raised her had been dirt poor. "She comes from nothing," Calvin would say, as if this were some kind of grace. When he met her, she was selling hats—or it might have been gloves or scarves—in a shop somewhere on Madison.

She had a poor girl's teeth, but other than that she was fine. She had clear skin, resilient red hair, and a child's powdery scent. Her green eyes were large and soft. Her name, for which she can hardly be held responsible, was Eunice Cramp. She rarely smiled, perhaps because of those teeth, but though on the quiet side and woefully insecure, she was not a glum sort of girl, not at all.

The summer they met, Calvin was already well into his decline. His last book had fared badly, worse than the one before. He was all washed up, everyone said, and he knew it—knew that this was what people were saying, I mean. He was at that point in a serious drinker's life where he could no longer concentrate, even when sober. He could not work, and he could not stop drinking, and he seemed to be losing his mind. His appearance at times could shock you, he looked so uncared for; and his behavior—well, no doubt you've heard.

But Eunice Cramp was going to change all that. Eunice believed in Calvin Trent. Of course she did. She was in love with the man and all starry-eyed about the author—though in fact when he introduced himself in Central Park, she had no idea who he was. Then again, which of his girls ever did? But Eunice was different from his other girls, and this Calvin grasped.

Through the unlifting fog of inebriation, she shone out to him for what she was: a beacon, an angel of salvation. The longer they were married, the less we saw of them. It was all part of Eunice's battle plan: to get Calvin on the wagon, to get Calvin's health back, to get Calvin working again. We were a bad influence, of course—part of the old lifestyle that had contributed to his ruin. Most of us had grown up together (Calvin and I, as it happens, on the same Park Avenue block), or had gone to the same schools. The war had scattered us for a bit, but now a group of the old boys had rebonded, and those who hadn't already married and settled down had discovered bohemia.

[Advice]

JET BLUES

From a manual distributed last summer by Northwest Airlines to workers who had recently been laid off. After employee complaints, the airline apologized and stopped further distribution. Northwest Airlines filed for bankruptcy in 2005.

Use the phone book instead of directory assistance.
Do your own nails.
Replace hundred-watt bulbs with sixty-watt.
Buy spare parts for your car at the junkyard.
Go to museums on free days.
Get hand-me-down clothes and toys for your kids from family and friends.
Write letters instead of calling.
Make your own baby food.
Buy old furniture at yard sales and refinish it yourself.
Hang clothes out to dry.
Take a date for a walk along the beach or in the woods.
Grocery shop on double-coupon days.
Ask your doctor for samples of prescriptions.
Don't use your dishwasher's dry cycle; open the door and let the dishes air dry.
Cut the kids' hair yourself.
Use old newspapers for cat litter.
Turn the hot-water heater down and wrap it with insulation.
Donate time instead of money to religious organizations and charities.
Grow your own vegetables and herbs.
Borrow a dress for a big night out.
Don't be shy about pulling something you like out of the trash.



Echoes in Steel II, *by Paul Ching-Bor, whose work was displayed last fall at Reeves Contemporary, in New York City.*

Several of us were hard at work, or claimed to be, writing or painting masterpieces, but the activity to which we were most devoted in those days was carousing.

Give the lady a medal: she turned the old Greenwich Village flat—scene of so many royal debauches—into a proper little home. Whenever we did see Calvin, we were amazed. He looked years younger; he seemed steadier than we'd ever known him.

His old confidence—his cockiness—had come flooding back. "Think I give a damn what people say about my wife's teeth?"

Once, he let me read some of the new book he was working on. Though I'd given up novel-writing myself by this time, and was thinking of turning to drama, to Calvin I was still his chief rival as well as his sharpest critic. The new work was very good indeed, up to his best work, and I almost told him so.

Several years passed, and Calvin the old hell-raiser was living the life of a monk. His work, which now completely absorbed him—the big novel that would put him back on top—was still a year or so from being finished. One day, at Schrafft's, the all-but-forgotten Eunice ran into Kitty, one of the girls who was part of our circle back then, and the two of them had coffee. This girl Kitty was an expert at getting others to confide in her, and that is how we learned that Eunice was unhappy. She had married Calvin with the expectation that, in time, he would give her a child. Now she knew this would never happen. When we asked Kitty to explain, she only waggled her eyebrows meaningfully. This was, of course, the most succulent tidbit of the whole story.

As it turned out, being her husband's caretaker, secretary, and guardian, though it kept her frightfully busy, was not enough for Eunice. Protecting Calvin from bad influences and distractions had isolated her as well, so that she found herself with no real friends of her own. She suffered also from knowing how appalled Calvin's family was that he had married beneath himself. (Calvin's mother all but held her nose around Eunice.) And though Calvin kept assuring Eunice (as he'd assured us, too, when we protested) that the difference in their backgrounds didn't matter, she knew that it mattered a great deal and that it always would.

She hadn't much to look forward to each day, the poor girl, and she wasn't getting any younger. Her old dreams—the dreams that had brought her to the big city in the first place—now returned to haunt her. She was weary, but she was also restless, ever so. She couldn't sleep at night, she said, for the throbbing in her blood, the tormenting fear that life was passing her by. And here, it seems, Eunice had started to cry. Though she'd never told anyone before, and, according to Kitty, blushed so hard she turned the tablecloth pink, Eunice confessed that, once upon a time, she'd imagined some sort of place for herself in the theater!

And that is how she came back into our circle. First Kitty and then the other girls and then all of us together rallied round lonely, unhappy Eunice. No friends? Why, *we* were her friends! We would see to it that she got out more; we would show her the pleasures and excitement she had been missing. She didn't want Calvin to know, of course. She was afraid he'd be tempted to join us and that he'd return to his old wicked ways. And surely she was right. The wonder is that she never for a moment seemed to fear that *she* might be in any danger from us.

"I wouldn't have befriended her in the first place," Kitty grumbled, "if I'd known she was nothing but a little tramp." It was the pot calling the kettle black, of course, but that is how women are.

With Eunice's kind, it takes only one small sin to make a girl judge herself fallen. The feeling makes her hate herself, and the self-hatred compels her to sin a second time, and then over and over. Oh, not that she didn't have some fun on the way down. She certainly can't accuse us of not living up to our promise. There were moments—I personally saw to it—when the poor girl thought she had died and gone to heaven. I was never entirely sure, though, with Eunice, how much of it was about getting back at Calvin—for not giving her a baby, for drinking the blood of her youth—and how much was pure, unreinable desire. All I know is that, in a trice, Eunice Cramp had become the life of our party—that never-ending party from which she'd dragged Calvin bodily away, like a fireman rescuing a victim from a burning building.

She turned out to be a marvelous dancer.

She put gold streaks in her hair.

Her green eyes said *Go*.

As a drunk, I recall, she always started out screamingly funny and ended up weepy and tiresome. As a lover . . . ah, but a gentleman knows where to draw the line. I have no idea what she told Calvin she was doing all those hours she carried on with us. He was now writing so furiously, though, that he probably would have missed the outbreak of another world war.

But there would have been no third act, as it were, if Calvin hadn't learned eventually what his wife was up to. And the truth is, though Eunice might have been careful, the rest of us were not.

He took it hard, naturally. No one could blame him, to be sure, but it was impossible to feel sorry for Calvin Trent. His novel was out, and he was back on top again. He had triumphed; he had proved every one of us wrong. And Lord knows, there were plenty of girls for the asking. Not that he'd ever had much trouble in that regard anyway, even at his lowest. For the Eunices of this world are many, as the Kittys of this world are many—and I, too, have had my fair share of both.

Calvin might have found it in him to forgive a lapse or even two, given how devoted Eunice had been and how much he truly owed her. But when he learned the full extent of her betrayal—and he made it his business to learn it—he threw Eunice out. Needless to say, theirs was not the only rupture.

But, over the years, our circle has had a rather remarkable way of remaining intact. If this were a story about *us*, I could tell you what happened to each and every one of the other old boys involved.

What happened to Eunice, however, I cannot say. Surely she did not simply vanish, but when I try to recall the aftermath of the break with Calvin, my mind comes up blank.

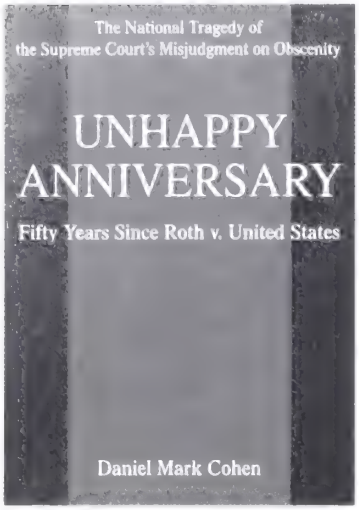
Did she stay in the city or did she move back to New England—or perhaps to some new place entirely?

I must have known the answer once, but I don't know it now. Not that this is any surprise after all this time—so many years, and many girls, and many, many bottles ago.

This is not to say that I forgot Eunice completely. On the contrary, I used to think quite a lot about Eunice. Indeed, there have been periods in my life when Eunice's story would not leave me alone. My first wife said it was because of a bad conscience; my second wife—well, she was always the jealous type anyway. A few times I thought of using Eunice as a character in one of my plays, but for one reason or another I never did.

I still think of Eunice occasionally; say, if I happen to see some girl who resembles her when we first met: soft-eyed and flower-fresh. "The derby might suit you better, sir." More often, though, it is when I see someone who looks as I imagine Eunice might look today. Like the faded, faintly seedy creature at *Pygmalion* last night who, when I thanked her for showing me to my seat, appeared startled to have been noticed at all, and broke into a black-toothed smile. ■

Congress Shall Make No Law . . .



In UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY, *Daniel Mark Cohen hands down a devastating indictment of the United States Supreme Court for the immaculate failure of its obscenity jurisprudence and the consequent corruption of American children by Internet pornography.*

Cohen argues that contrary to the rule of American law, but as a matter of common sense, speech is properly defined in terms of words, and so pictures do not constitute a form of speech. Hence, pornography, while it may be shielded by other provisions of the Constitution, is not entitled to the supreme protection of the First Amendment.

At last, UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY *constitutes an impassioned statement of advocacy for a forsaken constituency in this country: more than sixty million children who have been effectively abandoned by the United States Supreme Court and the American nation as a whole.*

WHEN THE FOUNDING FATHERS ratified the First Amendme they chose to cast the free speech provision in figurative terms

"*Congress shall make no law . . .*
abridging the freedom of speech, or of the pres

The same rule of law rendered literally is:

"*Congress shall make no law . . .*
abridging the freedom of [the spoken word],
or of the [printed word

Certainly, in adopting the First Amendment, the Found Fathers did not mean:

"*Congress shall make no law . . .*
abridging the freedom to distribute photograp
images of women and men engaged in acts of prostitutio

And yet, in effect, the latter proposition is precisely the rule of l established and upheld by the United States Supreme Court over t past five decades.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT was conceived, composed, and ratified protect *words*, the exclusive medium by which human beings tra late political and social ideas into communicable language. That is say, the word "speech" as used in the First Amendment is prope defined almost exclusively in terms of *words*. In contrast, *pictures* not constitute a form of speech, although to the degree such imag serve to advance political and social ideas, and so, appeal to a ma Reason, they are properly classified as a variant form of speech. T political cartoon, a unique hybrid of word and image, is the cleare example. But pornography, that is, photographic representations women engaged in acts of prostitution, created to appeal, not to man's Reason, but rather to excite and advance his sexual desire, not a form of speech, and so, is not properly entitled to protection the First Amendment.

"Without virtue, there can be no political liberty."
– John Adams

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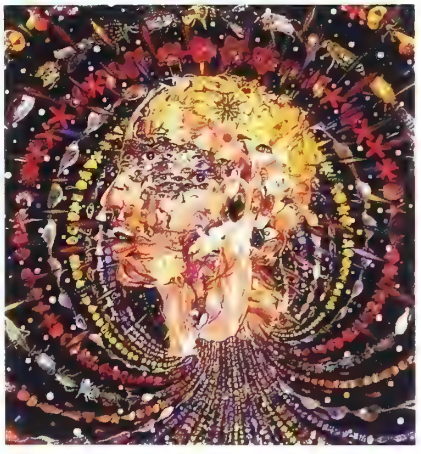
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A journey into the economy of melancholy

By Gary Greenberg

Doctor George Papakostas has some bad news for me. For the last half hour, he's been guiding me through a catalogue of my discontent—the stalled writing projects and the weedy garden, the dwindling bank accounts and the difficulties of parenthood, the wife I see mostly in the moments before sleep or on our separate ways out the door, the typical plaint and worry and disappointment of a middle-aged, middle-class American life, which you wouldn't bore your friends with, which you wouldn't bore yourself with if you could avoid it and if this sweet man with his solicitous tone hadn't asked. He's been circling numbers and ticking boxes, occasionally writing a word or two in the fat three-ring binder on his desk, and now he has stopped the interview to flip the pages and add up some numbers. His brown eyes go soft behind his glasses. He looks apologetic, nearly embarrassed.



"I'm sorry, Greg," he says. "I don't think you're going to qualify for the study. You just don't meet the criteria for Minor Depression."

Even if my confessor had gotten my name right, I would still be a little humiliated. I had come to his office at the Depression Clinical and Research Program of the Massachusetts General Hospital, insisting that I would *qualify*. I had told him that I figured anyone paying sufficient attention was bound to show the two symptoms out of the nine listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (*DSM-IV*) of the American Psychiatric Association—sadness, diminished pleasure, weight loss or gain, trouble sleeping, fatigue or malaise, guilt, diminished concentration, and recurrent thoughts of death—that are required for the diagnosis.[1] To explain my certainty and my interest in his study, I had told Papakostas that these days my native pessimism was feasting on a surfeit of bad news—my country taken over by thugs, the calamity of capitalism more apparent every day, environmental cataclysm edging from the wings to center stage, the brute facts of life brought home by the illnesses and deaths of people I love and by my own creeping decrepitude. I told him that I had more or less resigned myself to my dourness, that it struck me as reasonable, realistic even, and no more or less mutable than my short stature, my

[1] *Minor Depression is a provisional diagnosis, listed at the back of the* DSM-IV, *where it awaits further study. Research that uses this diagnosis thus has a twofold aim: to provide another FDA-approved indication for a particular drug and to give Minor Depression medicine's most lucrative imprimatur—the five-digit code that allows doctors to bill insurance companies for treatment.*

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Breathing Head (detail), leaves, photo collage, acrylic, gouache, and resin on wood panel, by Fred Tomaselli. Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York City.

constitutional laxness, my thinning hair, my mod

> THIS IS WHERE MEDICINE IS INFUSED WITH THE MIRACLES OF SCIENCE, AND I'VE COME TO SEE HOW IT'S DONE

Unless I didn't meet the criteria.

But before I can get too upset, Papakostas has more news. "What you have is Major Depression." He looks over the notebook again. "It's mild, but it's not minor. Nope. Definitely major depressive disorder, atypical features, chronic." Which means, he seems pleased to tell me, that I meet the criteria for at least four of the nine categories that Mass General is running. I can take Celexa or Mirapex or Lexapro or something called S adenosyl l methionine. I can climb into an MRI, get hooked up to an EEG, take home a device to monitor my pulse and breathing. I can get paid as much as $850 for my trouble. I can go back to the waiting area, read over the consent forms that spell out in excruciating detail the way in the mail disposition of the two tablespoons of blood that they will [illegible] will oppress me, what is expected of me, what my rights are, how I can bail out if I want to. And then I can make my decision.

I'm a quick shopper, and when Papakostas returns, I have already signed the papers for re[illegible] return to Mass General next week and then [illegible] for the next [illegible] months, so that the [illegible] antidepressant [illegible] In other words, fish oil.

[illegible]

assistants here [illegible] are soon hovering over me[illegible] tiny exam room that contains a metal table, a scale and a phlebotomist's chair, tweezing [illegible] tatively through the thatch on my chest and [illegible] trying out loud that they are hurting me. Th[illegible] nally clear the spots for the EKG electrodes [illegible] run the scan. They take my pulse and blood [illegible] sure, weigh and measure me, and draw my b[illegible] into a vial. Fair-skinned Caitlin is blushing [illegible] tle as she hands me the brown paper bag w[illegible] cup for my urine specimen. I can see how [illegible] these young women are by this forced intin[illegible] and I try to tell them they needn't be so shy [illegible] they know I have just been declared men[illegible] ill, and I wonder if reassurance from the like[illegible] me just makes things worse.

But I haven't come here to minister to t[illegible] or, for that matter, to maintain my dignity. In [illegible] nondescript office building beside the towers [illegible] pavilions of Massachusetts General Hospit[illegible] Boston, these dedicated people do the rese[illegible] that determines whether drugs work—whic[illegible] to say, whether drugs will come to market as [illegible] ernment-sanctioned cures. In the process, t[illegible] turn complaint into symptom, symptom i[illegible] illness, and illness into diagnosis, the see[illegible] knowledge of what really ails us, what we n[illegible] do to cure it, and who we will be when we [illegible] better. This is the heart of the magic factory, [illegible] place where medicine is infused with the mi[illegible] cles of science, and I've come to see how it's done.

I never used the term "magic factory"—I wouldn't want to seem paranoid in a place l[illegible] this—but I told Papakostas about my suspici[illegible] of the drug industry and even referred him [illegible] what I had already written about it. If he can[illegible] a whiff of bad faith here, if he thought me a bl[illegible] stocking on an evidence-gathering excursion [illegible] the porn shop, or if he worried that I would le[illegible] him just to get a story (he knew I was a therap[illegible] that I was intimately acquainted with the che[illegible] list of symptoms), he was too good natured [illegible] say so. But then again, he is a doctor and ha[illegible] believe that depression is the medical illness th[illegible] the antidepressant industry is [illegible] on—it is [illegible] the drug company ads say and as doctors tell th[illegible] depressed patients, a chemical problem with [illegible] chemical solution—then my intentions shou[illegible] n't matter. Diseases don't care whether you l[illegible] them. What matters is the eviden[illegible] how much serotonin is in the blood or how mu[illegible] sugar is in the urine and all the other ways [illegible] tests lie or telling you something is wrong.

But there is no lab to send my bodily fluids [illegible]

der to assay my level of depression. Instead, : are tests like the Hamilton Depression Rat- cale. The HAM-D was invented in the late s by a British doctor, Max Hamilton. He was g to find a way to measure the effects of the lepressants that the drug companies were just ging to market. To figure out what to test for, bserved his depressed patients and distilled common characteristics into seventeen items, as insomnia and guilt. Patients could get as y as four points per item, and a total of eigh- of the fifty-two possible points is now con- ed the threshold for depression. Ten of the nteen items were about neurovegetative signs sleep and appetite, the kind t likely to respond to antide- sants—something Hamilton w because he'd worked with drugs. Not surprisingly, this -friendly test quickly became vorite of drug companies. In it remains the gatekeeper to ntidepressant industry, used by Food and Drug Administra- to evaluate candidate drugs. ecause the people from whom nilton derived the items were rmined already to be sick, the M-D cannot be used to *diag-* depression. So psychiatrists e developed the Structured nical Interview for *DSM-IV* ID), which is tied to the *DSM-* catalogue of the 270 afflictions t cause people sufficient "psy- distress" to be considered di- osable mental illnesses (the sec- edition of the *DSM*, published 1968, lists a mere 168 diag- es). The *DSM-IV*'s fifty-one sible mood disorders take up 74 ts 886 pages, which list criteria l specifiers that a clinician as- ibles into such diagnoses as Ma- Depressive Disorder with lancholic Features, Chronic h Seasonal Pattern.

There is no magic to the SCID. determine whether you meet *DSM-IV* criterion of "depressed mood most he day, every day," it asks, "In the last month, there been a period of time when you were ling depressed or down most of the day near- very day?" To find out whether you have a "di- nished ability to think or concentrate," it asks, d you have trouble thinking or concentrating?" d so on with the lists of symptoms, until, based your answers, you get shunted, like coins in a ter, from one chute to another, and you drop o the drawer with all the other pennies.

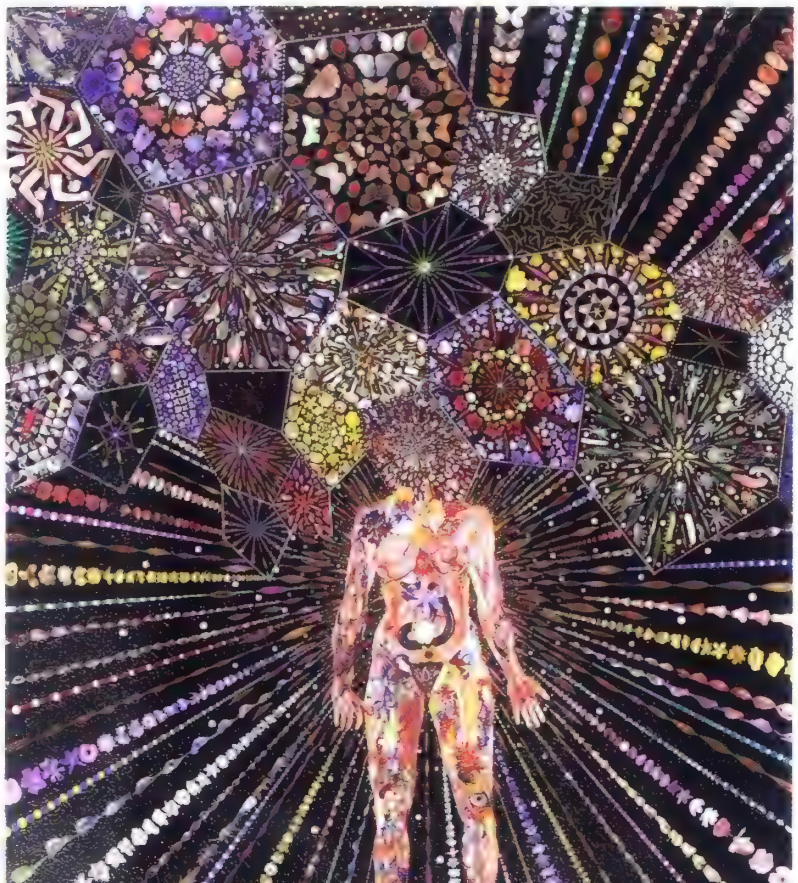
I never saw the scoring from my SCID, so I'm not sure how I ended up with my diagnosis. (I was relieved, however, that it would not be entered into my medical dossier, where it might wreak havoc on future attempts to get life or health insurance or to run for president.) I do know that I told Papakostas the truth, at least to the extent that I could figure out how to answer his questions about my psychic life. And I also know that in the course of a quarter-century as a practicing therapist, I have met people who are hammered flat, unable to get out of bed or find solace in any quarter, who are nearly insensate to anything other than their abject misery, who can think of little other than dying—who, in short, meet the criteria for Major Depression in my own private *DSM*. There have been a handful of them, maybe ten or twenty out of the seven hundred or so patients I've seen. Whatever my score on the SCID, it was hard to believe that Papakostas really thought I had Major Depression. I wasn't tearful with him, and although I whined about the things that the SCID invited me to whine about, I was alert and smiling, joking, more effusive—perhaps out of nervousness—than I normally am.



ennium Phosphene Bloom, pills, leaves, photo collage, acrylic, and resin on d panel, by Fred Tomaselli. Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York City

I didn't say this to Papakostas, didn't protest that my aches and complaints were not really Major Depression. Just as well: Item 17 ("Insight") on the HAM-D awards two points to anyone who "denies being ill at all."

Julie greets me when I arrive the next week. I'm eavesdropping on the receptionist, who is reassuring someone on the phone that many of the doctors at the Depression Clinical and Research Program teach at Harvard. I get my



medicine today, assuming that my EKG checked out, that my blood and urine were clean of illicit drugs and indication of disease. Julie hands me a clipboard with three questionnaires and a pen. The Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomotology (Self-Report)—the QIDS-SR—comprises sixteen multiple-c questions. Here is number 11:

View of Myself
- I see myself as equally worthwhile a serving as other people
1. I am more self-blaming than usual
2. I largely believe that I cause prob for others
3. I think almost constantly about majo minor defects in myself

The Q-LES-Q-SF, the Quality of Life E ment and Satisfaction Questionnaire (S Form), wants me to circle the numbers 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Very Good) tha scribe how satisfied I've been during past week with sixteen aspects of my from my economic status to my sex driv terest, and/or performance. And on the Well-Being Scale, I can express—by fi in the little bubbles, like on the SAT—I of six degrees of agreement with fifty statements about my attitude toward such as, "For me, life has been a contin process of learning, changing, and grow or, "My daily activities often seem tr and unimportant."[4]

The tests in the women's magazines ting the waiting-room tables aren't m different from these, save for one thing cial scientists have stamped their appr on the official questionnaires after sub ing them to various statistical challe and worrying over such consideratio the fact that people will answer accor to how they want to look to the tester. aside from a passing frisson over telling J however elliptically, about my *very* sexual performance, I am not thinking a impressing her. I am thinking about little I seem to know of myself. I di know, for instance, that wondering if is empty" or "if it's worth living," which at least once a week, is, as the QIDS sists, a Thought of Suicide or Death. I th I march to my own drummer just as m as the next guy, but when the Well-B Scale asks me to rate how difficult it is me to voice my own opinions on con versial matters," I think of how often I agree with myself over what my opinio how the closer I get to fifty the less sure I of anything, even of the answer to this q tion, and I cannot find a place to bubbl

[4] *The way that researchers decide whether these tests accurately indicate depression is by correlating respo on them to responses on tests already known to mea depression—a good idea, unless there is no anchor a end of the chain, in which case you may well have cr ed a self-validating semiotic monster.*

Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York

: uncertainty. I wonder what it means that I
tate so long over these questions, whether I
uld circle the QIDS item that says, "My
ıking is slowed down."
haven't finished with the Well-Being
le when Papakostas comes to fetch me. I
him I'm confused about a consent form
e just handed me; she explained that the
Papakostas and I signed last week was
tdated." But, I tell him, this new form
ns to be for a different study, one that re-
res me to take two different pills at the
ıe time. He looks perplexed, excuses him-
, and returns with Julie. Together they ex-
n that the study I signed up for last week
full, so they reassigned me. He looks mor-
d. Julie, who told me she was fresh out of
ıherst, looks worried. They're explaining,
logizing, reassuring, as if they were waiters
a restaurant who have just delivered the
ng meal to a valued customer.
But we all know what has happened here.
ey have broken the code, the Nuremberg
le, the one that says that they cannot con-
t experimentation on a human unless the
nan in question knows exactly what he's get-
g himself into, of which it is their responsi-
ty to inform me. Not only that—and this is
l enough, since the U.S. government is pay-
for this research,[5] and the funding is contin-
ıt on scrupulous attention to such matters—
for a moment they have laid bare the thing
t all this scrupulous attention to my autono-
is supposed to obscure: that they are using me,
t my Well-Being, my Life Satisfaction, my
od, my piss, will all get rendered into raw da-
for these doctors and their sponsors. They
ve moved me around like a pork belly, and
a split second the bald fact of the commerce
are conducting is right in front of our faces.
reassure them that I am satisfied with their
closures, that I just wanted to make sure we
re all on the same page. Julie leaves the
ım with a last apology, and Papakostas hands
my copy of the form, countersigned by him.
opens the binder again and asks me how my
ek was. Papakostas has a way of making the
AM-D into a reasonable facsimile of an actu-
conversation. So when he asks me for an ex-
ıple of what I feel self-critical about (Item 2),
ıpen the spigot a little, telling him I worry
ıt my insistence on working at my therapy
ıctice part-time, my giving up a plum teach-
g job, my indulgence in writing and other
s savory vices, my seemingly endless desire
free time—that these reflect a hedonism
d irresponsibility that have led me to squan-
r my gifts. Papakostas waits a beat, then nods
and says, "In the past week, Greg, have you had any thoughts that life is not worth living?" It's time for Item 3.

Papakostas is so unfailingly kind—and I want him to *care*, I want him to tell me that I am not really feckless—that I cannot be mad at him for sticking to the script, let alone correct him about my name. He's not doing it because he's a bad man, or a disingenuous one, or a shill for the drug companies. On the contrary. He does it because he wants to help me, because he thinks I am suffering, and because he is a doctor and this is what he knows how to do: to find the targets and send in the bullets, then to ask the questions and circle the numbers and decide if those bullets really are doing their job. We're not here to talk about *me*, at least not about the homunculus we call a *self*. We're trying instead to figure out what's going on in my head—in the gray, primordial ooze where thought and feeling, according to the latest psychiatric fashion, arise.

UNDER THE AGREEMENT WE'VE MADE, THE MEDICINE MUST BE TREATED WITH THE REVERENCE DUE A COMMUNION WAFER

Back on the street, blinking in the noonday sun, I peek into the brown paper bag they have given me. The "study medicine" comes in a pair of plastic bottles stuffed with two weeks' worth of glistening amber gel caps. They look just like regular prescription drugs but for the sticker that says, DRUG LIMITED BY FEDERAL LAW TO INVESTIGATIONAL USE. That seems a little dramatic for something I can get at any health-food store or by eating however much salmon it would take to provide two grams of omega-3s per day. But under the agreement we've made—that they are doctors, that I am sick, that I must turn myself over to them so they can cure me—the medicine must be treated with the reverence due a communion wafer.

Not that anyone at Mass General would say so. In fact, they've designed this study to minimize the possibility that something as unscientific as faith or credulity or the mystifications of power could be at work here. The trial is a so-called three-armed study. I have been randomly assigned to one of three groups. One group gets placebos in both bottles. Another group gets eicosapentanoic acid and a placebo, and the third group gets docosahexaenoic acid and a placebo. Only the anonymous pharmacist laboring in the bowels of Mass General, armed with a random number generator and sworn to secrecy, knows which group I'm in. The study will then be able to show which of the two omega-3s has more ef-

ıbout $2.5 million over five years.

fect, and whether either one is more powerful than placebo.

This method is known as the "double-blind, placebo-controlled design," and it provides a way to deal with something that the drug industry would rather forget: that in any given clinical trial, especially one for a psychiatric drug, people are very likely to respond to the fact that they are being given a pill—any pill, even one containing nothing but sugar. Which is why the FDA requires all candidate drugs to be tested against placebos—to try to separate the medicine from the magic, to see what the drug does when no one is looking. But, like a pain-in-the-ass brother-in-law, the placebo effect keeps showing up, curing people at a rate alarming to both regulators and industry executives. In fact, in more than half the clinical trials used to approve the six leading antidepressants, the drugs failed to outperform the placebos, and when it came time to decide on Celexa, an FDA bureaucrat wondered on paper whether the results were too weak to be clinically significant, only to be reminded that all the other antidepressants had been approved on equally weak evidence.[6]

IN OVER HALF THE TRIALS USED TO APPROVE THE SIX LEADING ANTIDEPRESSANTS, THE DRUGS FAILED TO OUTPERFORM THE PLACEBOS

Despite the fact that the placebo effect is the indirect subject of virtually every clinical trial, no one really understands how it works. Science, designed to break things down to their particulars, cannot detect something so ineffable, so diffused throughout the encounter between physician and patient. Until there is money to be made in sugar pills—at which point the drug companies are sure to investigate them thoroughly[7]—about the best we can say is that the placebo effect has something to do with the convergence between the doctor's authority and the patient's desire to be well. But this relative ignorance doesn't stop doctors, wittingly or not, from using their power as a healing device.

[6] *The advantage of antidepressants over placebos in those trials was an average of two points on the HAM-D, a result that could be achieved if the patient ate and slept better. The average improvement in antidepressant clinical trials is just over ten points, which means, according to Irving Kirsch, a University of Connecticut psychologist, that nearly 80 percent of the benefit is actually a placebo effect.*

[7] *In 2002, researchers observing the EEGs of patients in an antidepressant-versus-placebo trial stumbled on a pattern of brain activity common to those subjects who responded to placebos. Drug companies were very interested in this discovery, not because it allowed them to study the placebo effect but because it might allow them to identify those placebo responders and bounce them out of a trial before it starts.*

For instance, they can reshape you in a way that makes you a good fit for the drugs. That's what these questionnaires, with their peculiar way of inventorying personhood, do; they alert you to what it is in yourself that is diseased—casting your introspection as "excessive self-criticism," your suspicions of your own base motives as "low self-esteem," your wish to nap in the afternoon as "excessive daytime sleepiness," your rooting hunger late at night as "increased appetite"—and they prepare you for the cure by letting you know how you will feel better.

Just before I got my pills, Papakostas asked me how long it had been since I had felt good for a appreciable time. Good? I asked him.

"Symptom-free," he said, as if we had agreed that my feelings were symptoms.

"For how long?"

"Thirty days. Or more. At least a month."

I wanted to tell him that I was a writer, that I counted myself lucky to feel good from the beginning of a sentence to the period. I wanted to ask him if he had ever heard of betrayal, of disappointment, of mortality. Instead I laughed—derisively, I suppose (was this the "irritability" of Item 10?)—and said I had no idea what a month of feeling good would feel like.

Of course, this only confirmed his diagnosis.

But *thirty days* is ringing in my ears as I head back to my car. I make a sudden decision: to duck into a restaurant, to order a glass of water with my meal, to start the trial not tomorrow morning but right now. I cannot resist the wish, the temptation, to lay down my pessimism at this altar, to put myself in the hands of these doctors, to take their investigational drug and let them cure me of myself. I gulp down my six golden pills.

Drugs do work. By themselves, I mean, even without the benefit of the placebo effect. Just ask the tuberculosis patients at Sea View Hospital in New York who, in 1952, took a derivative of hydrazine, a chemical that Germany used in the waning days of World War II to power its V-2. The drug, called Marsilid, worked not only on their lungs but also on their heads; enough of them reported feeling euphoric—there was even a rumor they were dancing in the wards—that doctors started prescribing it for their melancholic patients.

In a society famously ambivalent about pleasure and the use of intoxicants to achieve it, however, it isn't enough to take drugs to feel better. It is preferable, especially for a drug company, if you have an actual illness to treat. When it was discovered that Marsilid prevented the brain from manufacturing an enzyme that broke down serotonin, an intriguing chemical that had just been found in the brain, scientists had their disease. De-



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prevalent. The new theory went, was not a psychological or existential condition but a brain disease caused by a "serotonin deficiency" or some other "chemical imbalance." Drug companies spread this gospel aggressively. In the early 1960s, for example, Merck bought 50,000 copies of *Recovering the Depressed Person*, a book by a doctor who had pioneered the serotonin theory and the use of drugs to treat it, in order to distribute the book to doctors who might not yet have heard that depression was the disease for which the new drugs were the cure.

But the evidence for the serotonin theory was circumstantial to begin with, and it has remained so for the last half-century. Although scientists have mapped the jungle of nerve fiber through which serotonin makes its way from brain stem to synapse, analyzing the biochemistry of that journey and inventing drugs that inhibit or encourage it along the way, they have never proved that a serotonin deficiency actually exists in depressed people or, for that matter, figured out how much serotonin we ought to have in our brains in the first place. Nor have they explained certain inconvenient facts: that reserpine, for instance, a drug that *decreases* serotonin concentrations, also has antidepressant effects, or that so many people fail to respond to antidepressants—which, if antidepressants were really arrows aimed at a molecular bad guy, simply shouldn't be the case.[8] In the face of these dismal results, many scientists have begun to move on to theories about neurogenesis and cellular damage and other brain events of which serotonin may be only a marker, the finger pointing to the mood.

> WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE CONSUMER ECONOMY IF WE BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT ANY AMOUNT OF HAPPINESS IS ENOUGH?

None of this stops doctors from continuing to manipulate serotonin in order to relieve depression. The omega-3s I'm taking are thought to render neurons more supple, allowing them to make the most efficient use of whatever serotonin is available. So far, however, the pills don't seem to be having an effect. Indeed, as I end my second week, I notice only one change. When I wake up early in the morning, when I crave my afternoon nap, when I find myself frustrated by my shortcomings or deflated by the seeming impossibility of getting done what I want to get done, when I read the newspaper and, like Ivan Karamazov with his catalogue of atrocity, want to return my ticket, when I [illegible] sorry for all of us, I wonder if indeed I've [illegible] suffering from an illness all along.

But I am still thinking about those thirty [illegible] preoccupied with the idea that there are o[illegible] right now in the midst of that month of resili[illegible] to setback and hardship who are not simply l[illegible] ier (or, as I think in my self-flattering mom[illegible] *shallower*) but *healthier* than I, that they l[illegible] dodged a bullet that has caught me; that I [illegible] don some armor and make up for what [illegible] ture has, so these doctors say, [illegible] med me.

Neither have they shown that in identifying the brain chemistry of a given mood or experience they have found the cause rather than the correlates; that is, they could have found the ways the brain provides, but doesn't originate, that mood or experience.

The third visit, the first one after I sta[illegible] the drugs, is shorter, more perfunctory than [illegible] first two. Papakostas moves briskly from [illegible] question to the next and looks at his wat[illegible] we digress. But the protocol calls for him t[illegible] whether I have any questions. So I tell h[illegible] wasn't sure I had understood him in our [illegible] meeting. How long was it that he thoug[illegible] should be feeling good?

"For at least a month," he says.

I ask him why he wanted to know.

"People, when they're depressed, they g[illegible] sort of recall bias," he says. "They tend to feel [illegible] their past is *all* depressed."

Which would suggest, I want to point out, [illegible] depression is more like an ideology than an illn[illegible] more false consciousness than disease.

This isn't the first impertinence I've stifled [illegible] day. Earlier he asked, "Are you content with [illegible] amount of happiness that you get doing th[illegible] that you like or being with people that you lik[illegible]

"I'm not big on contentment," I said. *Is anyo[illegible]* I wondered. Is anyone ever convinced that hi[illegible] her pursuit of happiness has reached its g[illegible] And what would happen to the consumer ec[illegible] omy if we began to believe that any amoun[illegible] happiness is enough? "I'm sorry to seem den[illegible] I explained, "but it's not how I usually th[illegible] about things."

Papakostas was reassuring. "You know, t[illegible] question condenses a lot of areas of life into j[illegible] a number. It doesn't work well," he said. "So [illegible] questions we just don't like."

Well, if these are dumb questions, I want[illegible] to shout, *then why are you asking them?* Why [illegible] we pretending that these answers mean anythi[illegible] Indeed, if I'm just the middleman here, the [illegible] you've got to go through to get to the molecu[illegible] essence of my troubles, then why ask me a[illegible] questions at all?

Later, when he asked how many days th[illegible] were in the last week that I had napped for m[illegible] than thirty minutes, and I told him four, he s[illegible] "See, some of the questions are really nice [illegible] terms of being objective," before putting me do[illegible] for two points on that item.

I suppose it would be easier if there were bio-
mical markers," I offered. "Otherwise, you're
stuck with language."

Hey, we're psychiatrists," Papakostas said.
nguage is good."

Now I was really confused. Hadn't we just
nt the last half hour circumventing language's
roximations? If language is good, then why
n't *he* taping this visit, taking down my words
ead of translating them into the tests' pale
ulacrum of language? For the same reason, I
pose, that he doesn't seem to think that con-
ousness itself, in all its insuperable indetermi-
y, matters very much, as I discover when we
et two weeks later. I ask Papakostas about a
mising new experimental treat-
nt for depression, one that us-
n anesthetic drug called keta-
ne. A government psychiatrist
trying to bring ketamine in
m the cold, from the psychi-
c underground where LSD and
locybin are used for transfor-
tive purposes[9] and where keta-
ne has a reputation for deliver-
a powerful and salutary (if
rifying) experience of being dis-
bodied and dislocated—not un-
e a near-death encounter. To
pakostas—who is not familiar
h this unofficial research, dis-
dited since the excesses of the
ties grew like an adipose layer
er the therapeutic promise of
rchedelic drugs—I'm explain-
g the idea that a single whack
side the head, one glimpse into
e cosmos and all its glory and
difference, can set you straight
a long time. I am getting to
e part about how inconvenient
e economics of a one-time-
ly drug are for an industry ad-
cted to One-A-Days, when he
terrupts me.

"Sort of like ECT," he says, us-
g the new and improved name
electroshock therapy. "The way
s supposed to reset your neuro-
nsmitters. But we know that theory doesn't
ork, because ECT patients relapse."

"But isn't there a difference between ECT and ketamine?"

"Well, of course ketamine works mostly on glutamate pathways . . ."

"No. I mean that you're conscious when you take ketamine and unconscious when you get ECT."

The distinction seems lost on Papakostas, or maybe he just doesn't have time for a discussion on the nature of consciousness. Either way, you cannot help but admire the purity of his devotion to the material, the way he has pared down psychic life to its bare bones. His is a spare and unrelenting pursuit, and his single-mindedness right now seems nearly ascetic.



Papakostas may be circumscribing my subjectivity in order to make it work for the drugs, but he's also renouncing his own subjectivity, putting aside whatever curiosity he might have about the shape of the self, the objects of consciousness, the raw nature of our encounter, in order to make good his claim to possess the instruments of science. Armed with them, he can take my emotional measure and report my depression with the dispassion and confidence of an astronomer reporting the distance to a star. The truth thus de-

As it happens, these are also drugs that affect serotonin. ne concept of "serotonin deficiency" was invented in 54 by two Rockefeller University scientists. In a short tice in the back of Science, *they noted that LSD, nose profound effects on consciousness were well own, contained within itself a copy of the serotonin olecule, and that serotonin had recently been discovered the brain. They speculated that a lack of serotonin, nose role in neurotransmission was still not accepted, ust have something to do with mental illness.*

eathing Head, leaves, photo collage, acrylic, gouache, and resin on wood nel, by Fred Tomaselli. Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York City

rived, decontaminated of aspiration and expectation, is better, truer somehow, than the one we know through our credulous senses and fickle sensibilities. Maybe that's why I don't argue with him when he adds up my numbers and tells me that in the world behind the world, the one in which I am officially depressed, the survey says I'm getting better.

Which is news to me. I hadn't been keeping track of my HAM-Ds and Q-LES-Qs, but apparently my numbers were trending steadily toward health. I'm discomfited, disturbed, maybe even a little depressed at this, at my apparent inability to know my own inner state—not to mention the possibility that I will have to relinquish my own idea of happiness and settle for "symptom-free" living instead.

I arrive at my next visit resolved to get the dazzle out of my eyes and to make my psychiatrist take account of the seams I think I'm seeing in the Matrix. But as I'm finishing up with the tests on my clipboard, a petite woman with short hair and large eyes comes into the waiting room. She's not quite looking at me as she introduces herself quickly, beckons me to follow her, and, before I can tell her that there must be some mistake, that I am Dr. Papakostas's patient, she turns her back and briskly leads the way into the warren of offices beyond the waiting room.

Papakostas must be away on vacation, I think. It is August, after all. But when we pass his office, there he is at his desk, leaning into his computer screen. He doesn't see me. I imagine that he has tired of my questions or that his colleagues have caught wind of our extracurricular discussions, all that *language*, decided it's time to remind me who is asking the questions around here, and pulled him off the case. Whatever the explanation, it is hard not to take this personally—which, of course, is exactly how a depressed person, whose disease makes him "rejection-sensitive," would take it.

In fact, I can't seem to escape the gravitational field of my diagnosis today. When I tell the new psychiatrist I didn't catch her name, she repeats it carefully and slowly, as if to account for my "psychic retardation." When I explain why I am going to record our session (she asked, something Papakostas never did), she says, "Oh . . . in-ter-esting," filling the spaces between syllables with professional smarm. I suspect that she's running the numbers in her head and wondering whether this will be the "difficult" interview that's worth three points on Item 8.

If the purpose of the switch was to make things more businesslike, then Christina Dording was the perfect choice. She is cold and unflappable, her lines well rehearsed, her inflection contrived to come perfectly pitched. When she asks me if I think my depression is a punishment for something that I've d (Item 2), and I try joking—"It's an enterta thought, but I haven't had that one"—she s not to notice. When I confess that I'm ba even after all this time, by the HAM-D's tions—"This past week, have you been fe excessively self-critical?"—that require me to words like "excessively" and "normally" an pecially" (something that Papakostas has with affably by letting me ramble on until something that allows him to circle a number) answers with such crisp condescension—"If th a comparator implied, it's always to when y not depressed"—that I wonder whether *I'm* one asking silly questions. Maybe I'm the person who wonders whether "excessive" m more than I think others do or more than I th I ought to. Maybe her answer isn't as circul it sounds, maybe it means more than saying problem when it's a problem and not when it's maybe it isn't yet another denial of the basi sumption here—that they are the experts a my mental health, that depression isn't so thing I'm equipped to detect in myself, becau I was, I'd be in the other study, the one for the nor Depression I thought I had in the first pl Or maybe all these maybes, and my resulting ability just to blurt out a yes or a no, are just other example of my "excessive self-criticism

Dr. Dording and I are not off to a good s Which makes it a little easier to interrupt interview to ask her whether she really th self-criticism is pathological.

"Pathological?" she asks, as if such a thing never occurred to her. "I don't know if I'd it pathological."

"Symptomatic, then," I offer.

"Well, it's certainly not optimal."

"Optimal," I say, deploying the therap repeat-and-pause tactic, hoping she'll tell me actly how much self-criticism is optimal, how she knows.

"*Certainly* not optimal." She does her own pa

"But being self-critical is something that h people succeed, isn't it?"

"Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I don't th being *excessively* self-critical is ever a great thi No." She starts turning pages again, resu the interview.

But I don't want to let it drop. I've come pull back the curtain, and, the numbers asid want to know, colleague-to-colleague, just tween us pros, do I really seem depressed to *Majorly* depressed? I ask her to tell me what thinks the difference is between Major Dep sion and Dysthymia, a *DSM-IV* mood disor that, if I have to be diagnosed, comes closest capturing my melancholy.

"You're getting into close quarters her she says.

n another world, one in which psychiatrists ac-
ly liked language, we might explore this slip—
he really means to say that I'm getting into
diagnostic distinctions here—and its reve-
on of discomfort at my intrusion into her pro-
onal space. But she seems unaware of what she
just said as she explains: "Dysthymia is more
-level chronic. Minor Depression may or may
be long term, but it typically has less criteria
n Major Depression."

nd before I can ask her how any of this com-
s with what she actually sees, she closes the
ebook and walks me out.

eorge Papakostas is a few paces in front of me
round the corner of the reception desk. He's
ded for the men's room. I decide to spare him
ined pleasantries at adjoining urinals. But I
dle to the elevator, and he shows up just as
rrives. We ride down and walk out of the
ding together. I tell him how fascinating I
this process, and how many questions I still
e. I'm working toward asking him if we can ex-
d our next meeting somehow, maybe go out for
ch or something, so that I can debrief him. But
ells me he is going to Greece to visit his ail-
father, and he won't be back in time. We
ke hands goodbye.

imagine that he is relieved to be done with me.
ow how this looks to him, the patient chal-
ging the boundaries of the professional rela-
nship, the *What About Bob?* nightmare. Or I
k I do. Maybe I don't know anything about
. Maybe what he really sees as we stand on the
shold of his concrete fortress is a conversation
hestrated by ion channels and neural path-
s and axonal projections, two people deep in
grips of their chemicals, one of them still
ging (because of those chemicals, no doubt)
is old-fashioned idea that he is more than the
n of his electromolecular outputs, that a con-
sation like this one, not to mention recalcitrant
unhappiness, might be complex and
mysterious and meaningful.

am already deflated when I arrive for my last
erview. Of course, there's no place in the
M-D to express this, to talk about the im-
asurable loss that I think we all suffer as science
ns to scientism, as bright and ambitious people
ote their lives to erasing selfhood in order to
e it of its discontents. The HAM-D questions,
rding's unconvincing solicitude, the banality
his exercise, the tyranny of the brain—they all
m as unassailable, solid, and impenetrable as
office building itself. I'm downright unpleas-
t when Dording asks me if I've been feeling
lty or self-critical. "A constant feature of my
," I say. She ignores me.

But then she does something strange. She skips
Insight item, the one where she's supposed to
ask whether I think I'm suffering from an illness and to give me points if I don't think I am. I ask her why. "You typically don't ask," she replies. "It's atypical that a person is something other than a zero. Clearly psychotic people could have a two. There are occasions when you can get a one, like if a person thinks their lack of interest or energy doesn't have anything to do with being depressed. But typically people who are in here are a zero."

"So you would have to be either psychotic or believe that your symptoms are the result of some other conditions?"

"Yeah."

"As opposed to just saying, 'Well, you know, this is just how I am.'"

"That's a good question. I think that an answer like that would require an explanation. You would need to talk a little more about an answer like that." And I'm thinking that we should have this discussion, right now, because I am that patient, and I don't think I'm psychotic.

NUMBERS ASIDE, I WANT TO KNOW, JUST BETWEEN US PROS, DO I REALLY SEEM DEPRESSED TO HER? *MAJORLY* DEPRESSED?

But that isn't going to happen. Instead, Dording is going to give me a physical. She goes to find out if the exam room is available, returns to tell me that it is not, that I can wait or do it on my next visit.

"Next visit?" I ask. According to the protocol, this is my last.

"You're not coming in for the follow-up?" She looks as surprised as I am, as if no one would pass up that opportunity. I ask whether it would be any different from what we've been doing. It wouldn't, she says. So I tell her I'll skip the follow-up and wait for my exam.

Julie is also gone for vacation, so Caitlin takes my vitals and draws my blood. Then Dr. Dording comes in. She taps my knees, looks in my mouth, listens to my heart and lungs. When she asks me to follow her finger with my eyes, she puts her hand on my bare knee. The touch of her fingertips is firm and cool and impersonal, my knee just a prop to hold her up.

She repeats her offer of follow-up, then elaborates on something she mentioned at the end of our interview. "Give me one second here," she had said as she flipped the pages of my binder. "Look at your scores. Nice response." Now she says, in case I didn't get it the first time, "I think you've done very well, you're *much impro*[illegible] She doesn't ask whether I agree, nor does she explain why if I'm better I would need *follow-up*, why I would need to do more than buy some fish oil at the Whole Foods next door.

If, that is, I have been taking fish oil for the last eight weeks.

[illegible] I was on placebo or drug. She's be[illegible] a moment. "I don't think we unblind the study," she says. She deliberates over my paperwork. "No, not in this one. No unblinding."

I protest. "I don't get to find out?" It's as if she's never been asked, as if no one in the whole history of clinical trials had ever wanted to know which side he had been a witness for.

"No," she says. "But you had a good response."[10] She's chipper now, like she's trying to convince me that I ought to take my improvement and go home happy, another satisfied customer. And really, it doesn't matter. Because the point here is not to teach me anything about myself, or for them to learn anything from me. It's not even to prove whether or not omega-3s work. It's to strengthen the idea that this is what we are: machines fueled by neurotransmitters at the mercy of our own renegade molecules.

Once upon a time, the scientific explanation for depression sounded something like this:

> If one listens patiently to a melancholiac's many and various self-accusations, one cannot in the end avoid the impression that often the most violent of them are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but that with insignificant modifications they do fit someone else, someone whom the patient loves, has loved or should love. . . . So we find the key to the clinical picture: we perceive that the self-reproaches are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away from it on to the patient's ego.

For a modernist like Freud, who wrote *Mourning and Melancholia* in 1917, depression was embedded in history, personal and cultural, and untangling that history, rescuing it from the oblivion of the unconscious by turning it into a coherent story, was the key to a cure. A fascinating and tragic notion—that we carry within us an other whom we can never fully know, but whom we must try to know—is headed for the dustbin of history. Freud, with his extravagant hermeneutics, his because-I-said-so epistemology, his unfalsifiable claims—not to mention the sheer inefficiency of psychoanalysis—has given way to the Dordings and Papakostases of the world, with their inventories and brain scans and pills. They have replaced Freud's unconscious, the repository of that which is too much to bear and which will only stop tormenting us to the extent tha[illegible] give it language, with an unconscious popul[illegible] by carbon and hydrogen and [illegible] gen, the basic building blocks of the mate[illegible] world, essential but forever dumb.

Still, I'm not exactly pining for Freud [illegible] leave Mass General for the last time. He got [illegible] much wrong, some of it inexcusably so. Ind[illegible] as I drive through the lunch-hour scurry on [illegible] hospital-zone streets, the doctors in blue sc[illegible] hurrying between buildings, wan patie[illegible] wheeling IV stands down the sidewalks, am[illegible] lances and private cars delivering a legior[illegible] the sick to this city of hope shimmering in [illegible] late summer heat, I am once again struck [illegible] temptation—to believe, as I hurtle down St[illegible] row Drive having these thoughts, passing [illegible] these other I's having their own thoughts, c[illegible] vinced that we are driving ourselves just as su[illegible] ly as we are driving our cars, that I am wr[illegible] about who I am, that we are all wrong. Th[illegible] scientists peering into the darkness in our sk[illegible] will eventually illuminate it entirely and sh[illegible] us that such thoughts and the conviction w[illegible] which they are held are only accidental: sp[illegible] drels of our cerebral architecture that can be [illegible] arranged with surgical precision. And just as [illegible] once were playthings for the gods or sinn[illegible] poised over a fiery pit or enlightened ration[illegible] ists cogitating our way to the truth of oursel[illegible] we will become the people who needn't ta[illegible] ourselves too seriously, who will stop mistaki[illegible] the vicissitudes of personal history for the [illegible] garies of personal biochemistry, who will gi[illegible] up the ghost for the machine.

Because irresistible ideas about who we a[illegible] only come along every so often, and here [illegible] Mass General they've gotten hold of a big on[illegible] They have figured out how to use the gigan[illegible] apparatus of modern medicine to restore o[illegible] hope: by unburdening us of self-contradicti[illegible] and uncertainty, by replacing pessimism wi[illegible] "optimization," by inventing us as the peop[illegible] who seek Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction, wh[illegible] will buy from the pharmacy what we need [illegible] forge ahead toward Well-Being unhindered [illegible] Depressive Symptomatology, to pursue antid[illegible] pression if not happiness. Who can resist th[illegible] idea that our unhappiness is a deficiency that[illegible] in us but not of us, that it is visited upon us [illegible] dumb luck, that it can be sent packing with[illegible] dab of lubricant applied to a cell membrane?

The epiphany makes me wonder whether I'[illegible] been unduly churlish to Christina Dordin[illegible] maybe I should take her word for it, accept th[illegible] I am better now, and thank her. But remorse las[illegible] only as long as it takes to get the results from th[illegible] lab to which, out of curiosity, I sent my pill[illegible] There wasn't a drop of fish oil among them; I w[illegible] on the placebo.

All of which raises the question of how the doctors know what kind of pills to provide, whether to give a drug or not. Later, the lead investigator on the study, David Mischoulon, told me that they "take their best guess" about whether the subject was on drug or placebo. The reason for not disclosing my experimental condition, he explained, was so that doctors wouldn't detect a pattern in the responses and thus "break the blind." He added that I could indeed find out when the study is completed—about five years from now, he estimated.

A WORLD IN THREE AISLES

Browsing the post-digital library

By Gideon Lewis-Kraus



"Treeware" is the epithet that, in certain digital circles, is used to disparage what are more commonly called books. Those who find words like "treeware" amusing or useful are the same people who see library stacks as modern reliquaries, crepuscular corridors soon to be abandoned for infinitely available digital databases. Those of us who, by contrast, still feel some fondness for books, even as we view this technological crossing as perhaps a stygian one, tend to take the distinction itself more or less for granted. But Rick Prelinger and Megan Shaw Prelinger, experimental amateur librarians, believe otherwise. They think the conflict between a so-called digital culture and a so-called print culture is fake; they think we should stop celebrating, or lamenting, the discontinuous story of how the circuits will displace the shelves, and start telling a continuous story about how the two might fit together. And they have designed a library project—part public archive, part private collection, part digital-appropriation center, part art installation—to suggest where we might begin.

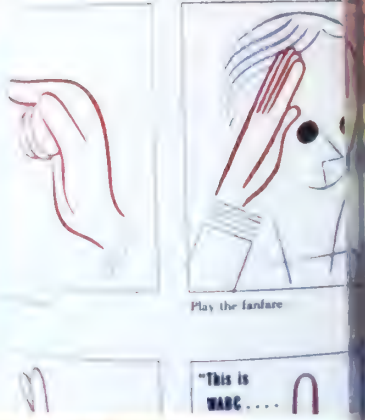
For a radical laboratory at the border between our physical past and our digital future, the Prelinger Library is not the world's most glamorous place. It is located in a jaundice-colored converted factory at the corner of Eighth and Folsom, in the South of Market neighborhood of San Francisco. This is a district best known for its proximity to the highway and for its cavernous rooms, which are now used as expensive lofts, leather boutiques, auto-body shops, and commercial spaces that are still empty despite a drastic rent reduction since 2000, when they hummed with faux-wealth-generative activities that now seem both preposterous and naively endearing. The library itself is the size of an elementary-school lunchroom and outfitted in a manner not dissimilar. The walls are a pallid yellow, the floors a hard and unfinished gray, and the haphazardly rigged shelves, eleven-foot stanchions, a gleaming gunmetal. They look haphazard, but it turns out they are solid enough to hold, among many other items, a row of four-inch-thick bound volumes of *Factory* magazine from the 1920s. These shelves and their unconventionally arranged contents take up the vast majority of the room. There are, besides, two six-foot-long folding tables, bowed from book weight. There's an old photocopier one has to feed manually, a functioning scanner, two enormous bright green stepladders on wheels, a few uncomfortable wire-frame chairs with twisted-lollipop backs, and one comfortable chair—which Rick and Megan call "the comfortable chair," and which I carried around with

Gideon Lewis-Kraus reviews books for various newspapers and magazines, and his journalism has appeared in The Believer *and the* Oxford American. *He lives in San Francisco.*

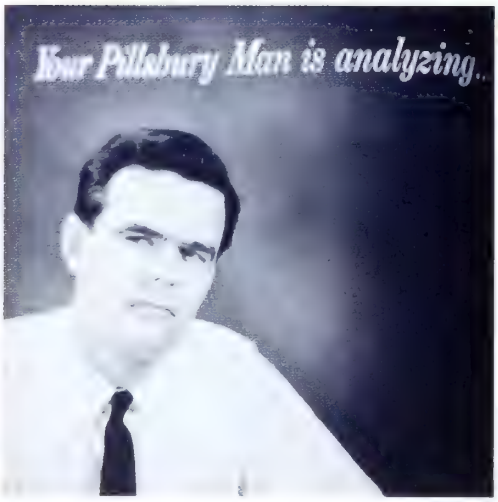
Photographs from the Prelinger Library by Jason Fulford and Tamara Shopsin

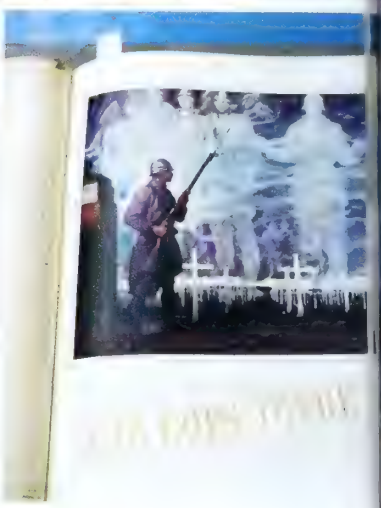












me as I browsed my way along. There is also a great heap of distended cardboard boxes in what is called the "Staging Area," though cursory observation might suggest that the only staging that goes on in the area is the staging of cardboard boxes. These boxes in fact serve as foster care until permanent housing can be found for their inhabitants; until then, the faded bursting boxes sit in service to the sense of bookish shabbiness that Megan and Rick have cultivated amid so much concrete and fluorescence.

Rick and Megan estimate that the library contains about fifty thousand items, which they have obtained from used-book stores, shrinking institutional and public libraries, periodicals brokers, private donors, and eBay. They have thirty thousand books and periodicals, and twenty thousand pieces of what they call "ephemera," maps and charts and brochures and errant scraps of apposite paper. They house the ephemera in deceptively bland gray boxes that are five inches wide and a foot tall and deep; these boxes are intershelved with the books, which are intershelved with the periodicals. Megan and Rick believe that when you are looking for a book, it might be helpful and illuminating and even inadvertently crucial to stumble across a postcard or a leaflet or a glossy city-planning binder from, say, 1940s Baton Rouge. For the most part, it is easy these days to find what you're looking for; one hallmark of digital efficiency is that the more specific the query, the more efficient the query-based search. Megan and Rick, however, would like to help you find what you are *not* looking for. Between the two of them they've seen a lot, which is why they've built their lives—and this reconsidered version of the small private library—around the question of how to make certain that there are still surprises to be had.

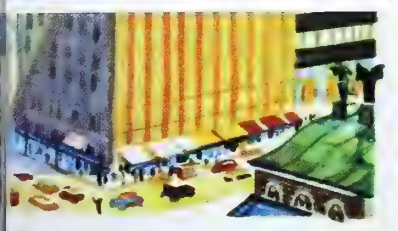
Megan and Rick are decidedly not Luddites. Rick moonlights—in his day job—as board president of the Internet Archive, a Web clearinghouse for free, public-domain information. He flies around the world to help libraries put their books online. Both Megan and Rick would love to one day do the same for their holdings; in recent months they've begun this process, putting
thousand items online. Megan is
the editorial board of a magazine ca
Bad Subjects, which provides fift
years of back content for free onl
and no longer even produces a pr
edition. Which raises the obvious qu
tion: if they are spending their mo
ings digitizing billions of pages to
made instantaneously obtainable
anyone on the planet with access t
modem-equipped computer, or edit
a journal that is now entirely digi
why do they truck across town to spe
their afternoons painstakingly arra
ing and rearranging fifty thousand
catalogued and whimsically classif
items, very few of which are ov
whelmingly rare or commercially va
able, in a small converted factory ab
a carpet store in an out-of-the-way c
ner of perhaps the world's most wi
city, building a library that is open
the public a few hours on some d
and no hours on other days and
staffed by people with zero expert
in professional librarianship and
only one comfortable chair?

They do it because they are s







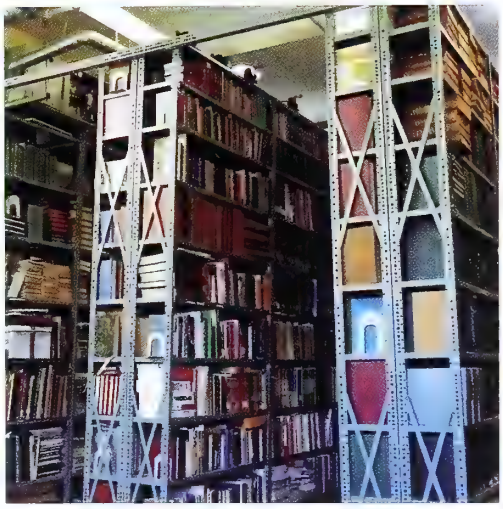


wind blows up and down the city streets.
ows around the tall buildings.



Whoooo! _____

17





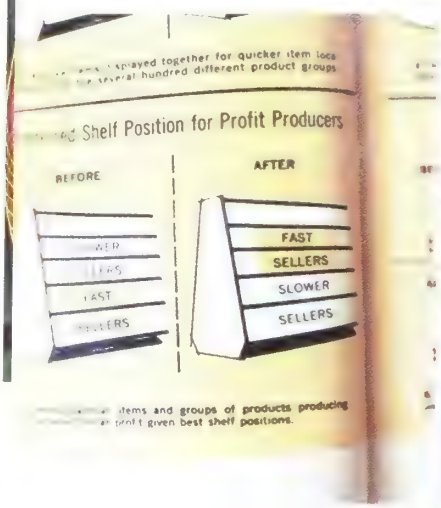
unded by people who think of the In-rnet as the new Library of Alexan-ia, and although they can appreciate is Alexandrian vision for its ambition nd scope and sheer usefulness, they e uneasy about what such horizonless positories will do to the future of in-rmation and information retrieval. hey are also uneasy about the ways ublic libraries seem to be adopting a lithe approach to these mammoth nternet caches. So they want to help reserve a space for the physical, the mited, and the fussily hand-sorted ongside the digital pile. And they ink there is a way that the small pri-ate library—a phrase that, up until ow, has tended to connote a marble-usted terrarium of leather-bound wealth—can be reimagined to do just that.

Rick and Megan's idea of such issy curatorship is embodied by the relinger Library's classification heme. The first rule is that locality umps all other considerations. So, for xample, Frank Norris's *McTeague*—in handsome old cloth edition—rests in SAN FRANCISCO, not in FICTION. The library contains six rows built around three aisles: aisle one is the broadest and brightest and most congenial of the three; aisle two is the dim slum where one gets the distinct impression that one might in fact be mugged or perhaps sold contraband; and aisle three is narrower than aisle one but less dangerous than aisle two. Row one houses their REGIONAL collection, which reads across like a huge book-spine map of the United States. SAN FRANCISCO starts on the far left, then blurs into MARIN COUNTY and other outlying areas, then expands into a full bank on CALIFORNIA before moving on to the sprawling shelves taken up by the PACIFIC NORTHWEST.

The PACIFIC NORTHWEST is a cornerstone of their collection. Megan is from Eugene, Oregon, and feels a strong connection to the West's embattled landscapes, particularly with regard to her family history. She is one of the thirty thousand living descendants of Pocahontas and is a fifth-generation Oregonian, but she grew up among Eugene's lower middle class. After working her way through South Eugene High School and then Reed College, she found herself in a doctoral program in philosophy at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union. The narrowness and haughty anti-provincialism of academia were suffocating; Megan was unhappy. "When I left graduate school," she told me one day over lunch at the laundromat-cum-café across the street, "I needed to regain some historical perspective by reclaiming my sense of engagement with the landscape, which then helped me reclaim my relationship to my intellect." This reclamation took the form of a series of solitary road trips through Oregon and the interior West to visit sites of personal and historical significance. By "landscape," as it turns out, Megan means not the unspoiled veld but rather the landmarked history of individuals, communities, and their environs. The library is only one of the Prelingers' many landscape-related projects: Megan works as a wildlife rehabilitator, Rick has made films addressing issues of landscape interpretation, and the two of them together distribute their Landscape

[illegible] ed [illegible] when they had [illegible] ed that reads, "Landscape is our [illegible] A trope of hidden histories." They ceremoniously leave it at sites of particular resonance and record the circumstances of these "coin drops," both in a private notebook and on the Web. (Those who find the coins, the back instructs, are to "value me as you please.") Landscape anchors not only the library but the Prelingers' own approach to most intellectual questions.

Rick grew up in New Haven, went to Andover, and then dropped out of







Berkeley a mere two units shy of a degree—which takes some real effort, given that this is less than one class. He puttered through the late seventies and early eighties as a typographer in San Francisco and New York until his work on a film called *Heavy Petting* led him into the underworld of "ephemeral films"—industrial movies, safety videos, social-hygiene shorts, and the like. In 1982, Rick started driving around the country in rented trucks to relieve libraries, schools, and garages of their cans of 16-mm film, and before long he had built the Prelinger Archives, the world's most significant collection of such work. He is credited with pretty much single-handedly saving this entire genre from extinction, and to many filmmakers, archivists, and private enthusiasts he is not only a trade celebrity but a genuine hero.

In 2002, Rick and Megan, by then married, sold their collection of more than forty-eight thousand films, one [illegible] thousand canisters of footage, to the Library of Congress for half a million dollars, less than a fifth of its appraised value. In exchange, they kept tape copies of four thousand films, and they pay their mortgage with an unconventional stock-footage business. Nearly two thousand of their films are digitally available—in a wide variety of resolutions and formats—for free, at this very moment, through the Internet Archive. If you want to cut up and reshuffle them, if you want to screen them for drug- or irony-addled friends, or if for some reason you just want to relive some sadistic safety video, they are all there for your enjoyment. If, however, you require the contractual niceties most commercial work demands—indemnification, warranties, and other legal provisions—you need to license the footage through Getty Images. Megan and Rick are not wealthy, but this half-gift-economy arrangement has been wildly successful and has allowed them to spend many hours a week happily burrowing around in their library. Megan also has a day job as an oil-spill responder and staff member at the International Bird Rescue Research Center, although she does it because she loves the work, not for the tiny salary. Megan's public concerns (wildlife rehabilitation) are private, and her private concerns (building her own open-access library) are public.

Rick and Megan defy the clip-art stereotype of librarians, though most librarians do; it's a myth about librarians that they look like librarian Rick has a tousled thatch of pi straight whitened blond hair a smooth pink jowls, and wears styli black film-geek glasses, a rotation three or four black T-shirts, and black Levi's over scuffed black wo shoes. He's both preternaturally mi and a bit impish. Megan has wide ey and blinks infrequently, walks wi long purposeful strides, and choos her words with care. She often wea a navy blue T-shirt that says LIBRA

in yellow block letters on the fro and LIBRARY in even larger yello block letters on the back. She tends project the greater seriousness of th two and has a flinty sort of temper, b it is not easy to say anything defin tive, as she and Rick tend to freely e change attributes. Rick is in his ear fifties, and Megan is in her late thirtie but collectively they seem ageles equal parts adolescent ardor and wi ened composure. They are very affe tionate, but not in that flaky Bay Ar way that suggests intimacy seminars

Their library, which has existed abstract form from the moment th first exchanged emails, is the commar center of their marriage, which seen as much a matter of cerebral cultur gambits as of romance. In fact, th distinction itself, between the libra and Megan and Rick's connubial hiv mind, evaporates on close scrutin Megan describes the library as funda mentally a physical organization their own mental furniture. Their a

ıent maps out the range of future
cts they have considered pursuing,
ts varying granularity of organi-
ı provides insight into what they
worked through and what they
n't quite gotten around to yet.
was such a vaguely imagined future
ct that brought Rick and Megan
ther in the first place. Some of
an's pieces on politics and culture
ıd Subjects caught Rick's eye. He
living in New York and negotiat-
the rights to resurrect *Landscape*
azine, a periodical founded in 1951
ı early cultural geographer named
ı Brinckerhoff Jackson. Rick sent
an a short but striking fan email
, although she didn't know it at
time, was the start of an attempt to
uit her as a writer. Megan half-
ognized Rick's name from an
y she'd read in high school
ed "Industrial Jeopardy Films"
l contributed to *RE/Search #10: edibly Strange Films* (FILM, row
r, bank four, shelf three; cf.
Search #11: Pranks!, by Rick's
ıjecture the single most popu-
individual title in the library).
An e-epistolary romance blossomed.
gan was writing an essay on free-
ys in the American landscape,
ough she didn't have all the resources
: needed. Rick responded that he
ppened to have, oh, maybe some-
ng like five or six closeted boxes of
gely unread books on the history
d theory of freeways that she might
d useful. He had been saving them
· an unspecified future foray. That
oject became their first coauthored
say: it appears in *Signs of Life in the .S.A.*, a volume they store in AMER-AN CULTURAL HISTORY.

Over the next few months, having
et face-to-face in New York to discuss
ıat piece, they exchanged over email
ore than one hundred thousand—by
ıeir rough estimations—of what were
obably the most torrid words ever
xchanged on such ordinarily blood-
nquickening subjects as the sources
f far-right-wing antigovernment re-
ntment and the need to reform our
ysfunctional copyright system. Rick
ıoved to a courting post in San Fran-
isco. In October of 1999, he was
reening a video at the American In-
itute of Graphic Arts conference in
as Vegas; he called Megan, she flew down the next day, and they eloped (on maverick art historian Dave Hickey's recommendation) to the Little White Chapel. Finally, their libraries could be merged.

Now they no longer talk much about which books originally belonged to whom. If pressed, hard, Megan will report that their books on birds were "historically identified with me," whereas most of the film books were "historically identified with Rick." In a section like AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY, Megan scanned the shelves before reporting that "our collections pretty much shook hands here," making that interlocking-fingers motion that seems to have become the international hand gesture for "synergy." On a tour one day through RIGHT-WING STUDIES, Megan pointed out to me their side-by-side editions of *The Turner Diaries*, the apocalyptic manifesto that inspired Timothy McVeigh. It's not that they find race war an aphrodisiac, but their mutual attention to the far right was one of the uncanny commonalities that drew them together.

> THE CHARM OF THE PRELINGER LIBRARY LIES IN THE CANNY AND UNEXPECTED WAY ONE SUBJECT BLENDS INTO ANOTHER

On my first official day of browsing, I worked my way through the REGIONAL section. The area on the PACIFIC NORTHWEST moves across row one through the rest of the West, dabbles in the Midwestern states, dwells for a few shelves in NEW JERSEY and NEW YORK and CONNECTICUT (historically identified with Rick), and then on to GEOGRAPHY (GENERAL), NATURAL HISTORY, and eventually EXTRACTIVE RESOURCE INDUSTRIES, the big but plausible conceptual leap from the land itself to what we take from it. I planted the comfortable chair for a spell near NEW JERSEY (historically identified with me), then frittered away an hour in CARTOGRAPHY with a book called *How to Lie with Maps* (row one, bank six, shelf seven; Rick tells me this is a very popular section and a very popular book), and then moved on to do some more serious research in LANDSCAPE (GENERAL), where the profusion of copies of John Brinckerhoff Jackson's *The Necessity for Ruins* recommended that I pick it up. It became apparent at some point that one of the ways they make sure a book gets the attention it deserves is by securing an unignorable number of copies. (They also tend to give away books to interested parties, so they have to monitor their inventory of their most gifted titles.)

In the title essay of that volume, Jackson sums up the values of site-specificity that root the Prelinger Library's physical vitality. The link between our past and our present, he writes, "is given visible form in monuments and a temporal form in a series of scheduled holidays and days of commemoration . . . the community is constantly reminded of its original identity and its ancient pledges." This, in brief, is the Prelinger Library's rejoinder to the digital prophets of locationlessness and communicative asynchronicity. It's a rejoinder, however, not a rebuke. Rick and Megan are all for the obvious advantages of digital tools: Rick checks his BlackBerry every three minutes, regardless of what he's doing or where he is. What this sort of library offers is a reminder that we submit to a ravenous ahistoricity—the flattening of distinct layers, the TiVoish fast-forwarding through temporal punctuation—at the peril of losing some connection to what William James called "a wider self through which saving experiences come."

The charm of the Prelinger Library lies in the canny and pleasantly unexpected way one subject blends into another. For instance, row three starts with SUBURBIA, which then becomes DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS—home repair and the like, including a periodical called *Keith's Beautiful Homes*, in which Keith himself remains an elusive and shadowy figure—which in turn leads into ARCHITECTURE. This latter transition is one of the conceptual pirouettes that Megan is proudest of, as it bridges the gap between the material and immaterial worlds. ARCHITECTURE becomes GRAPHIC DESIGN, which in turn hardens into TYPOGRAPHY and

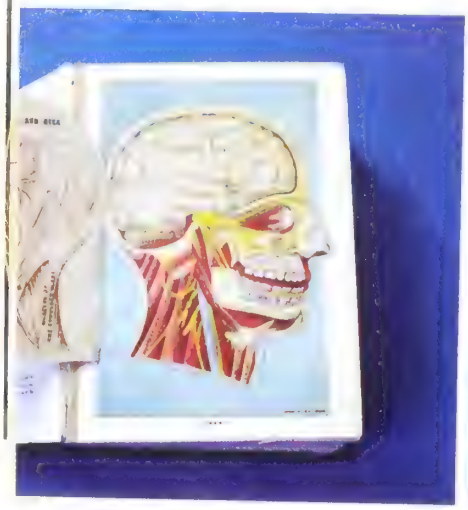
RTISING and SALES cap the end of [illegible] At last the wayfarer through the dark straits of aisle two may bathe in the welcome light of the rear of the room, where there are large factory windows and a thirty-foot skylight.

In ADVERTISING I spent quite a bit of time leafing through old issues of *Modern Packaging* magazine, which perhaps would have been more appropriately titled *Modern Cartoning*, since most

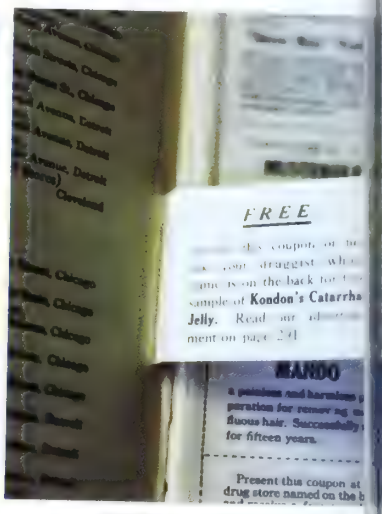
boosterism and confidence in the top-down technocratic administration of goods and pleasures. This air of mechanical expectancy has rather obvious connections to our own digital utopianism.

The connections in Rick and Megan's browsable narrative require varying degrees of imaginative exertion. On my first tour of the library, when Megan showed me where COMPUTERS folds into MUSIC, I casually

ability functions on two levels. T first level is purely functional: days, it's simply harder and har browse in other libraries. Many finest libraries require institution fthation for stack entry: at the lithic Doe Library at UC Berk which I visited for comparison, o users must petition for day passes. worse than this is the trend to explicitly closed stacks, like the at Stanford's Hoover Institution. lic libraries, which Rick rever







pages offer sumptuous and multi-fonted ads for impossibly complex, room-filling automatic-cartoning machines. Aisle two is a trove of similar periodicals, such as *Progressive Grocer* and *Quick Frozen Foods*. In the September 1962 issue of *Progressive Grocer*, one headline announced "Pineapple Cutting Demonstrations Intrigue Customers, Sell Pineapples." The third paragraph of the article, in its entirety, reads as follows: "His technique is to glamorize this exotic fruit, and if that be gilding the lily, then perhaps gilding would be a good way to multiply the sales of lilies." Representative headlines from *Quick Frozen Foods*—March 1960, a few short years before the earth shattering discovery re: expanding markets for gilded lilies—promised the following string of untethered numbers cleverly disguised as articles: "Next Decade: 60% Climb," "500,000 New Customers," and "$400 Million Plus." These magazines, like the bulk of the Prelinger Library's periodical collections, were tumescent with postwar

remarked that some of the links were perhaps more tenuous than others. Megan gave me a sharp look, and I thought she was going to ask me to leave. "All the connections themselves are *fine*," she said. "We just don't have all the books to fill them in as explicitly as we'd like, or to arrange all the materials perfectly at once." And thus the library is in a constant state of associative refinement, what Megan characteristically calls "brushing the teeth of the granularity"—that is, "work," which also includes the transport of heavy cardboard boxes from one heap to another. (This was the sort of chore I turned out to be good for.) Even if they never acquired another book, their ultimate plan for the sculpting of the library would take fifty lifetimes and would even then be an asymptotic preoccupation, with their distant descendants bickering about whether *Looking Backward* should go in AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY or UTOPIANISM, moving it back and forth under cover of night.

Rick and Megan's desire for brows-

calls "one of the last remaining de democratic institutions in West society," are increasingly cente around computer terminals and pidly grandiose atria that make th feel less like book repositories more like shopping malls or free ternet cafés.

The San Francisco Public Libr which happens to be only half a n from the Prelinger Library, was c structed at enormous public expe in the nineties, and the result—a v uous hotel-lobby sort of space, the tual books peripherized as a guilty terthought—is unanimously conside a disaster. The vast majority of visit to the SFPL congregate on the fi floor, where they sit in long queues a look bored while they wait to use ternet terminals; there are at least t hundred such islands dotting the lar roomily bookless spaces at the libra and the wait for a terminal is still terminable. The reference librarian reconciled to their new roles customer-service technicians in t

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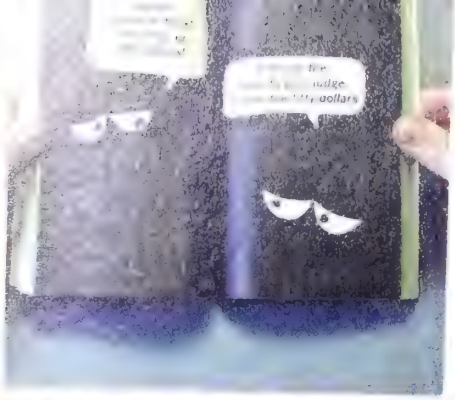
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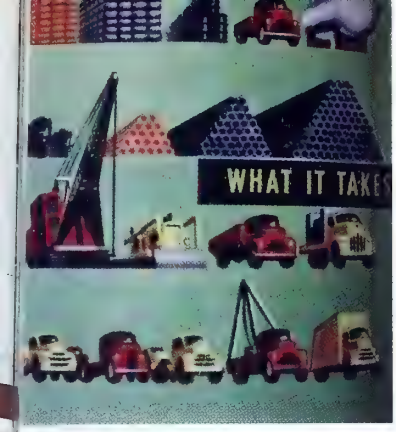


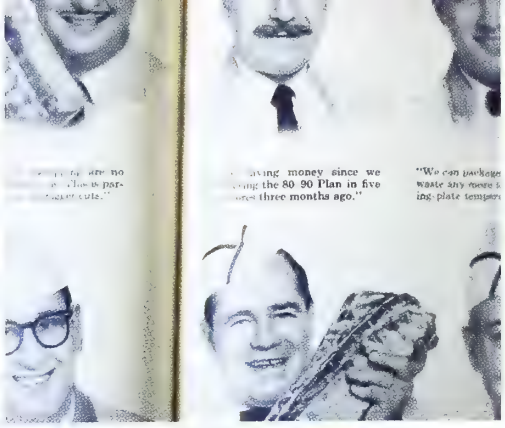
Space Food Sticks

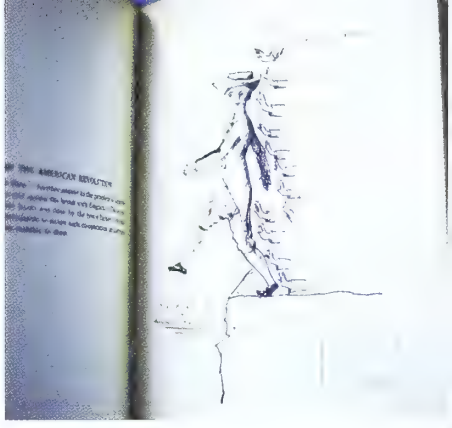
guise of advanced-degreed "information scientists," stand behind high oak-paneled counters and field questions about how to use these Internet resources, or more often just how to get the printer to work. A loft-ceilinged Periodicals Reading Room crowns the atrium. With a vaguely industrial metallic design, it's a bad parody of the Apple Store a few blocks up Market Street near Union Square. Rem Koolhaas, in fact, took his Office for Metropolitan Architecture team on an extended what-not-to-do tour in San Francisco while they were designing the new Seattle library.

The Prelinger Library was inspired, in part, by the Warburg Institute Library in London, which was founded by the German art historian Aby Warburg. As a student at the University of Strasbourg in Alsace during the 1880s, Warburg found his research on Botticelli thwarted by an either/or system of librarianship: either books were kept in tiny, overspecialized "seminar" libraries or they were lost in the crowds of big storehouses. Warburg imagined an alternative architecture based on what he called the "law of the good neighbor": "The overriding idea," wrote his disciple Fritz Saxl, "was that the books together—each containing its larger or smaller bit of information and being supplemented by its neighbors—should by their titles guide the student to perceive the essential forces of the human mind and its history." He knew that no government or public institution would fund such a project, so he turned to his wealthy father, a Hamburg banker, for the funds to embark on the systematic book collecting that would consume the rest of his life. Warburg's central concern was the relationship between antiquity and the Renaissance, with particular regard to modern appropriations of ancient iconography. A manic sort, Warburg built his library feverishly; it spilled out of his home in Hamburg and had to be moved to a specially constructed building, and then under Nazi threat the whole collection was decamped to London. Today it undergirds the interdisciplinary Warburg Institute at the University of London, which has provided a home for restless scholars such as E. H. Gombrich and Frances Yates. The library's fl floored arrangement moves from TION (politics, customs) to ORIEN TION (the turn from superstition a magic to science and religion) to WO (recurring motifs in literature) and nally to IMAGE (enduring symbols art and architecture).

The Prelingers' ideal of browsab ty is much the same: it celebrates co text, a shaped approach to the cul vation and distribution of informati It's no coincidence that periodicals li *Modern Packaging* and *Progressive Gr cer* sit within a long arm's reach of t resources on hypermedia, for these ro four mainstays represent two equal unappealing versions of twentieth- a twenty-first-century American conte These early marketing journals co struct an exclusively commercial fram they capture the dawn of the corp rate realization that one eternally vagu suburban context can be elaborate and applied en masse to sell a lot products to a lot of consumers. Thes magazines crystallize managerial po turing at its most unapologetic: m nipulative, one-way, exclusivel

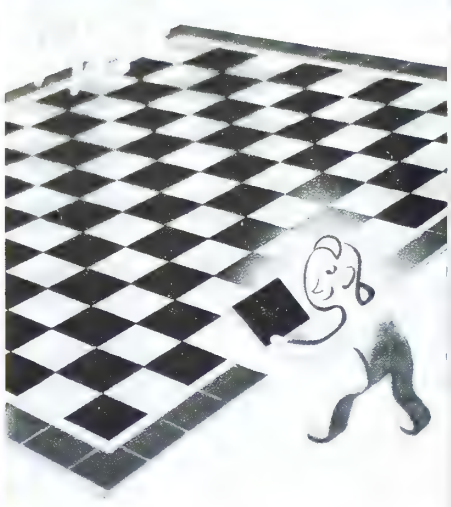












ttom-line-oriented. Hence Rick's in-
est in what he has called "media ar-
aeology," the protracted sifting
rough of accumulated media detritus
at so often gets swept under the his-
rical rug. As a typographer, Rick had
ground-floor view of cultural fabri-
tion; as a media enthusiast and radio
anner, he has a keen sense for the
ays in which media can be alternate-
ly used for both univocal
and democratic ends.

Rows five and six, which form
sle three, are the Prelinger Li-
ary's pith. Here it becomes explicit
hat this collection is not about
rowsability per se but tailored and
ointed browsability—browsability
ithin a narrative structure and in
rvice to some very particular ideas
bout the ownership of culture and
ie cultural frameworks of democra-
y. Aby Warburg built his stylized li-
rary to explore the connections
etween antiquity and the Renais-
ance. Rick and Megan have crafted
heirs at least in part to address the
elationships among intellectual
"property," the evolution of the
media, and cultural production.

If the REGIONAL section and the cen-
trality of landscape provided Megan's
root, and the transition from HOME RE-
PAIR through ARCHITECTURE to DESIGN
formed an omphalos, this is the en-
cephalitic head, where Rick and Megan
establish the connections between
browsability, mediation, and access.
Although it brims with lots of inter-
esting items and is clearly the most
tightly and lovingly curated aisle, it is
also the least surprising. It moves from
WOMEN'S STUDIES through exactly sev-
en books of MEN'S STUDIES into GENDER
and SEX and FAMILY and YOUTH, then
from EDUCATION to PRISONS—Megan's
half-joke—to NATION STATES/STATISM
and U.S. POLITICAL HISTORY. From there
one races through WAR, NUCLEAR
THREAT, RADICAL STUDIES, and COM-
MUNISM, ANARCHISM, and UTOPIANISM.
Row five exhausts itself in the final
banks with PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION,
INTELLECTUAL "PROPERTY," BUSINESS
(Megan's second-proudest transition,
after the material-immaterial one at
ARCHITECTURE, is from PHILOSOPHY
through INTELLECTUAL "PROPERTY" to
BUSINESS), and then MATH, HARD SCI-
ENCE, and finally OUTER SPACE, a coy
twinkle of a finale.

Another principle of the library is
appropriation-friendliness, a trait that
makes itself felt most clearly in aisle
three—obviously in the INTELLECTU-
AL "PROPERTY" section, but even more
so at the end of row six, the epilogue
row, a hodgepodge of things that don't
fit elsewhere—FICTION (which for a
variety of reasons the Prelingers are
on their way to phasing out, through
either intershelving or just taking stuff
home) but also several looming banks
of the *Catalog of Copyright Entries* and
a 125-year run of the *Official Gazette
of the United States Patent and Trade-
mark Office*.

These hulking volumes punctuat-
ing the final row of their library indi-
cate how much of the Prelinger mind
is preoccupied with questions of copy-
right and access. In fact, Megan and
Rick are co-plaintiffs with their friend
Brewster Kahle in a lawsuit to rewrite
the current model of copyright pro-
tection. This lawsuit was just denied a

process of appealing. Brew-
the Internet days
[illegible] guy whose conversa-
tinglework with newly coined words
like "intertwingling" and "incultrat-
[illegible], he made multiple fortunes in early Internet work and has now dedicated his life and money to making the Internet Archive, which he founded and directs, an Alexandrian source of "universal access to all human knowledge." And the lead attorney for the plaintiffs is none other than Lawrence Lessig himself, who has come closer to cult-figure status than any law professor in the history of the profession. Lessig is an intellectual "property" guru who, depending on whom you talk to, is either a messianic figure or a Visigoth who believes in the sanctity of nothing.

The lawsuit is over the status of what are called "orphaned works." As their case brief puts it, over the last thirty-odd years the United States has moved from an "opt-in" to an "opt-out" copyright regime. That is, before the mid-seventies, if one wanted a copyright one had to mark one's work as such, register it with the U.S. Copyright Office, and then, if it still held residual commercial value after the first twenty-eight-year term ended, renew that copyright, or else the work would pass into the public domain. A series of copyright reforms has reversed the situation. Now, from the moment of inception, any creative work made since January 1, 1964, that can be reduced to tangible form has an automatic copyright for the full duration of the term; that is, life-plus-seventy years for individual authors and ninety-five years for corporate authors.

An orphaned work is a work that is presumptively under copyright even though there's no apparent or locatable or even interested owner. Before the renewal requirement was lifted, only about 15 percent of all copyrighted works were thought worth renewing, meaning that the vast majority of all creative material passed into the public domain at the end of its first term. Now, however, all work is presumptively under private ownership for about a century; as one legal scholar has quipped, the present system offers "perpetual copyright on the installment plan."

There's no way to estimate what percentage of the volumes in the Prelinger Library are orphaned, but it's likely very high—although Megan and Rick have done their best to stack their collection with public-domain works. Regardless of the copyright status of the collection, they're interested in making their library as fecund as possible. They're always on the lookout for image-rich materials and are in the process of creating a digital-appropriation center, complete with a bank of scanners, computing terminals, and state-of-the-art photocopiers and printers. In an era when creative expression is immediately and unreflectively considered property—hence the looming scare quotes in intellectual "property"—and is figured in terms of how best to exploit its commercial viability over the near-limitless term of the copyright, Megan and Rick have revisited the idea of the small public-private library as a sort of "intellectual preserve." The environmental analogy, common in the I.P. literature, is not a coincidence: as with the early preservationist movement (and the actions of current environmental philanthropists like Ted Turner), Rick and Megan hope that by opening this small library as an appropriation center they will encourage others to make similar gestures—both as preservationists and as democracy-minded content providers. The Prelinger Library is a place where creative expression is understood as something that needs a period of limited commercial protection before being released as a gift into the shared commons of information, where it can be used, built upon, responded to, transformed.

> MEGAN AND RICK HAVE REVISITED AN OLD IDEA: THE SMALL PUBLIC-PRIVATE LIBRARY AS AN "INTELLECTUAL PRESERVE"

The question of accessibility is a question of invitation: will individual
invited to participate in and contr
to a democratic culture or will the
in a world where most conte
corporate-owned and -provided.' h
promise of the Internet-as-Alexan
is more than the roiling plenitu
information. It's the ability of indi
uals to choreograph that inform
in idiosyncratic ways, the hope tha
dividuals might feel invited by the s
itational pull of a broad and open c
mons to "rip, mix, and burn" t
curate. This new sort of curator, i
fect, is one definition of blogger: an
ateur experimental librarian for th
ternet, the curator of (in blogger/w
Cory Doctorow's phrase) a digital W
derkammer, a private informati
choreographer who has made
alignments public. And it's i
small part the expansive curat
al freedom of the early Inte
that helped convince Rick
Megan that opening a librar
distinctively arranged, so spect
ly comprised, and so physic
magical might be a live option.
not that the Dewey decimal syst
isn't in some sense designed for a
ciative browsability; it's that the De
decimal system is a helpful but ossi
structure best suited to the bureauc
ic centralization of thousands of dif
ent libraries. There's certainly use
that one great library in the sky,
fectly concentrated, all redundan
eliminated, the searchable catalo
available to everyone at any time.
Megan and Rick's new version of
structures of browsability and acc
demonstrate that there will always b
need for those small, discrete libraries
part public, part private—on the grou
as well. Every Library of Alexandria
some broad boulevard needs Prelin
libraries tucked away in t
alleys behind.

Central to the Prelinger Libra
experience is the orientation tour
went on as many, with as many diff
ent co-visitors, as I could. The best t
I took was with a group of radical r
erence librarians in town for the A
archist Bookfair in Golden Gate Pa
When we arrived at the end of ais
one, Megan picked up a bound volu
of *Display World* magazine and told t
group that this periodical—with its ri

trations and fantastic advertise-
ts, including an inscrutable mock-
f some kind of mechanical baby—
a particular attraction for the artists
art classes who have come in search
sual materials.

ne librarian—who couldn't have
ed more like an anarchist librari-
with long greasy hair and a vin-
tech-start-up sweatshirt under-
th a ratty leather jacket—didn't
e get it. "Well, I can see how it
ld be interesting to artists," he
d, "but how do they find it?"

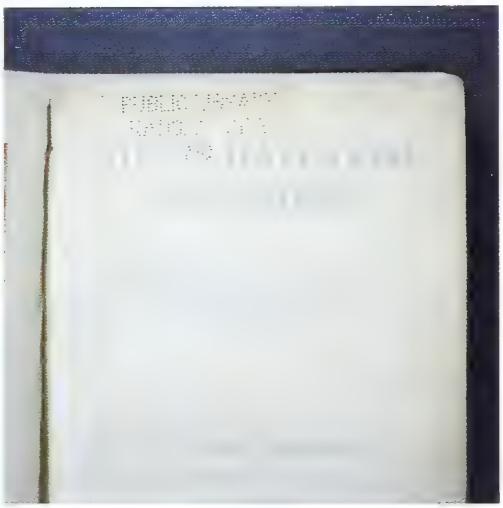
fer instead visual user-aids for visitors, which they plan to do, their mediating intelligence will still be the library's vital substrate. "We want to foment bursts of concentrated discovery across the spectrum," Megan told one tour. Which is not to say, of course, that the library experience is a predetermined one. The brilliance of this library is that it represents some midpoint between directedness and freefall.

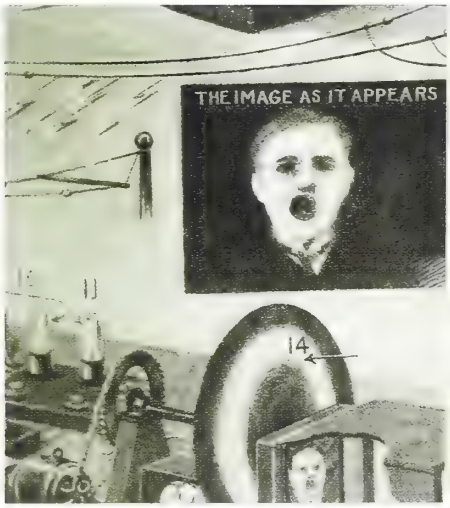
If the books on our shelves speak about who we are, or stand in for the possibility of whom we wish someday

about the visual arts and media cross-pollination, their project perhaps more closely resembles classical private collections than it does today's Internet-envious public libraries.

A couple of years ago, the *New York Times* reported that the University of Texas at Austin would be moving almost all of the undergraduate library's ninety thousand volumes to make space for "software suites" that will provide access to the "24-hour electronic information commons." The executive director of the







Megan, whose overwhelming kind-
ss occasionally reveals truculent
ges, looked at him as though his was
e stupidest question ever asked at
e library. "*We show them*," she said,
d moved on.

At the end of this tour, one of the li-
arians raised her hand and said, "I
ve to say I'm feeling a bit defensive
a librarian. I mean, you're flouting all
these conventions"—by which she
esumably meant having some sort of
taloguing system, ordering things in
me vaguely alphabetical way, maybe
nce in a while putting a periodical run
something akin to chronological or-
r. But I didn't think her defensiveness
as wholly due to the library's proce-
ural unorthodoxy. I think there was
me part of her that as an institution-
librarian was jealous of the fact that
use the Prelinger Library one pretty
uch has to go through Megan and
ick, who have poised themselves as
ne inevitable mediators. Even once
ey phase out their intro tour and of-

to resemble, what Megan and Rick have done is to replicate this on a community-wide scale. They reached a moment in their book acquisition—at about thirteen thousand volumes, give or take—when they realized they were no longer solely in the business of imagining future selves. They were no longer private bibliomanes with private projects. They had crossed some psychological and physical threshold and now were, instead, public bibliomanes with public projects. They found themselves in possession of enough resources to go into the business of imagining future communities. Rick and Megan understandably distance themselves from the private libraries of the past, which were often viewed as mere morning rooms for gentlemen, inclined more toward fancy pressmarks, ornate ex-libris plates, and fossilized-fish ornaments than toward coherence (or even cut pages) among the volumes. But in the Prelingers' sense of the library as a site of communal exchange, with their ideas

digital-library initiative at Rice University is quoted as saying that "the library is not so much a space where books are held as where ideas are shared." This is odd. Most people might suppose, to the contrary, that a library is *exactly* a space where books are held. There are many, many places on a college campus where ideas are shared: lecture halls, seminar rooms, computer clusters, dorm lounges. The library happens to be the one where ideas are shared precisely *because* books are held.

So much of the current literature of library science is devoted to the idea that the library, if it is to maintain any kind of relevance, can no longer be a "mere warehouse for books." Again and again, the librarians I talked to insisted that the very idea of the library must be startled for it to keep pace with its digital analogue. The Prelingers agree. Their gamble, though, is that the best way for libraries to move forward is to take several thoughtful steps back. ■

THE CONTINUATION OF POVERTY

Rebranding foreign aid in Kenya

By Victoria Schlesinger

On an oppressively hot morning in January 2006, I set out in a rented car from Kisumu, an aging port city on the shores of Lake Victoria, to visit Sauri, a remote outcropping of farming villages in the northwestern corner of Kenya's Nyanza province. I was traveling to Sauri with a simple goal: to witness the beginning of the end of global poverty. The narrow two-lane highway to Sauri cuts a winding path through the region's abundant maize and sugarcane fields, from which I could just barely discern the outline of mud-and-thatch homesteads, connected by a jagged patchwork of red-dirt roads and footpaths. Old women balancing oversize buckets of water on their heads and men in dirty sports jackets riding bicycles saddled with 200-pound bags of maize gave way as my car sped by. Shirtless youths burdened by unwieldy loads of brush piled high atop their heads stared wordlessly as I passed, and when young children caught sight of me they yelled, sometimes in fear, sometimes in glee, "*Mazunga! Mazunga!*" ("White lady!")

Sauri is actually a tight-knit constellation of eleven small hamlets with a total population of about 5,000 people. Most Saurians observe a mixture of Christianity and traditional Luo religion, which means they both revere the Bible and practice polygamy. Famous for their lyrical music and dance, the Luo are among the poorest ethnic groups in Kenya and have historically been discriminated against by the Kikuyus, the country's largest and most politically powerful tribe. The Luo are the largest tribal group in Nyanza province, an area where some 65 percent of the population lives in severe poverty, nearly a quarter of the children under the age of five suffer from malnourishment, and 20 percent are orphans. This leaves Nyanza's Luo among the poorest in an already poor country: at least 50 percent of Kenya's 35 million people live below the poverty line; one out of ten children dies before age five, most of them from disease; more than 2 million people are infected with HIV; 2 million have died from complications related to HIV/AIDS.

Grim statistics such as these led economist Jeffrey Sachs—special adviser to former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and director of Columbia University's Earth Institute—to choose Sauri as the location for the first research village of the Millennium Villages Project (MVP), an endeavor whose stated goal is to halve the number of people living on less than a dollar a day in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015. Sachs, named one of the hundred "Most Influential" people in the world by *Time* magazine in 2005 and best known professionally for his "shock therapy" approach to fixing the post-Communist economies of Russia and Poland, is also the author of the much-lauded 2005 bestseller *The End of Poverty* (foreword by Bono). In his book, Sachs claims that the world's intractable systemic poverty could be resolved, efficiently and quickly, via a package of inexpensive, scientifically based solutions, all for as little as $1 per person annually. Sachs founded the first Millennium Village in Sauri in 2004, and it has since expanded into eleven other research villages in ten African countries, plus an additional sixty-six villages that receive similar aid but are only monitored. Along with his colleagues at the Earth Institute, Sachs envisions the village spreading across the entire African continent, creating "a scalable model for fighting poverty that can be expanded from the village to district level and eventually to additional countries."

It took about an hour, much of it spent driving on a rutted dirt road, to reach my first destination, Sauri's new medical clinic. Constructed with MV

Victoria Schlesinger is a writer living in New York City.

ey, the freshly painted five-room
ding stood adjacent to the row of
t, single-room structures that make
he Sauri community center. The
er was home to a meeting room
by the villagers and also had plans
a computer lab and a library. I
ed inside one of the boxy, white-
hed rooms, empty but for a few
es of furniture and a small purple
, above which was a sign that read:
POSED COMPUTER TABLE 1.
Outside the clinic, several dozen
ple sat on light blue benches in
shade of a tin awning, waiting to
be seen. Decorative green-and-red-leaved plants sat on either side of a door marked LABORATORY in black, stenciled letters. Inside, I met a smiling young man who introduced himself as Jared Oule, a nurse from the Kenyan Ministry of Health on loan to the MVP. Inviting us into his tiny lab, which was stocked with a generator-powered refrigerator and microscopes for analyzing blood samples, Oule happily rattled off a list of MVP community-development projects underway: the distribution of seeds and fertilizer to local farmers; the expansion of an already existing school free-lunch program; a program to oversee the use of the community's newly acquired two-door Nissan pickup; the construction of cisterns to protect surface spring water from contamination; the creation of a business plan for a local café; even a proposal for providing Internet access to the villagers, once the government extends the power grid here.

The following morning, I made my way to a nearby Anglican church for a meeting with the Sauri Executive Committee, a liaison group that coordinates activities among the MVP's numerous committees. The first person I met was the chairperson, Monica Okech. A stout, grandmotherly woman in her fifties, Okech constituted a fine example of what could be called an "upper-middle-class" Saurian; this meant she had enough money to construct a concrete-walled and tin-roofed house, and she was able to regularly hire workers to farm her land. Okech began to tell me the history of Sauri's involvement with international aid groups, which, to my surprise, was a long one; Sauri has received financial assistance from international organizations for more than fifteen years. The World Agroforestry Centre and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute have conducted projects here since 1991; Africa Now, a U.K.-based charity, came to Sauri in the late nineties to build spring-protection cisterns; a women's credit cooperative begun by CARE Kenya in 1999 was still underway; and the free-lunch program, initiated by the local school principal, had been feeding students since 2000. This struck me as somewhat odd. Given the wealth of ongoing development work, Sauri appeared to be a less than ideal choice as the site of a test case for poverty eradication aimed at the "poorest of the poor." If



ustration by Brian Hubble. Source photographs by Victoria Schlesinger

re truly attempting to estab- epresentative baseline of data MVP model, would it not be ed locale?

MVP has taken a decidedly different approach, relying instead on pilot sites with what it considers the highest likelihood of success rather than those that exemplify the depth of the problem. Half of the research villages have been situated in areas with an established history of interaction with foreign development groups. The idea is that the likelihood of rapid success is greater in places such as these because inexperience with and cultural barriers against development work have already been overcome.

My conversation with Okech was cut short by the arrival of two men. Patrick Matuo, a portly, boyish-faced Kenyan whom I recognized from the MVP website as the local project manager, was the first, followed by MVP project director and renowned agronomist Pedro Sanchez. Okech warmly greeted Sanchez, whom she has known since the mid-1990s, when he first came to Sauri as the director general of the World Agroforestry Centre. Sanchez was in Sauri to prepare for a visit from a group of financial donors, who would be accompanied by Jeffrey Sachs. He indicated to Okech that he wanted to take a tour of the crop fields. Okech invited me to accompany them.

It was close to noon by the time we reached the fields, and the sky above Sauri was filled with billowy white clouds that offered little promise of rain. Kenya had suffered a harsh drought during the shorter of its two rainy seasons. Crops had failed both in Sauri and nationwide. Sanchez, his sun hat pulled down snugly and his mouth a grim straight line, surveyed the small valley of farms behind the church. The maize plots were little more than a desiccated mess of stalks and leaves dried to the consistency of brown shipping paper. Okech and the other Kenyans with us looked somber and uncomfortable. Okech stood at Sanchez's side, her features flat and serious as she worried a sprig of guava leaves in her strong farmer's hands and explained, with another extension officer translating, the severity of the situation in Sauri: the [illegible] an utter failure.

"But no one in Sauri will go hungry," Sanchez pronounced rather loudly. He was referring to the harvest of July 2005, a bumper crop that Sachs, during a "thinkMTV" documentary featuring Angelina Jolie, had called "an incredible triumph." Okech, her unease visibly increasing, replied that some in the community had been forced to sell their maize to pay for other needs, like building supplies, funerals, rent, and school fees. They had no household surplus and soon would be without food.

"There is a surplus," Sanchez said firmly. "The committee should distribute the surplus." Okech explained that some members of the committee in charge of the reserve didn't want to distribute it. They believed that those now in need were at fault—because they were either lazy, didn't follow correct planting procedures, or had acted against MVP recommendations, which urged participating villagers to use their maize for food or to sell it to the MVP cereal bank. This faction of the committee opposed bailing out farmers they considered unwilling to follow the MVP plan. Okech feared that fighting might erupt among villagers when the decision was made as to who would be helped.

"The community should help these people," Sanchez said softly. "No one should be hungry in Sauri."

We continued on to other fields, Okech fiddling with the broken watch she wore on her wrist as jewelry while Sanchez maintained a pensive silence. We had reached a parched soybean field when Sanchez, clearly shaken by the sight of the failed crops, announced that he'd "seen enough."

"It's better in other locations," Matuo suggested.

"We'll go to those places for the visitors," Sanchez answered. "We need to impress these people."

Our last stop was outside a local school, where we stood staring at an unplanted field. Okech suggested that Sanchez and the MVP offer microcredit to defray some of the farm overhead, by which she meant basic things like paying workers, repairing tools, or, for those with small plots, renting land. Many villagers, she said, had sold the maize from last year's bumper crop to pay for these expenses. To [illegible] Sanchez, winner of the 2002 W[illegible] Food Prize and recipient [illegible] MacArthur Foundation "genius" a[illegible] that includes a $500,000 "no st[illegible] attached" award, responded by [illegible] ing, "I don't understand why [illegible] need money to prepare their l[illegible] He paused and chuckled [illegible] consciously. "Maybe th[illegible] a stupid question."

On September 18, 2000, the Un[illegible] ed Nations issued the Millennium [illegible] velopment Declaration, a laudable [illegible] truistic set of principles that inclu[illegible] eradicating extreme hunger and po[illegible] ty, the promotion of gender equa[illegible] the achievement of universal pri[illegible] education, and the pursuit of the f[illegible] against AIDS and malaria. If succ[illegible] ful, the declaration's goals were t[illegible] reached by 2015 and would repre[illegible] a lessening of worldwide misery [illegible] precedented in human history.

The wealthy nations of the w[illegible] hastened to get involved. In 2002, [illegible] European Union and the United St[illegible] made a pledge (albeit a non-bin[illegible] one) to donate 0.7 percent of thei[illegible] spective GNPs toward aid for de[illegible] oping countries. The following y[illegible] the United States created the Mill[illegible] nium Challenge Corporation, wh[illegible] has dispersed over $1.5 billion in gra[illegible] to Africa, and pledged another $15 [illegible] lion toward HIV/AIDS relief. In 20[illegible] the E.U. set a target of 66 billion eu[illegible] annually to developing nations [illegible] 2010, with Britain alone provid[illegible] more than 1 billion pounds to su[illegible] Saharan Africa in 2006. The year [illegible] fore, the G8 nations canceled roug[illegible] $40 billion in debt for the worl[illegible] poorest countries, most of which are [illegible] Africa. Large nonprofit organizati[illegible] took action as well. The Global Fu[illegible] to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis a[illegible] Malaria has contributed $3.2 billion [illegible] date; the Bill and Melinda Gat[illegible] Foundation donated $287 million [illegible] HIV/AIDS research and $750 milli[illegible] for vaccines and immunization of i[illegible] poverished children; in 2006, Wa[illegible] ren Buffett gave another $30 billion [illegible] the Gates Foundation.

Although this outpouring of fina[illegible] cial largesse is admirable, the history [illegible] Western generosity and grand sol[illegible] tions in Africa does not bode well f[illegible]

ture success. Economist William erly, an outspoken critic of U.S. gn aid policy and author of the re- book *The White Man's Burden*, es- tes that the developed nations donated $568 billion in aid to ca since the 1960s. Yet the pover- is only worsened. The population b-Saharan Africans living on less a dollar a day rose from 41 to 46 ent between 1981 and 2001—ch means that there are an addi- al 150 million people living in dire mstances. Presently, the life ex- ancy of sub-Saharan Africa's 750 ion people stands at just over forty- ears.

conomists, politicians, and acad- cs of every stripe have offered ex- nations for the intransigence of ican poverty, perhaps none more iferously than Sachs, who took ter stage in the debate when Kofi nan appointed him to head the J. Millennium Project. Sachs's first was to oversee the preparation of "action plan" on how best to ieve the Millennium Goals, a cess that brought him into close tact with Pedro Sanchez, who, ng with Sanchez's wife, Cheryl m (also an accomplished agrono- t), was responsible for the report on ger. From the plan's findings came first rough outline of what, in 04, would become the Millennium lages Project.

Sachs rarely shies away from high- ating the revolutionary aspects of MVP and its efforts in Sauri. "This village that's going to make histo- " he said in the MTV documentary. 's a village that's going to end ex- me poverty." The MVP would at- npt to simultaneously augment agri- ltural yields, increase access to clean ter and sanitation, and improve ba- health care, schools, and the infra- ucture. This approach, Sachs rea- ned, would be the most reliable eans of creating an economic cushion at would buffer the poor against ever- esent problems such as drought and ness. Millennium Promise calls Sauri d its peer villages "a ground-breaking ncept" in village-level anti-poverty velopment, which will succeed be- use of its commitment to "Doing all it, all at once."

Despite the sweeping rhetoric, the MVP is hardly the first attempt at spurring radical rural economic growth through an all-at-once approach. Efforts to jump-start an agricultural revolution through a "holistic package" of improvements took place in many locations, under a wide variety of circumstances, during the 1970s and 1980s, under the rubric of Integrated Rural Development, or IRD. Proponents of this method believed that only a Green Revolution, like those of India and Mexico, would be forceful enough to pull the increasingly disenfranchised rural poor into the mainstream, productive sectors of developing economies. To achieve this end required not only investment in agriculture—better seeds, fertilizer, and access to markets—but also improvements in health and education services. Attempts to implement an IRD model were made throughout the developing world, with funding from institutions like USAID, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as large private donors, including the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. It was also backed by nations such as Britain, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands.

Oddly enough, Sanchez, whom I met again at the Earth Institute in New York after I visited Sauri, didn't have much to say about IRD, because of what he called "very little analysis" of the old projects. "We just don't have the data," he said.

A search for the term "integrated rural development," however, in the library database at Columbia University—where Sanchez works—brought forth 165 hits on the topic; the USAID database delivered another 704; the World Bank's website, 125. With little effort, I was able to order in-depth project reports and evaluations that charted the spotty history of IRD and rural poverty: in Swaziland, an agricultural rural-development program conducted throughout the 1970s foundered in the wake of governmental incompetence and opposition; Save the Children's five-year Tunisian village IRD project concluded in 1983 that although villagers with the fewest alternatives readily adopted its methods, the



government would not; an IRD project [illegible] amid political instability. By the mid-eighties, the concept of [illegible] fallen into disrepute.

Kenya's experiment with IRD dates to the early 1970s, with the implementation of the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP), which attempted to make simultaneous improvements to the health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure sectors. Assessment of the SRDP found that few, if any, new anti-poverty ideas emerged from these experimental projects; they were burdened with large recurring costs and were not self-sustaining. In Kenya, as elsewhere, researchers noted that while specific factors such as insufficient technology, experts, and money handicapped IRD, overwhelmingly the primary cause of failure was a lack of cooperation between donors and recipient governments. The 1976 book *Aid and Inequality in Kenya* noted that government officials viewed the SRDP as an "expatriate show," suitable only as a "device for getting aid donors to commit untied funds." By the late seventies, the Kenyan government had entirely abandoned the SRDP, which had been implemented nationwide, acknowledging that it had made little progress toward improving the lot of the country's rural poor.

Four days later, as the roads began to fill with women and men carrying their heavy morning loads, the MVP impresarios and their donors arrived in Sauri to observe the progress. The group numbered roughly twenty-five VIPs, plus their drivers, translators, and security guards, transported in a convoy of safari vehicles and four-wheel-drive SUVs. Among them were New York Yankees co-owner Ray Chambers, co-founder with Sachs of the Millennium Promise nonprofit; Ben Goldhirsh, the twenty-six-year-old millionaire founder of *Good*, a magazine whose original mission statement boasted that the "world of good" is "not just for do-gooders anymore"; a representative from the Case Foundation in Washington, D.C., which had already donated considerable funds to the project; and Rieko Suzuki Kitaoka, wife of a senior Japanese diplomat to the United Nations, who arrived dressed in pristine white jeans and a black straw sun hat, and who said she was there as "a friend of Jeff and Sonia's." In the back seat of a white SUV sat Sachs, his wife, Dr. Sonia Ehrlich Sachs, and their youngest daughter.

By midmorning, the convoy had reached Yala Township near Sauri and made its way to the communal storage property, parking before a row of giant corrugated-metal and concrete warehouses used to hold grain. Climbing from their vehicles, the VIPs resembled nothing so much as a flash flood of khaki sweeping across the road, a rogue wave of sunglasses and sun hats imperiling the small band of Sauri villagers in their Sunday finest—the executive committee—waiting to greet them.

Sachs greeted Okech, who, swathed in a matching aquamarine tie-dyed dress, scarf, and head wrap, stepped forward and warmly embraced him, happily repeating "Hello" and "How are you?" in broken English. When Patrick Matuo presented Okech to the VIPs, she responded by spreading her arms wide and saying in Luo, "Welcome, to my teachers and God." Okech then introduced each executive committee member and was halfway through thanking them for making the long trip to her village when I noticed a few of the VIPs jerk uncomfortably, like fish leaping out of water. Looking down, I saw a swarm of large black ants scurrying hurly-burly through the red dust beneath us, crawling around and over VIP leather loafers and strappy black sandals. It seemed we were standing on their mound, crushing their colony and trails. Okech, apparently undaunted by the bugs, pressed on with her speech, while the donors shifted uncomfortably and swatted at their ankles.

Safely inside the immense, cobweb-stippled storage house, the VIPs admired the bulging white plastic maize sacks covering the floor. I wondered why some sacks were stacked flat in piles of three while others were propped up on end. A committee member dressed in a suit and tie explained that the upright sacks, 10 percent of the total harvest, would be donated to the school free-lunch program. The 281 sacks lying flat contained the [illegible] bank community reserve that [illegible] and Sanchez had discussed earlier. The MVP had purchased the maize [illegible] Sauri's farmers for roughly $16 per [illegible] then sold it on their behalf at a profit when maize was scarce on the local market.

One of the committee members began to talk to the VIPs about the [illegible]. In 2005, he said, the MVP had supplied Sauri's farmers with 8 tons of [illegible] quality hybrid maize seeds and 120 [illegible] of chemical fertilizer. Five months later, Sauri harvested the largest [illegible] crop in its history—956 tons. Average crop yields increased 150 percent, from 2 to 5 tons per hectare, and Sauri's farmers planted an additional 100 hectares. Sachs had mentioned the harvest during an address he had made at the United Nations in September 2[illegible], calling it "a tremendous achievement and ample evidence that the only obstacle to meeting the Millennium Development Declaration's goals was political will and money.

Perhaps. But after my visit to Sauri I spoke with Dickson Khainga, an economist at the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, a think tank that advises Kenya's federal government. Khainga described the MVP approach as "just proving what we know"—namely, that with an infusion of fertilizer and money, farmers working nutrient-depleted soil can experience significant yield increases. "If we invest well in the farm," he said, "[we] can raise more. I think the main underlying issue is why it is that we don't [do] what we know."

At the U.N., Sachs failed to mention that the chemical fertilizers that produced this abundance would be greatly de-emphasized in the future. Apart from that, the MVP planned for Sauri's farmers to gradually replace the chemicals with a natural fertilizer shrub called fallow. Although long advocated by development experts as a cost-efficient way to fertilize soil, fallows, unlike chemical fertilizers, require a specific combination of education, technical support, and patience, and there is no guarantee that farmers will continue to use them. Sanchez had in fact introduced fallows to Sauri in 1996 as part of a pilot program for the World Agroforestry Centre. By 2004, he [illegible]

nly a dozen farmers continued to t them.

he bumper harvest provided vil- rs with a supply of maize to sell, e, or eat. But, as Okech had al- y informed Sanchez, those with ll plots were unable to grow ugh to pay their expenses and e beyond the threat of hunger. s fact should have come as no sur- e to Sanchez. According to MVP , the much-improved yields would ide the average Sauri farm with ghly sixty-three bags of maize an- lly. Selling these bags to the MVP al bank, a family would earn about 60, enough to meet the dollar-a-day threshold for only half a year.

Next we stopped at the govment-owned Yala sub-district pital. Unlike the MVP clinic, was a single-story cement build- with filthy walls, peeling paint, l a slew of outdoor benches wded with dull-eyed patients. e hospital, which provides care as many as 96,000 people, had surgical theater, no running wa- and just sixteen beds. Inside, the metal cots were arranged in a v as in an army medical ward. o, three, and four sick people lay clessly next to one another, wded onto one green vinyl mat- ss. Women hovered around their ine children, offering them water m grimy plastic jugs, and skeletal ung men suffering from HIV/ DS sat on the concrete floor wait- to be seen by a doctor.

The host for the hospital tour was even Biko, a young Kenyan doctor rking for the Ministry of Health. e MVP brought Biko here to Siaya trict in October 2004, where he was posed to divide his time between uri's clinic and the government hos- al. The MVP website lists the hand- ne young doctor as one of the ex- rts in Sauri, showcasing his work th the sick, performing C-sections d amputations and ministering to ose stricken with HIV/AIDS. But lagers say that after several months ko abruptly stopped coming to Sauri. has been reported that he quit after scovering that a new wing of the uri clinic was, in his words, "a ghastly unstable mound of bricks." When I asked Biko why he left, he refused to reply, saying only that his answer might hurt Sachs, who wasn't to blame.

Government employees like Biko are crucial to the MVP's long-term viability, because the future process of "scaling up" from the research sites to fully functioning villages throughout Kenya and elsewhere will fall to government. As Sachs and the MVP envision it, the $110 per person annual contribution—roughly $550,000 per village, or $1.9 billion a year for the 17 million living in extreme poverty in Kenya alone—will be divided between non-governmental organizations and wealthy countries,[1] which will supply about 64 percent, the remainder coming from the host countries and villagers, at least partially in the form of doctors, administrators, and agronomists. Whether this financial structure is viable remains to be seen. For example, at the time of the VIP tour, Kenya had provided just five employees, including Biko.

After the hospital tour, the donors were driven a short distance to a dirt road paralleling a defunct railroad track and small plots of crops. A short hike along a narrow footpath in order to glimpse the fields and the fallows was planned, but before we began, Sachs called everyone to attention. He wanted to explain why we had visited the hospital, perhaps to allay any confusion for donors expecting to see only examples of the project's success. The hospital tour, he said, was meant to demonstrate that "you weren't seeing the fruits of the project yet. You're seeing the needs."

Just then, a green SUV with tinted windows pulled up beside us. From it stepped a dapper middle-aged man in a suit and tie who strode into the center of the circle of visitors. "How is everybody?" he asked, smiling. "I'm a bit late because I didn't get the program. So I've just been running around, and fortunately I've been able to meet you. But welcome, and I will join the program."

Such was the arrival of Jakoyo Midiwo, Siaya district member of

[1] *For the time being, however, the MVP will pay the international donors' share of the expenses, in order to demonstrate the value of the model.*

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parliament, local restaurateur, and occasional brawler—and, judging from the sheepish expression on Patrick Matuo's face, someone who had not been invited on the tour. Now that he was here, Midiwo could hardly be sent packing, and he joined the group as if he belonged.

I had already met Midiwo several days earlier, at his stylish restaurant-bar in Kisumu, where he treated me to a round of Tusker, a local beer. Midiwo told me he was a supporter of the MVP, albeit with reservations, ones he would have liked to discuss with the project's leaders. His primary complaint involved the dispersal of money in Sauri to the exclusion of other locations within the district.

"Sauri is the upmarket part of my constituency, and now they're taking it to a place that is even better," Midiwo had told me, taking a swallow from his third beer. "I would want to take that money to the poorest of the poor. There is animosity on the ground. You see, Sauri now is the most hated village in my constituency. People are envious, some are jealous. Got to start with the neediest first."

The problem, according to Midiwo, was not just where MVP funds were spent but how. For example, if the MVP encouraged local farmers to raise cotton, Midiwo believed his district would be better positioned to exploit foreign investment incentives like the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000, which lowers trade barriers to sub-Saharan African countries that export textile products, like cotton T-shirts, to the United States. There is significant potential for economic gain by substituting or augmenting maize with cotton, which, until its collapse here in the early nineties, was the basis of a promising industry in Kenya. According to a 1998 study on farming choices in Siaya district published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, small-scale Kenyan farmers could earn a third more per hectare by favoring cotton production over maize.

We left the roadside via a narrow dirt road made uneven by water erosion. Most of the donors kept their eyes on the ground, gingerly picking their way through the crop fields. The trail led to a gently sloping hillside that we learned had only recently been dug up and graded to protect a nearby spring from contamination by sewage runoff. At the spring, a series of footpaths converged near a stand of tall green maize stalks. In the distance, I could see small groupings of tin-roofed homesteads, each protectively encircled by trees and shrubs. A dozen women and men from the MVP water and executive committees stood in a semicircle above the spring, waiting expectantly for us to arrive. When we all had gathered, they broke into a traditional Luo song in praise of Sanchez and Sachs, the women and men clapping a slow beat and swaying rhythmically under the sweltering sun. One man held aloft a hand-drawn blue poster that read, SAURI WATER AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT. MOTTO: WATER IS LIFE.

The VIPs watched distractedly, some chatting quietly while others fiddled with their digital cameras, snapping a few photos. When the song was over, the water-committee members explained that the MVP had taught them how to build a large underground tank to protect the spring water, which would then flow yearround out of a spigot protruding from a smooth wall on the hillside. Previously, one woman said, they had filled their buckets cup by cup, but now the spring flowed like tap water. To demonstrate, village women walked down the curve of new red clay steps and took turns at the spigot. Each filled a large plastic bucket with water, hoisted it atop her head, and then performed an impressively nimble balancing act with a single hand as she ascended the stairs.

Simple as this small demonstration of water management may seem, it actually represents what Sachs, in an interview I conducted with him in New York after my trip to Sauri, called "one of the great challenges, in general. Not only in Sauri but throughout Africa." The World Health Organization estimates that 288 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to reliably clean water and that another 437 million do not have adequate sanitation systems. "There are many approaches to water management in rain-fed agriculture," Sachs explained, ticking off a series of progressive options like farm ponds for irrigation, landscapes and structures for harvesting rainwater, drought-tolerant crops, even insurance that allows farmers to recoup their investments when the rains fail. "We will do all of them in this way," he said.

In Sauri, the impact of such wide-ranging ambition can be readily felt. Two years ago, for example, the MVP conducted a series of tests to assess the contamination threats to the local water supply. The results showed that less than half of the twenty local springs considered safe for drinking from actually were. In response, the MVP recommended that the water and sanitation committees repair eleven leaky tanks and organize the construction of four new boreholes. For all building projects, the MVP requires the relevant committees to first submit a project proposal. The villagers then supply the labor and a portion of the necessary materials. It is a seemingly reasonable exchange but one that demonstrates the ways in which the MVP's idealism careers headlong into the realities of survival. Each day, the residents of Sauri must see to their farms, haul water, make repairs to their homesteads and any equipment, care for their children, prepare food over fires and wash their clothes by hand. The heavy schedule leaves little surplus time to meet the demands of the MVP's bureaucratic development style, which entails weekly meetings of Sauri's 108 MVP committees. I spoke with several members of one of the twelve water committees, and a number of them expressed unhappiness about the amount of time the meetings required. One woman, a widow and mother of seven, told me she devoted ten full days during the all-important harvest to digging and pouring cement for a water-storage tank. She said she often worked four days a week on the springs—collecting money from her neighbors, organizing volunteers, and attending meetings.

When asked if perhaps the MVP was placing too great of a time burden on the Sauri villagers, Sachs told me, "All of these strains are real, but they're hardly unique to life." He said that the MVP is less concerned with day-to-day issues than with "finding pathways for impoverished people out of extreme

ty." He also knows that the small resident staff is stretched thin, e's determined to keep costs in as low as possible and points out 'escaping poverty is hard work."

ter the spring, the VIPs were n to see a Sauri homestead, e Okech introduced them to a oung woman outside of a brand- mud hut with a corrugated tin She stood, arms twisted in front r, as Okech explained that the an had recently lost her hus- . In traditional Luo society, wid- ely on the practice of wife inher- e—a de facto welfare system in h women automatically become dditional wife to a surviving ner-in-law—to ensure a mini- level of financial support. Wife ritance has diminished in Luo re since the onset of HIV/AIDS. if a woman is inherited, she re- is a second-class citizen in the of most Luo, a circumstance h, the second wife in a polyga- s marriage, knew only too well. tradition requires women to t or harvest crops depending on position in the marital hierar- beginning with the primary wife working downward. Subordinate s run the risk of planting or har- ng their crops late or not at all if perior wife falls behind in her work. Okech escaped this cul- bind when she became the own- a dairy cow donated to her by a ld Bank official. Now even if her s are delayed she still has milk ell, a source of great pride to "My husband would offer me ey," she said, "but it was only et change."

he widow Okech introduced us ad remained unmarried, and be- e she received no financial support n either her fellow villagers or the yan government, she had lapsed o abject poverty. Her hut had vn so dangerously dilapidated that small store of maize was jeopar- d. Okech had proposed to Sanchez the MVP supply corrugated tin ets and roofing nails for a new se, and promised that the widow ld donate any other necessary ma- als, plus labor. Okech expanded project to include other widows in ri, who, again largely because of HIV/AIDS, make up 33 percent of adult village women.

"We organized ourselves through the executive, and we've already put up thirty-eight such houses," Okech told the VIPs, who, seemingly recovered from their languor at the spring, clapped with enthusiasm. But Okech believed that the new houses, much like the reliance on subsistence maize farming, were insufficient. What the women really needed was a reliable income. "We would also love them to have something like dairy cows," she told the VIPs. "This is part of trying to get rid of hunger in Sauri." At the words "get rid of hunger," Sanchez awkwardly called out, "All right!" eliciting another burst of applause from the donors. Matuo immediately announced that the group was running late and began anxiously ushering everyone to the next presentation. As we left, the wife of the Japanese diplomat to the U.N. said to me, "That widow was very attractive. She won't be single for long."

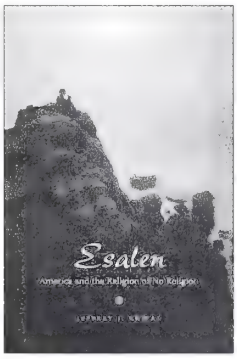
Our final stop brought us to Konjra, a village near Sauri that was designated to be home to one of the upcoming Millennium II locations. About three hundred villagers had assembled in a clearing next to a field of cassava and potato plants to hear Sachs, Sanchez, and other dignitaries deliver inspirational speeches about the MVP. The Konjra villagers were seated on the ground, fanned out in a circle around a clump of tall trees next to which the speakers stood, while the donors settled into plastic folding chairs. Low clouds on the horizon moved in, blocking the brilliant rays of sunlight and providing welcome relief from the long day's intense heat.

"We have spent the day so far in the Millennium Village Type I, Sauri sub-location," Sanchez began. "Thanks to the generosity of many people, some of them who are present here, the Millennium Project is now able to expand from one sub-location to ten." He paused, waiting for his words to be translated into Luo. "The success of Sauri," he said, a note of passion rising in his voice, "has energized the world."

The crowd responded with loud

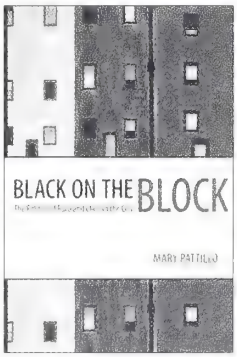
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Esalen
America and the Religion of No Religion
JEFFREY J. KRIPAL



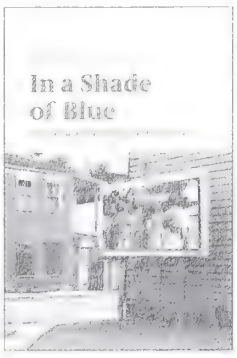
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applause and great whoops of joy. Sanchez quieted them with the promise of more good news: "Thanks to the combination of the great generosity of the government of Japan and of private philanthropists, many of whom are present with us, now this project is expanding to 112 villages in ten countries in Africa."[2] Like believers at a revival, the listeners went wild.

The Type II sites will receive the same development-aid package as Sauri and the other research villages, although their progress will only be monitored by the MVP, not studied. Following that, the MVP has preliminary plans to establish Type III villages, which will receive training, fund-raising assistance, and manuals, all based on the results found in the research and Type II villages. Another step includes the Millennium Cities Initiative, which is already operational in seven midsize cities across sub-Saharan Africa, including Kisumu. The Cities program is designed to foster business relationships with the Millennium Villages; they will also receive instruction from the Earth Institute on how to pursue foreign investment.

Each step of this progression rests on the assumption that what happened in Sauri was not only effective in terms of specific projects—many of which have already been reliably proven in other studies—but also innovative and unprecedented as a full-scale development model. The crucial issue in Sauri, then, is not the lunch programs or the farming interventions but whether the entire MVP approach, not just to aid but to community involvement and government engagement, actually works.

Which makes the disagreements over whether to distribute the maize surplus and the complaints about tiresome committee meetings even more troubling. As for the government, as long as Sauri remains the subject of popular documentaries, speeches to the United Nations, and reports in international newspapers, it will most likely continue to receive official Kenyan support. Will this still be the case in the coming years, when the global community has moved on to other places and other causes, and when the Kenyan government will be expected to fully meet its fiscal obligations to the project? That's hard to predict.

Money, of course, remains a crucial—and uncertain—factor. Under the $110 per person plan, the MVP is expected to meet 45 percent of the project's costs, the host government 27 percent, and the villages another 9 percent, with the rest coming from NGOs. The MVP's detailed accounting of the 2005 fiscal year showed a significant shortfall at each level of the cost-sharing arrangement: the MVP was forced to fund a full 71 percent of Sauri's total expenses; the Kenyan government covered only 13 percent, mostly in the form of on-loan extension workers like Steven Biko; the villagers were able to contribute just 6 percent.

Everything grew quite still when Sachs began to speak. I could hear the slight whip of the wind as the clouds above began to threaten. The audience responded warmly to his remarks, and Sachs became increasingly animated, his voice rising in force and vitality, almost like a cheerleader at a pep rally.

"What are the goals?" he cried. "To fight hunger. To fight poverty. To fight malaria. To fight AIDS. To make sure mothers are safe in childbirth. To make sure young children can grow up healthy and go to school, boys and girls. To make sure everybody can have safe w[illegible] drink." The VIPs and the vil[illegible] were roused to even greater [illegible] ysms of applause; one woma[illegible] lowed a long ululation, to [illegible] Sachs responded with a gu[illegible] "Yesss!" Sachs punctuated his [illegible] ments to the Konjra villagers b[illegible] feeding their children, reaping[illegible] harvests, combating AIDS, [illegible] malaria, and taking the "big ste[illegible] ward" out of poverty with que[illegible] "How does that sound?" he [illegible]

The answer, of cours[illegible] an enthusiastic affirm[illegible]

Sachs and the Millennium V[illegible] lages Project will press forwa[illegible] Konjra and elsewhere, despit[illegible] limited scientific information a[illegible] the financial failures, in large p[illegible] because the results in Sauri, suc[illegible] ful or otherwise, are not wha[illegible] MVP is about. In *The End of P[illegible] ty*, Sachs states this notion [illegible] clearly: "the world is filled wi[illegible] lot programs showing that or[illegible] tervention or another has pr[illegible] successful time and again. . . T[illegible] main challenge now is not to [illegible] what works in a single villa[illegible] district—though these lesson[illegible] be of great importance when [illegible] approaches are demonstrated—[illegible] rather to scale up what works t[illegible] compass a whole country and [illegible] the world." In this light, then, [illegible] represents not so much a test [illegible] or an opportunity to better u[illegible] stand poverty eradication b[illegible] merely a symbol of the promi[illegible] end inhabits.

From the nearly black cl[illegible] overhead, pinpricks of rain beg[illegible] fall. Sachs told the villagers [illegible] glad he would be to inform Kof[illegible] nan that a new Millennium V[illegible] would take root on this very [illegible] "Let me wish you a happy [illegible] healthy new year, and a year [illegible] achievements . . . thank you for [illegible] our partners."

With that, he returned with [illegible] VIPs to their cars to begin the [illegible] drive to the hotel in Kisumu, w[illegible] cocktails and dinner were schedul[illegible] begin shortly. The villagers slowl[illegible] gan to make their way home just a[illegible] sky cracked open, the rain tum[illegible] earthward in drenching sheets.

[2] *The decision to go forward was being made well before a thorough examination of the interventions underway in Sauri—a flagship research village—could be completed. Now, more than a year after Sanchez's announcement, the MVP knows that the free-lunch program correlated with greatly improved attendance and test scores and that blood tests for malaria decrease costs by accurately identifying those who need treatment, then there was the 150 percent increase in maize yield. These findings, however, make up only a small percentage of the ongoing programs in Sauri. The outcomes of the micro-credit, crop diversification, soil erosion, and sanitation programs, as well as others, are still pending. Even so, Sachs declared Sauri and the MVP model a success, predicting that "what happened in this village can happen in the next [illegible] village. It can happen all over Africa.*

FROM AN ANCIENT CLOUD

Getting by in Ethiopia's slums

By Yohannes Edemariam



When, from a
ud on the summit of
ount Tabor, God
nounced Jesus his
ly son, the glow from
rist's transfigured
e and robes is said to
ve lasted for hours.
epherd boys, believ-
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y, danced and sang
celebration until
e, worrying their
rents into sending
essengers out with
aves of bread. Since
e fourth century,
en gospel-whetted
ords began carving modern
hiopia, the Orthodox Church has
lebrated the Transfiguration in the
ird week of August. After mass,
aves of bread, like those sent out to
e shepherds, are eaten by the con-
egation before the deacons leave
sing for alms at gates.

One of the Feasts of the Lord, which
so include Christmas, Easter, and
e Ascension, the Transfiguration is
ore important to the Ethiopian
urch than to its Western counter-
rts; the healing dimension ascribed to Jesus' light is emblematic of the denomination's penchant for mystery and miracle. The Transfiguration is observed by the laity as Buhé, a ritual in which young boys go from door to door chanting flattering rhymes in exchange for coins. Because Ethiopia is one of the world's poorest nations, penury is dissolved into the passage of all its days, and during Transfiguration one can't help but notice how closely the efforts of the poor boys and the deacons resemble the outright begging that is practiced year-round by the country's many destitute—on the streets, at the gateways to churches, on residential doorsteps—with near-poetic religiosity. On any given day, in any Ethiopian town, one is repeatedly beseeched, implored, for help in the name of Jesus, Mary, the saints, in the name of Mengiste Semayat, the government in the skies.

One early morning last August, a week before Buhé, found me at a café on the western edge of Piassa, the winding, kilometer-long street the Italians built in Addis Ababa during their brief and harassed tenure as Mussolini's would-be colonizers. In daylight the road is thronged with shoppers and street kids sidestepping open sewers and puddles, dodging decades-old Volkswagen Beetles and Russian Ladas, which behave as if lane markings were merely friendly suggestions. Everywhere beggars advertise war wounds, stump legs and arms, the lesions of AIDS, blindness, whatever might evoke the pity of passersby. Young boys hang from the taxis crying out destinations, looking like they might fall to their deaths at any moment. Blue-shadowed mountains surround the capital. A thin,

ohannes Edemariam is a writer living Toronto.

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ltitude breeze soughs through
chapel yards.

ide the café it was raining hard.
acks were soaked from when, just minutes before, on my way down from St. George's Church, a coterie of Anywa tribesmen, mercenaries from the west, dressed in camouflage fatigues and riot helmets, armed with clubs and Kalashnikovs, had refused to make room for me on the sidewalk, forcing me into a miniature flood. They were out to disperse demonstrating Muslims angry at the demolition of a mosque built in a Christian neighborhood, apparently without the appropriate papers. The same stream that wet my shoes cascaded down the steep asphalt into a valley, into the neighborhood of Errie Bekentu, a name that translates to "A Cry for Help in Vain." As soon as Binyam, a young man I had hired as a guide, arrived, we followed the water.

A tangle of collapsing houses veined by muddy lanes, Errie Bekentu lies in a triangle whose corners—St. George's Church, eastern Piassa, and the imperial palace—mark the boundaries of the original city. The main road that Binyam and I walked down reaches the Kechené River and crosses a bridge, which rail-thin day laborers were widening that morning. Like all rivers in Addis Ababa, the Kechené is filthy, the color of chocolate milk. It smells of raw sewage; its banks are strewn with old clothes, corn husks, plastic bags. The walls of the houses in Errie Bekentu are made either of a grass-and-mud mixture pasted on skeletons of wood or of prefab corrugated tin. Most of the roofs in the city are also made of this insubstantial tin, which is expensive to replace, and many of the residences in Errie Bekentu admit water during rainy-season torrents. Holes in roofs and walls are loosely covered with old baskets, cardboard, sacks, plastic, anything to keep the wind out.

When I was a child, I could withdraw from the carnivalesque sights and smells of Addis's poverty. My family was not rich. My parents were paid by a Communist government, and we went without water or electricity as often as anyone. But I was privileged. I was never hungry, never thirsty. I went to a good school. The boys with whom I played soccer in my neighborhood would, after games, return to mud huts, I to a bungalow. Increasingly, what tore and ripped round the hurricane's eye of my childhood has haunted me, filled me with the unease felt by anyone who has had a brush with misery and escaped. My parents' picture albums from the seventies, eighties, and early nineties—decades full of revolution, bloody purges, famines, civil war—are lined with close-up photos of us kids and family members. I had come back to Ethiopia to see the Addis that those pictures do not show.

Snatches of blue sky were threatening the rain clouds as Binyam and I crossed the bridge on our way to Desta Hailé's. Desta, a tall woman with a crooked-toothed smile and an angular face, a manner both fierce and warm, isn't sure if she is in her late thirties or early forties. She lives with five others in a room inherited from her father, who was a member of the Imperial Bodyguard of Emperor Haile Selassie (1892–1975). Built fifty meters or so from the main road, the room is the last in a row of similarly sized homes, and against its back wall is propped a tiny, hole-ridden hovel, where Tinsai, Desta's twenty-four-year-old nephew, who has AIDS, sleeps on a stolen car seat. Close by, a house whose mud walls have in many places fallen away, leans at an impossible angle, as if it has negotiated a perverse contract with gravity. Binyam had introduced me to Desta, knowing of my desire to spend time with a family living in this especially derelict row of houses.

Figuring out the size of Desta's family was confusing. Initially, she said she had eight dependents and that yellow fever had recently killed her husband. I asked elsewhere about her husband's death, though, and was told, in surprise, that he wasn't dead, wasn't even sick, and usually came home around 11:00 P.M. As most foreigners in Addis are employed by NGOs, I imagine Desta saw my light, half-Canadian skin and adjusted the size of her family to inspire maximum pity. Which disheartened me. Ethiopians are traditionally proud, sometimes unreasonably so, but decades of aid have begun to infect people with dependency. In 2006, foreign financial assistance to Ethiopia was equivalent to more than half the country's total spend
that they often turn the peopl
help into beggars, the hundreds
istered NGOs sometimes see
strange analogues of the povert
set out to address.

Desta greeted us as we ducke
the spice-laced air of her hou
eight- by four-meter space halve
curtain of old flower-print dres
the front were two couches, i
with years of dust; in the back,
of drawers and a bunk bed, wh
clan sleeps, three above, three
Rain had rotted away a portion
cloth ceiling. Given the dista
the nearest water pipe, thoug
the number of bodies that daily
the room, the cleanliness and l
unpleasant odors were testam
vigorous effort in an environme
facilitates rapid descent into ch

A hungover Tinsai, hair sh
close to his skull, his body's wir
sion matching the unsettling li
his eyes, began ranting about g
NGOs as soon as I sat down. '
use everything for themselves!" W
he was eight, Tinsai's parents
one after the other, of diabetes
he hopped on the roof of a train
ed from Addis to the southeaste
of Diré Dawa, in Harrargé pro
There he was taken in by a M
woman named Zeyneb, a merch
khat, a shrub whose leaves ac
stimulant when chewed. Zeyne
the drug both in Diré Dawa and
into Djibouti, where the pric
higher; the two would take the
and at the border crossing, Tinsai
was to hide one half of the goods
Zeyneb paid tax on the other. T
and Zeyneb eventually became
than fellow khat smugglers, and
married after she gave birth. Bu
years ago, when Zeyneb died,
months pregnant with his se
child, Tinsai fell out with his in
and took the train back to Addis
ba, where he got HIV from a w
who continues to work the
though she knows she is infected
whom Desta said she would p
were there not consequences to
an action. Because he drinks, T
said, the doctors tell him he shou
take antiretrovirals, so the only
ication he has is for the tuberc
that punctuates his speech with c

gives his voice the consistency of
el. Tinsai could work if he want-
—he can weld—but rather than
long hours for just birr 10 ($1.13)
, he chooses parasitism: he begs by
ing the World Food Program card
certifies him as a carrier and en-
him every month to 45 kilograms
neat and 3 liters of oil; friends buy
food or, more often, khat and beer;
ats hotel leftovers. And when
ds are unavailable and the beg-
is slow, he ties himself "in a knot
bears the night."
ofia, Desta's twelve-year-old daugh-
who sells chewing gum and soft
r up near the palace to passersby
drivers stopped at red lights, came
et and shivering, home because
e trouble with the Muslims, hun-
ls of whom had been beaten,
wn into police pickups, and cart-
off to prison. Desta had sent for
a when she heard shots.
You should see the number of
erals!" said Sofia, a lean girl
sed in a tracksuit, her hair done
in cornrows. "They're wearing
gear, holding those sticks that
like bottles—and their guns.
My. God. So many!"
ike most slum families, Desta's has
nonthly financial plan and, when
ular work is not covering expenses,
by on whatever chance may bring.
selling birr 10 worth of soft paper,
a makes a profit of birr 4.50; she
s chewing gum at birr 0.70 a pack
sells each for birr 2.50. Some days
sells nothing; on others, she brings
ne as much as birr 15. Passing men
metimes feel her up, and the traffic
ce occasionally confiscate her wares,
d her home in tears. But the work
orth the trouble, as the money helps
family pay their electricity and wa-
bills (approximately birr 13 and 11
onth, respectively), as well as their
payments (birr 15 a month), which
ure that the community will cover
eral costs should someone in the
ily die. The family's main provider
Desta's undead husband, a bricklay-
who on good days—the work is sea-
al and comes in short contracts—
make as much as birr 30. Most
nths he manages to contribute birr
0–300. Desta also occasionally
rks—less than once a month, and for
r 90 each time—cooking at wed-

UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Fifty Years Since Roth v. United States

The National Tragedy of the Supreme Court's Misjudgment on Obscenity

by Daniel Mark Cohen

If the people of the United States collectively endorse a single prayer, one universal in its reach, thus transcending the necessary differences in faith and ethnicity that otherwise divide them, that prayer consists of three simple words:

God bless America.

But why should God bless America when her people, in ever increasing numbers, (now easily counted in the tens of millions), participate in an unacknowledged culture of prostitution, manifest most readily in their mass patronage of Internet and cable-television pornography? (For what is pornography, after all, but prostitution mediated by photographic cameras?)

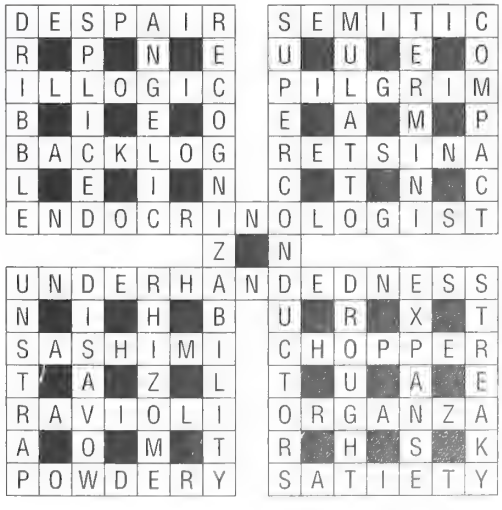
And why should God bless America when, as a consequence, she insists on the free, unregulated distribution via the Internet of the most vile sexual images so that, hourly, such pictures reach and indelibly corrupt the otherwise innocent eyes and chaste minds of the country's millions of unsupervised children?

God bless America?

No.

"Words without thoughts never to heaven go."
-Shakespeare

SOLUTION TO THE APRIL PUZZLE



NOTES FOR "QUO VADIS?":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

FIFTEEN-LETTER WORDS: 1. underhandedness, pun; 2. endocrinologist*; 3. recognizability*; 4. superconductors, pun.
QUADRANT A: 5. sash(I'm)I; 6. disavow*; 7. po(rk)-wdery*; 8. rhizome*; 9. U.N.-strap(rev.); 10. ravioli, hidden.
QUADRANT B: 11. despair*; 12. back-l-og(rev.), pun; 13. Sp-lice-d(elicious); 14. dribble, two mngs.; 15. ill-og(rev.)-ic(y); 16. angelic, hidden.
QUADRANT C: 17. Dr-ought; 18. C-hopper; 19. Satie-t(he)y; 20. st(r)eak-Y; 21. ex-pen's-E; 22. organ-Z-a.
QUADRANT D: 23. retsina*; 24. Semi-tic; 25. comp-act; 26. mu(L.A.)tt-O; 27. pil(rev.)-grim; 28. termini*.

s and funerals of the rich. And if Tinsai's begging has gone well, he donates what he can.

So a good month sees the family's income at birr 400–500. There are six mouths to feed, seven if Tinsai's cadging is slow, which means that, during a *very* good month, each person lives on a little more than birr 2.50, or 28 U.S. cents, a day. In a bad month, Desta pays the most important bills, leaving the others to accumulate interest; tries to feed the kids once a day; and waits for God, "who is kind, and never fails to give," to provide in some way, eventually.

The trend of slums choking world cities as far removed in geography as Caracas, Cairo, and Dhaka is well represented in urban Ethiopia. It has been estimated that more than 90 percent of Addis Ababa is slum. Even in neighborhoods considered wealthy—Bolé, Old Airport, Nefas Silk—where there are new high-rises, malls, and night clubs of every description, one need only walk past the main-road facade to end up among fragile shacks identical to those in Errie Bekentu. The city is unique in that the well-off and relatively well-off, who make up perhaps 20 percent of the population, live in and around the ramshackle poverty, their SUVs and satellite dishes protected by high walls topped with electrified barbed wire or shards of glass. Errie Bekentu itself is less than a kilometer from the most lavish building in Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa Sheraton, where rooms start at $300 a night.

Addis is the mess created when the twentieth century collided with a medieval and feudal culture that still exists in parts of the Ethiopian countryside, almost untouched: oxen-pulled ploughs, centuries-old myths, castles, blood feuds, arranged marriages, rock-hewn churches, and priests who know the gospels by heart in Geez, the all but extinct Semitic ancestor of Amharic, the language dominant over nearly eighty others in the country. Some numbers: 30 percent of Addis's population has no access to piped water (much of the city's piping hasn't been replaced in half a century); 35 percent, no access to any waste-disposal system; 22 percent, no latrine. Even when a family does have a toilet, it usually has to be shared with many other households. Every year, driven by famine or war or fear of forced marriage or debt, or because their families' lands have become divided too many ways to be split further, more people migrate from the countryside, settling in the slums, putting pressure on an exhausted infrastructure. And when they arrive, there is nothing for them to do. Addis's unemployment rate in 1994 (the most recent year for which statistics are available) was 34.7 percent, up from 10.5 percent in 1984. The men often turn to petty crime, and the women to prostitution, in a city the Ethiopian health ministry estimates has an HIV prevalence among adults of 8.4 percent.

The city government, whose job is not easy, sometimes razes slums and puts up condos or sells the land to entrepreneurs, forcibly relocating the inhabitants. The half-Saudi, half-Ethiopian billionaire who financed the Sheraton built small houses for those his hotel displaced. Sister Jember Teferra, head of the Ethiopian NGO Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project, which by many accounts is the most committed organization of its kind in the country, had her employees interview the people the hotel moved. The surveys revealed that after a year, only 20 percent remained in their new homes, built as they were on the outskirts of Addis, three hours' walk from the markets through hyena-infested forests.

Jember, a stern and graying liberation theologist, is one of thousands of Ethiopians, my father among them, educated abroad during the sixties and seventies, who came home to fight for the Ethiopian dream of giving the country wealth commensurate to its sophisticated culture—its indigenous architecture, poetry, alphabet, system of musical notation, religious literature. In the belief that the poverty of Addis can be addressed only by attacking the problem in its entirety, Jember's organization has created tiny communities, complete with factories, recreation spaces, schools, and health stations, as well as homes. "You could put [the poor] in a palace," said Jember, but without jobs, school, and health care, "it doesn't matter.... It's not going to make a difference in their lives."

"The class system exists," sh
"And I think it's a survival mech
especially in a religious socie
Ethiopia's. The easiest thing t
'God has put me in this place,
remain in this place.' Then you
pressure yourself if you say that

Christianity being the foun
of and scaffolding for much of
land Ethiopian society, entire li
planned around a year's one hun
so saint's days. You must go to
to honor St. George, St. Gabri
Mary, St. John, as well as the
nous saints, Tekle-Haimanot,
Gebre-Menfes-Qeddus.... It's
list. When Ethiopians say,
knows," which they do very ofte
don't mean no one knows; they
God *really* knows, and that wh
will befall them in a day, in a
next year, is His will.

"They tell me," continued Je
"'Why do you beg me to send m
to school? They will be poor an
And when [the kids] come out j
the mums turn around and tell
told you . . . they would accept
poverty better if they were in m
of position.'"

Those lucky enough to have
like Desta's husband (Jember dr
served that Desta's family could b
sidered lower middle class), ar
ployed in what one might ca
"informal formal" sector, trudgi
streets looking for contract work,
they get sporadically, rarely for
than birr 15–20 a day. Then there
informal *informal* sector, the numb
ways a human being can stay just
of death's reach. You can be a *d*
who brokers deals on all sorts o
and stolen goods (for instance, if
one wants to replace an old Peu
tires, a *delala* scours the city and
them, usually each from a diff
source); or you can hike out int
countryside and chop wood and
it to your back and hope to mak
a market without being intercept
a forestry official; or fish in the
rivers for combs and plates an
and discarded clothing to sell; o
lect shreds of cloth and pieces of
to make mops; or stand at the ro
with change for taxi criers; or a b
can find you a blind child and
said child how to beg graceful
your behalf.

'eople know how to survive," Jem- aid, later adding, "It's a miracle. estly. I can only say that. The t dwellers"—Addis's thousands of eless, who sleep in sacks on the walks or in shelters made of hed-together plastic harvested the rivers—"when the skies open, 're wrapped up . . . and all of that er], including [water] from the ı[s], comes through. And they get ı the morning and walk about just you and I." One day I walked ugh an encampment of such plas- helters, pitched against the stone of Bolé Medhane Alem Church. old woman whose two front teeth e gone sat raving, vampiric, and en-headed next to her one-cubic- er tent. I was there during mass, the loudspeakers amplified the st's message that true death is sep- ion from God. On the wall sup- ing the camp, someone had spray- painted the Amharic word NUW—"it is."

On the north border of Errie entu, an old hotel built in the cir- r shape of a countryside hut has ı converted into what I'm sure is a hel. Most striking is the building's ng room, with its crystal chande- , dusty Persian rug, dinner table ly surrounded by eleven chairs, s lined with black-and-white pho- of the property's long-gone owner his family—a space outfitted to t a dinner party of ghosts.

was two days before Buhé, but adic chanting had already begun n I was met at the front door of hotel by Addis, a light-skinned slim girl whose dreadlocks were hered in a shawl. She led me ough the bar, which was dark and ered with broken furniture and t nails, down a gloomy corridor ı former shower room, where she ps with two others: Mekdes, a tty twenty-three-year-old with ıs like reeds and an Afro of tight ls, and Elsa,* a quiet woman with hipped-tooth smile. Elsa and Ad- had first invited me to the hotel ile flirting with me one day on main road.

he names of these three women have ı changed at their request.

The trio have a higher standard of living than families like Desta's down in the valley. The girls eat meat—good meat, not the butchery scraps that Desta occasionally buys for a birr a kilo to make soup for Tinsai. They chew khat, chain-smoke, can afford "cosmotics," wear clothes that look new, have no jobs, and get out of bed at 2:00 P.M. every day. I found it hard to believe Addis and Elsa when they told me they no longer worked the bars. Mekdes, however, having been at the hotel for only a short while, had a different claim: that she had begun to dabble in the business and was thinking of fully immersing herself in it soon.

Mekdes and I were left alone when Addis and Elsa left to buy khat. During an awkward silence, I noticed, again, phone numbers of friends and acquaintances scribbled on one of the walls, along with the word "Harem," in English. Mekdes sat on one of the beds, wearing tight blue jeans and a red sleeveless top, whose laces she repeatedly undid, to reveal dark skin and a red bra, before tying them up again. She had given birth to a boy just nine months before and had lent me her diary, which begins, *Because this writing is about my child, it is a present I will give him when he grows up,* and is an account of her fall from being a *plump beauty that no one would pass by* to sleeping in an abandoned shower room. She stopped playing with her shirt and said, "I haven't seen the sun for three days."

A couple of years back, Mekdes's brother, who works for a local NGO, making birr 3,000 a month, gave her start-up capital to open her own clothing shop, which she did, in Bolé. But she is bad with money, she admitted, and the store eventually went under. When she was seven months pregnant with her boyfriend's child, he began to ignore her, caring little for how she was getting by, coming home drunk and smelling of perfume at all hours. When her contractions started, she had to ask one of her neighbors to take her to a hospital. After she gave birth, her brother helped her for a while, but, shamed by the fate of her clothing store, she didn't want to ask too much of him. When she confronted her boyfriend about his neglect, he punched her in the face. She left him, but he tracked her down at

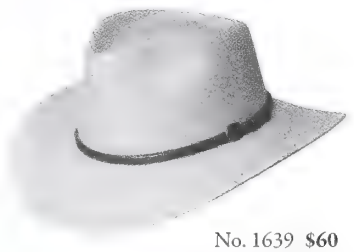
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who raised her.

On the streets, Mekdes met Addis and Elsa, who had both left home, many years before, because of similar abuse-laden circumstances. Addis had a brother who beat her when she so much as spoke to a boy, forcing her to flee home at the age of fifteen and begin working at a brothel. Elsa's reason for being on the street is written on her body, in the form of an ugly canoe-shaped scar running up her left forearm, a gift from her former husband.

Binyam arrived, late because he'd had to run an errand, and as Mekdes talked about her lack of options, he began to reassure her, telling her to stay strong.

"Nobody can really deal with this kind of life," she answered. "Without knowing it, you start off at a certain okay place and slide downward, and when you find yourself in *this* place, where you are amazes you; it scares you. But you've reached the place, touched your feet to it, and so, because you have no choice, you just live."

Soon, Elsa and Addis returned with three others in tow. The room was suddenly very loud. Birr 16 worth of khat was laid on the floor. Elsa began to brew coffee. The new arrivals all worked at a nearby bar: Hannah, a chubby older woman wrapped in a wool cardigan; Meron, a dark, silent girl; and Messeret, who sat chewing khat, black-toothed mouth wide open, wearing blue jeans and a tank top under a red bomber jacket. I was certain, once she started talking, that our meeting had been arranged because of her candor, so that she might, by proxy, shed light on the lives of the others.

By the time Messeret had told me, in speech interrupted by witch-like cackles, that she gets up late every day, eats, chews khat, then dresses for work at the Venus Nightclub, whose owner gives her birr 20 to flirt with his customers, encouraging them to stay and buy drinks, which "put them in the mood" to sleep with Messeret, in one of the bar's back rooms, for a price of birr 150 (birr 130 being the lowest agreeable price) or to pay birr 50 for "a short"; by the time she had said there was no way I could imagine (and there wasn't) the "smell" (she said the word in English) of the mouths and feet of the men she lies with, and had told me that "nobody ever fucks me without draping on two condoms," and that after her customer leaves, "I sleep, and this is what life is, disgusting"; by the time the girls had asked me to circulate their photos on Toronto's streets to potential husbands, and the smoke from six seemingly eternal cigarettes and the smell of roasting coffee mixed with body odor was beginning to make me feel ill; by that time, I very much wanted to leave, and so Binyam and I did, and I went to my grandmother's to lie in bed and stare at her nice white ceiling.

When Binyam and I arrived at Desta's the next day, she told us we needed to pay respects at the home of Tigist, whose twenty-five-year-old sister, Tesfa, had died, having lost a two-month struggle against typhoid. Up and down the main road, boys were fashioning noisemakers for Buhé, flattening pop- and beer-bottle tops for tambourines to tie on the ends of sticks. Twenty meters in width, ten in length, the tent erected by the Idir was pitched against the crumbling brick that forms the one solid wall of Tigist's house; the other three (one of which is so rotted by rain it's possible to poke a finger through) are of the more common painted-over mud-on-wood variety. The room's monthly rent of birr 11.50 hasn't been paid in years. Taking advantage of the gathering, at the entrance to the tent, an old man wearing dusty, shredded robes begged. Inside, men and women sat on benches and chairs. On a bed at the back of the tent, legs crossed, under a black-and-white photo of a healthy Tesfa, reclined Tigist and her two remaining sisters. As I lowered myself onto a bench, my eyes met hers and she quickly looked away. Tradition dictates that we simply sit, Binyam explained; if she wanted to talk she would come over to us, but to visit the bed was taboo. The small gathering of women in shawls and men in three-piece suits sat gossiping. One man told another how much money he was going to [illegible] from a new business venture he'd just entered into.

I was surprised when Tigist [illegible] from the funeral bed and came over to sit beside me, kiss my cheeks, ask how I was. Having full-blown AIDS, she cannot get by, as most women in her financial position do, on one solitary a day. She takes eight antiretroviral pills, a free cocktail of Lamivudine, Stavudine, and Nevirapine, which "burn" her, and so she must eat regularly. Tigist makes her living selling grass, which is strewn across floors before traditional coffee ceremonies. She gets up at six every morning and, after the steps that lead up into the house, arranges her grass, which she buys from Gurage tribesmen, who cut it up in the mountains. Tigist's entire day is planned around her pills. After tending the grass until 8:30 A.M., she buys three rolls for 0.20-birr bread, a 0.10-birr tea leaf, and birr 0.70 worth of kerosene for her kerosene burner. She eats before swallowing her pills. After breakfast, she cooks for Tesfa's children—Tihitina, eight, and Milkias, ten—food meant only for the children and paid for with money from Tesfa's husband, who has a serious drinking problem, makes selling newspapers and refilling cigarette lighters. As she cleans the house and washes clothes by hand, neighbors, who come and go, alert her when customers arrive. The cost of lunch, which she must eat before taking two more pills, is a bit higher: a tin for an *injera*, the traditional Ethiopian flatbread, birr 0.60 for one meal's worth of *shuro* powder (*shuro* sauce, made from ground chickpeas, is the food of the poor), and birr 0.70, again, for kerosene. She eats supper, which is again *shuro* and *injera* and maybe tea, takes the last three pills, then tends her grass until around 10:00 P.M. All told, she needs around birr 10 every day for food, which she certainly doesn't make selling grass. But from the World Food Program she receives the same 45 kilograms of wheat Tinsai does, which she sells for birr 90, giving her a monthly income of roughly birr 200. This is still not enough, so sometimes Tesfa's family will share what they can spare, or Tigist goes and eats at the house of another sister, who works long hours at the Addis Ababa textiles factory.

Just weeks before, Tigist had allow

GO to take her nine-year-old , to where she was not sure— where in the countryside—be- there was no way she could feed clothe him, and send him to ol, and besides, he had begun to ole and use colorful language, and hought he might have a better at childhood in a hinterland ee camp. "It's inevitable that one ne'll come looking for his mother," said when I asked her how she d to find him. The child's father, gandan refugee whom she met n she was fifteen, is dead, she ks. The couple split up because of nan's drunkenness. She was not whether the AIDS came from him om her encounters when she was eet kid of thirteen and fourteen. once asked Tigist what she would f I could place her on a mountain cock all the world's ears to her ls. Although she couldn't think of hing, I think I already got an answer lay we were introduced by Desta, se family is friendly with Tigist's. The thing I'm most afraid of . . . ," st said, before Binyam cut her off, ng her that faith in God was what needed, that He would heal her. What is it that you're most afraid I asked. The thing I'm most afraid of is"— smiled, with her lips and with her ery eyes, which look perpetually g, as if life were one long slap in the face—"that I might die," she said.

After the funeral, Binyam and I ed cards at the hotel with Mekdes il sundown. And when we emerged the night, roving bands of chant- boys, burning pyres, and firecrack- going off like anemic gunshots made city seem gripped by revolution. Since we had made an appointment urn *chibo* with Desta's family, after nick supper near Arat Kilo, Binyam I dipped south into the slum, down ad running through dilapidated ses, the doorstep of virtually every graced by a young woman waiting a male customer. Tigist, who also sits her doorstep in the evenings, told the way to approach one of the ies is simply to say, "Got a drink?" ese are the girls at the bottom of prostitution hierarchy. Most aren't pretty or cosmopolitan enough to be hired at bars, and so stand freelance in front of their homes (or sometimes their parents' homes), charging as little as birr 5 for their services.

From the intersection at the top of the main road, we could see Tesfa's funeral tent, still lit. At the entrance to the lane leading to Desta's loitered a group of young men, idle, smoking cigarettes. Binyam, who seemed on edge, looked back at them repeatedly as the kids enthusiastically greeted us, carried the bundles of twigs into the lane in front of the house, and set them up in the shape of a tepee.

"They've been waiting for you," said Desta, with a warm smile.

Kerosene was poured on the *chibo* and a match struck; flames leaped up to cast shadows of the chanting children on the houses' mud walls.

Buhé is for boys, but streetwise Sofia, wearing a military cloth hat, was the unquestioned leader. *In this quarter!* she screamed. (Everybody: *Ho!*)

One dingay! [a stone]
(Ho!)
In that quarter,
(Ho!)
Another dingay
(Ho!)
Oh my Yohannes
Anbesa geday! [a lion killer]

Everybody now:

A lion killer!
I heard them saying it
So I came from home
Having closed my door
Hoya hoyé abi mariye!
Hoya hoyé abi mariye!

Desta's husband was home, shyly leaning against the doorframe. Because he would scurry out if I visited when he was in, I never spoke to him, but he seemed a good sort, a family man. After a while, he gave some change to one of the kids for firecrackers from a souk. The children chanted that I was Michael Jackson, an American doctor, a wearer of gold, and asked that my enemies be consumed in flames.

A nine-year-old, also named Binyam —Desta originally told me he was her child, but his parents live in a house closer to the street—danced around the pyre. Hannah, a cute six-year-old with a disproportionately large Afro,

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[illegible] dorm [illegible] ously close to the [illegible] Shoats [illegible] one of Desta's, although Desta said she was.

When the firecrackers arrived and were thrown into the blaze, sound waves exploded into the misty night air. Sofia:

In the quarter
one sini [a cup]
In that quarter, another sini
What we want is
Birr ke simuni! [birr 1.25]

The kids burst into laughter at this, as they jostled for position. Binyam was heaped with the honors of being a taxi driver and an airplane technician before I handed out change to each child.

Neither Tinsai nor Nahom, Desta's willful, foulmouthed great-nephew, was home, and I was as relieved not to see the one as I was disappointed to miss the other. I'd begun to look forward to the cheap thrill of watching a four-year-old pick fights with everyone his own age and tell everyone older what he was going to do to their mothers. And Tinsai broke my heart. When in his presence, I felt a brawl marching in my direction. "Poverty puts me at peace," he would often tell me, explaining that having nothing means he is free—"Free!" he would growl in English—to let tomorrow take care of itself, to exist off the confines of any sort of grid. Desta told me that Tinsai hadn't been right since he watched his pregnant wife, Zeyneb, get crushed to death under one of the cars of a train they had been riding into Djibouti. (Tinsai said Zeyneb died when "wind got into her womb" and that he didn't know anything about any trains.) He had a certain sweetness, sleeping in his hovel for fear of waking the kids with his coughing, or infecting them somehow. But mostly what emanated from Tinsai was a doomed young man's unarticulated rage.

The twigs were just glowing embers on the ground as little Hannah came over to kiss me goodbye.

Because we had a date to burn more *chibo* with the girls at the hotel, and walking there by way of Arat Kilo would take a good half hour, Binyam and I decided to risk crossing the bridge, which I'd been told is one of the most dangerous places in the city at night. Binyam asked Desta whether the children might accompany us. Perhaps we would not be touched if we were with kids whom would-be robbers might recognize, he said, and if something did happen, Sofia might be able to identify the culprits. Surprisingly, neither Desta nor her husband had objections to this.

The perils of crossing the Kechené gave Errie Bekentu its name. The original houses on the eastern lip of the valley were those of the guards, cleaners, grooms, and cooks at the palace built circa 1892 by Emperor Menelik II (1844–1913), the founder, with his wife, Taitu, of Addis Ababa. (These days, the heavily guarded compound is where Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi lives.) The male workers would frequent bars up where Piassa is today; rather than taking the long route home, by way of Arat Kilo, they would walk through what was then thick cedar forest on the banks of the river and get attacked and robbed, and no one would hear their screams for help.

"Hold on to your mobiles," Sofia said, as we reached the main road and headed for the bridge. Sudanese refugees sat in twos and threes, tall and very black and blowing streams of cigarette smoke that fingered their way up through dim lamplight.

It's hard, really, to say how dangerous the bridge is. Mekdes said a friend of hers was crossing when she was robbed and thrown into a ditch. There are stories of people's fingers being cut off to get at their rings. But Addis is a city of well-traveled, often-embellished rumors. Information is passed along in snatches of conversation at bars and bakeries. Murders, rapes, and robberies are not covered by the state-owned media. Neither, of course, is police abuse. While I was in Addis, I heard of the taxi crier who made the mistake of staring at federal soldiers too long and was beaten until one of his ears fell off, of the young hipster who was similarly beaten for having long hair, of the traffic cop who got into an argument with a soldier and received six bullets in the stomach. I heard about a general who took a hundred officers across the Eritrean border to plan an insurgency against the government, which is widely despised—especially after the 2005 election, when [illegible] position Kinijit Party claimed [illegible] won a parliamentary majority b[illegible] demed power, which caused th[illegible] of Addis Ababans to take [illegible] streets, which in turn prompt[illegible] government, largely compos[illegible] Tigrian tribesmen who do ever[illegible] they can to make life easier fo[illegible] kin, to send soldiers out to fire c[illegible] ly into the crowds. A hundre[illegible] ninety-three people died, and [illegible] more were wounded.

Before the election, being [illegible] ployed, Mekdes and her boyfrie[illegible] gan working for the opposition [illegible] in exchange for board in one [illegible] member's houses. After the M[illegible] election, the government began t[illegible] tor Kinijit members. On June 1, [illegible] Mekdes, her boyfriend, and other[illegible] at the party member's house when[illegible] looked out the window and sa[illegible] diers approaching. She and her [illegible] panions exited the building by a[illegible] door. *At the time*, Mekdes wrote i[illegible] diary, *since I was three months pre[illegible] with you, I was afraid to jump the* [illegible] The others scaled the obstacle, le[illegible] Mekdes in the back yard of the [illegible] ing, but she managed to escape thr[illegible] the first-floor apartment of an old [illegible] she knew and spent the rest of th[illegible] walking aimlessly, afraid to g[illegible] friends' houses for fear of waiting [illegible] diers. *Because I was so hungry, you m[illegible] a lot in my stomach.* She had used [illegible] of the birr 6 in her pocket tryin[illegible] vain, to reach her boyfriend's [illegible] phone. After they met up the next [illegible] the two spent several months jum[illegible] from safe house to safe house be[illegible] moving into the small room wh[illegible] Mekdes had her first contractions

After the killings some Europ[illegible] countries withheld aid money. But [illegible] cause Ethiopia is a member of [illegible] "coalition of the willing," and its l[illegible] ers make every effort to convince [illegible] siders that jihad lurks in the coun[illegible] every corner, U.S. dollars have [illegible] tinued to prop up a government th[illegible] punishing everyone who didn't v[illegible] for it by the imprisonment of opp[illegible] tion leaders, as well as by taxation [illegible] the raising of prices, which have soa[illegible] so high that Desta's family could not [illegible] ford to buy wheat for the bread tra[illegible] tionally baked on Buhé.

Ethiopia's politics unfold in tra[illegible]

of its historical self. After the evolution, which deposed Emaile Selassie, the Red Terror set ie military junta known as the led by the nominally Marxist el Mengistu Hailemariam, who ned in power until the current ament toppled him in 1991 with ican-supplied arms, allied itself party named MEISON and en- in street warfare with another , the EPRP. The two Marxist parffered on one issue only: whether to install a civilian government away. Yirgedu Senbetu, an elderman living across the street from , who makes birr 2 profit a day g *injera*, told me that her sixtyold aunt was beaten until her les tendon snapped because she d not disclose the whereabouts of aughter, an EPRP member. The killed three children of one of her bors. She remembers Girma Kebeie cadre responsible for the class gle in the Errie Bekentu area, who d to have ordered the murders of reds, including pregnant women eenagers as young as fourteen. came the 1977 war with Somalia; 984 famine; the long civil war, h killed Tigist's father, a tank dri- and the 1989 coup attempt. This vent I remember almost fondly: I valking with one of my sisters along a when two MiG fighter jets tore ds overhead, moving with the ter- beauty of sharks, leaving a nineold boy trembling.

ar causes famine, displacing counolk, who come and settle in aly crowded Addis neighborhoods Errie Bekentu, which causes crime spreads disease, which makes ple call for better governance, ch leads to more war. The events ık in jagged lines of mistrust, frused rage, and mourning through ally every Ethiopian family, my included.

n the bridge this night, though, net nothing more unpleasant than hostile stares of young men, who in bored-looking groups. Sofia ed to our joining her and the oth- n the morning, the traditional time maller kids to chant. After kissing goodbye, we were surrounded by a en prepubescent boys, who bewed me with the title of train- owner. I gave them a birr for their efforts. As they dashed back into the night, one of them yelled, "Thank you," and then, in English, "*Eye lub you!*"

"You crossed the bridge?" Addis asked incredulously when we reached the hotel. As Mekdes, Addis, Elsa, Binyam, and I sat around their fire, bands of boys, attracted by the light, filtered into the hotel's compound. After a half hour, I removed myself and sat on my haunches, staring at dots of *chibo* burning through the fog shrouding the opposite side of the valley.

And then . . . "Johnny?" It was Addis, her voice heavy with sex.

"Johnny?" and I knew what was coming. Poverty is an unbalanced mathematical equation. There I stood, with my pocket full of birr, and on the other side, Addis, Mekdes, Elsa; Desta's family, which I'd been frequently providing with bread in the mornings; Tigist, for whom I'd regularly bought milk; Tinsai, for whom I'd bought a blanket; a childhood friend from my old neighborhood, whose expression was pained as he asked me for birr 20 to buy some beer.

"Johnny, we're hungry. We haven't eaten all day."

And I slipped her birr 30.

On the way home, Binyam and I stopped at the Arat Kilo Hotel, a local drinking hole, dark and smelling of unwashed bodies, lit only by red Christmas lights strung up above the bar and on the walls. Call girls danced in an open space. Depressed-looking men sat in twos smoking cigarettes, unable to speak over the fuzzy din of the speakers blasting Tupac and local superstar Aster Aweke—"*Eweee, what am I going to do? Eweee, I've fallen in love.*"

I kept my date to chant with the kids on the morning of Buhé. Six turned up—Sofia; a boy I didn't recognize, street name Bebeto, after the Brazilian soccer player; nine-year-old Binyam and his older brother, Alemayehu; and Tihitina and Milkias, niece and nephew to Tigist, who in mourning for the kids' mother had cleared all the beds from their home and was sleeping on the floor, having a recurrent dream in which a stranger takes her out to run in open spaces.

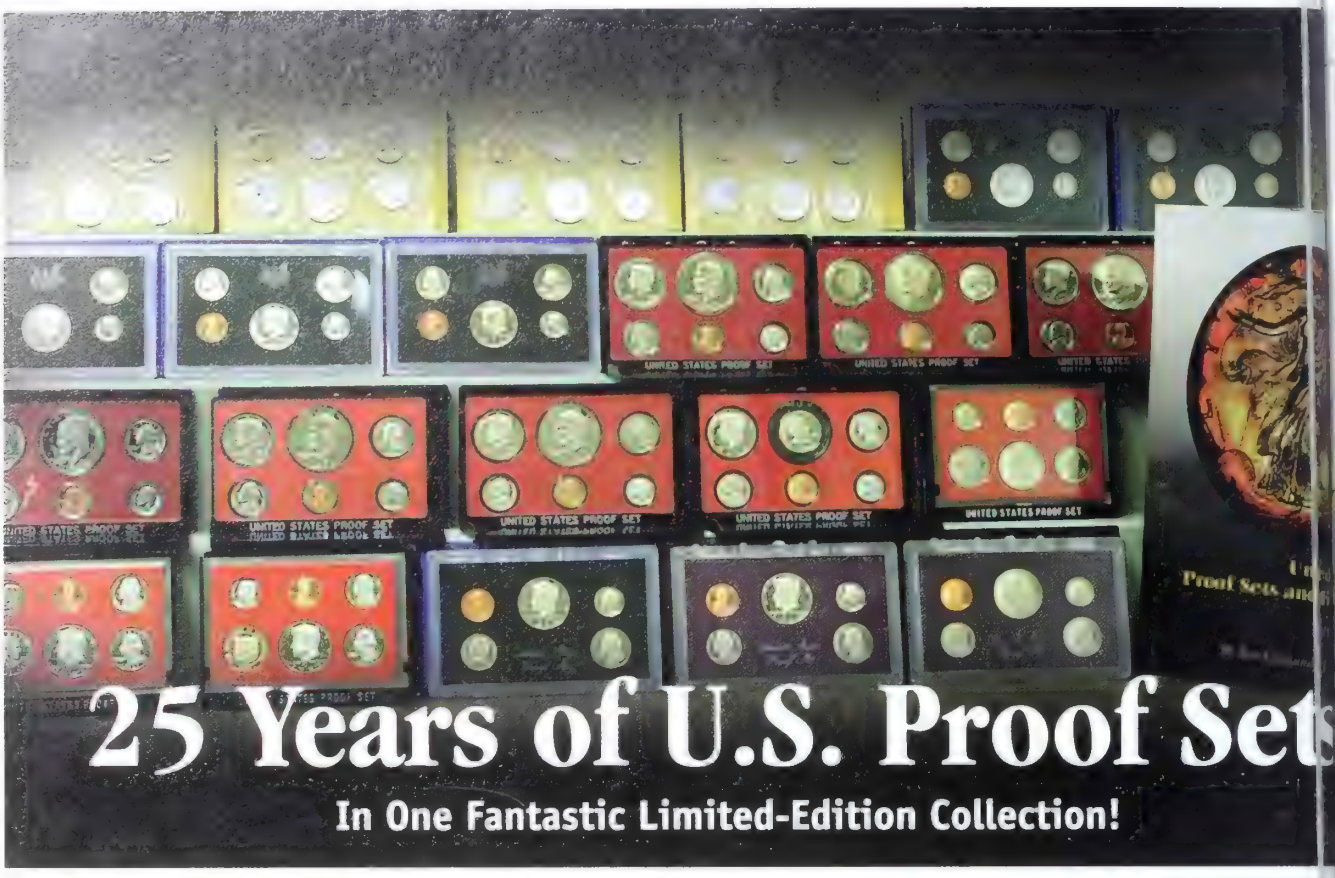
We chanted for a wizened old cobbler, repairing shoes under a veranda staircase; at the Lalibela Pub; at the entrances to tin huts; and in a compound where an old, Italian-style house, which probably once belonged to someone wealthy but was now tenements, had the words ONE LOVE spray-painted on its wall. At one point, Sofia became caught up with a troop of singing deacons armed with a drum and a copper horn—

Woahawoah!
We heard your voice from an ancient cloud!
Yes, we heard your voice from an ancient cloud!

—and the other kids, feeling left out, milled about at my knees. After about an hour, because everyone was exhausted, Tihitina lagging as far as a half-kilometer behind, we stopped not far from St. George's Church, where the Transfiguration mass had just let out. At the foot of St. George's, an eight-months-pregnant Mekdes had knelt and prayed for fifteen minutes one day last year, when her boyfriend had left with the key to their room and she was hungry and had nowhere to go. Each time I visited the church I noticed people—dandies in three-piece suits, women in finest Sunday wear, beggars—standing with their mouths to the stone wall of the building, kissing it, whispering. When I asked my grandmother about the practice, she explained that people's tears are flowing, they are hungry and tired, and they beg Jesus, Medhane Alem, the World's Medicine, to return, but that, at present, he is not listening very well. He seems reluctant to descend.

On the street, the kids tallied the results of their own more realistic appeals: between the six of them they had made birr 1.85. We all agreed that this was pretty meager, and I gave them birr 10 to divide among themselves. Sofia bumped shoulders with both Binyam and me, as any hip Addis Ababa teenager is wont to do, and the kids kissed us goodbye, before they all walked away—a line of children trickling slowly down toward A Cry for Help in Vain. ■

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MANDAEANS

By Eliot Weinberger



hey live, or lived, on the Iran border; who knows many are left? They are older than Islam; who vs how old? Some say they eretical Jews, some say one e Nazarene Christian sects, e a branch of Gnosticism or ichaeanism; some say they e from Ceylon.

y believe they are the de- dants of Noah's son Shem. the other peoples of the n descend from the union of th and a demon who dis- ed herself as Noah's wife.

y dislike the Jews, whom y call "an evil nation" nded by the renegade Man- ans Abraham and Moses, a ple "who do not agree on a single rance," who circumcise with swords sprinkle the blood on themselves, ose husbands abandon their wives lie down with each other. They be- e that Jerusalem was created when en evil stars slept with their moth- Each year they have a ceremony nonor the Egyptians who drowned en the Red Sea closed over them as y pursued Moses and the Jews. They those Egyptians were Mandaeans.

ey venerate John the Baptist, who s a Mandaean. They believe that n's mother became pregnant by drinking spring water, that the baby remained in her womb for nine months, nine days, nine hours, and nine minutes, and that he was born through her mouth.

They venerate Mary, the Jewish daughter of the king of Babel, who ran away from home and entered a Mandaean temple. There she fell into a deep sleep, and when she awoke she was Mandaean. Then she was transformed into a vine whose fruit was precious stones and pearls. Then she was transformed into a priestess, and birds and fish listened to her teachings, entranced. But then she was impregnated by an evil demon, and gave birth to Jesus, who was raised as a Mandaean, was even baptized by John himself, but who left the faith and became a false prophet, spreading lies and wickedness throughout the world.

They say the Christians have secret rites in which they worship a female donkey with three legs.

They dislike the Zoroastrians, who sleep with their mothers and sisters and eat the dead, who take vows of silence and abort their babies.

They call Muhammad the "son of the butcher," and believe that he is Mars, the planet of violence, and the lord of the end of time. They say that he "propagates a shout that is not a shout."

They say that Socrates was a Mandaean.

They believe that there have been four ages in the history of the world, each repopulated by a single couple. The first was destroyed by plague and the sword; the second by fire; the third, at the time of Noah, by flood. This, the fourth and last age, will be destroyed from the air. When there are no more Mandaeans left on earth, the earth will cease to exist.

Their Adam has a son named Adam, and no Cain. When Adam was a thousand years old, the Great Life determined that it was time for him

t Weinberger's new book, An Elemen- Thing, *will be published by New Direc- is this month.*

Ferrying Souls to the Afterlife (detail), from a Mandaean manuscript scroll
he Art Archive/Bodleian Library Oxford

to die. He refused, and insisted that the Angel of Death take his son, Sitil, instead: "In this world in which I live, the young vegetables are eaten before the old, tougher ones." Sitil then became the first to die.

They are not circumcised. They do not allow conversion.

They build a pool for baptism by the side of a river, with ditches so that the water can flow in and out. Beside it, they build a temple that is unadorned and completely empty inside.

They are baptized, with total immersion, once a week, and also baptized when they have been polluted: traveling among Muslims or foreigners, or forced to accept food or drink from them; eating fruits or vegetables that have not been purified in running water; being bitten by an animal; having quarreled with someone; contact with blood, whether from a nosebleed or menstruation; having touched a Mandaean who was in a state of pollution.

They cannot drink water from a tap or a bottle, for that "cuts" or kills the water. Only free-flowing water, from a river or spring, is alive. Running water is *iardna*, which derives its energy from the celestial Iardna, River of Light. Some say the Iardna is the River Jordan.

They believe that somewhere in the north, beyond the pole, is a world that is the double of this world, called Msunia Kusta. Every living Mandaean has a double there, and all the Mandaeans of the past live there, with plenty of food and music and cool breezes. No one ever speaks there, for everyone knows what everyone else wants to say.

Their rituals for birth or death or marriage or first baptism take whole days or many days. They believe their rituals strengthen the *laufa*, the concrete connection between this world and the other world. The initiation into the [illegible] of the priesthood takes sixty-eight days of continual rites. On [illegible] days the new priest m[illegible]

which stands for his wife in the other world.

They believe that unbaptized dead babies go to a special limbo where they are suckled by a tree with fruit shaped like breasts.

They do not lament their dead, for tears create a river that is difficult for the soul to cross. There are special ceremonies for those who die from drowning or burning, for those who are struck by lightning or fall out of a palm tree.

They are repelled by celibacy, and believe that the soul of a virgin dries up and dies, and after the body's death inhabits a black cloud. They believe that a person without children has no place in the world.

They do not wear leather, for the cow is a polluted animal.

They do not wear anything blue, for blue is the color of the imperfection and evil of the material world.

Each person has four names, one of which is secret.

They believe that ours is one of 365 universes.

Their day has twenty-four hours, and begins at dawn.

They have lucky and unlucky days, days to sow or harvest, hunt or fish, inhabit a new house, request a favor; days to cut one's nails or change one's clothes. A child born on the sixteenth day of the month will suffer from constipation. One should not wash one's head on the third. The thirtieth is the day for sex. The seventeenth is the luckiest, and those who fall ill will feel better in seventeen days.

Their alphabet has twenty-four letters. Both the first and the twenty-fourth letter are "A." The alphabet existed before the creation of the universe. Each letter emanated from the previous letter and praised it, until the entire alphabet became swollen with pride. The letters lined up on either side of "L," the middle lette[r] my camps facing each other, [t]letters realized that without o[ur] tion there could be no langu[age] they all grasped hands.

Their priests know twenty-[se]words that have never be[en] nounced or written in a bo[ok]. are transmitted written in s[ilk] then erased.

They inscribe their sacre[d] on bound sheets of lead, th[at] may be baptized, and that t[hey] last forever.

They copy their sacred bo[oks] long scrolls of paper. Eac[h] ends with the name of the sc[ribe] the name of the scribe who[se] was copied, and all the p[ast] scribes who had copied that [par]scroll. Some of these line[s] back nearly two thousand yea[rs].

They write magic texts on [pa]bowls that are buried upside d[own] trap the demons within.

Their most sacred book, the [Ginza] has a Right and Left half. At [the] of the Right, one turns th[e book] upside down to read the Left [half] seven contradictory accounts [of] origin of the universe.

The first outsider to write abo[ut] Mandaeans was the Dominican [friar] Ricoldo da Montecroce, or R[icoldo] Pennini, at the end of the thir[teenth] century. He traveled in Ar[menia] Turkey, Persia, and Mesopo[tamia] and was fluent in Arabic. He w[rote a] book in Latin attacking Islar[n], *Confutation of the Quran*, th[at] mained famous for three hu[ndred] years. Soon translated into G[erman] and from Greek into man[y] guages—Martin Luther wro[te a] German version a few years [after] his death—the original was f[ound] ten and in the sixteenth cent[ury] was translated back into Latin.

Late in life, da Montecro[ce], Pennini, wrote an *Itinerari[um]* *Book of Peregrinations in E[ight] Parts*. He wrote:

"In Baghdad, then, I saw strange things worthy of wonder.

pygmies, men a cubit tall. From
aist up they are in every way like
handsome enough though very
but their legs look like those of
:ken. It is of them that Aristotle
hey procreate in their third year
ie at the age of seven.
ı Baghdad I also saw a very
ge snake, that had four legs like
, but behind it a long horrible
's tail. It was quite docile with
aster, but was terribly threaten-
ith everyone else, in its move-
s and in sticking out its tongue.
an even stranger snake ap-
:d, with the face and hair of a
an, but with all the rest of its
like a terrible snake."
the Mandaeans he wrote:
ı very strange and singular
le, in terms of their rituals, lives
e desert near Baghdad. Many of
ı came to me and begged me in-
ntly to go and visit them. They
ı very simple people and they
ı to possess a secret law of God,
:h they preserve in beautiful
s. Their writing is a sort of mid-
way between Syriac and Arabic.
y detest Abraham because of cir-
cision and they venerate John
Baptist above all. They live only
a few rivers in the desert. They
ı day and night so as not to be
demned by God, even to the
t that a woman prepares the flour
ake bread with one hand, hold-
he other in running water so that
ıe were to die, she wouldn't be
demned by God for having a
d covered with flour. They not
/ baptize their children, but also
r animals, and when a cow gives
h they baptize both cow and calf.
:y say a kind of mass and sacrifice
ad and raisins, and when they
ship, they wear seven vestments.
:y have no contact with any of
other peoples of this land except
uy and sell; and they do not eat
ad touched by a person of another
gion. They pray very much and
'e a great respect for marriage."

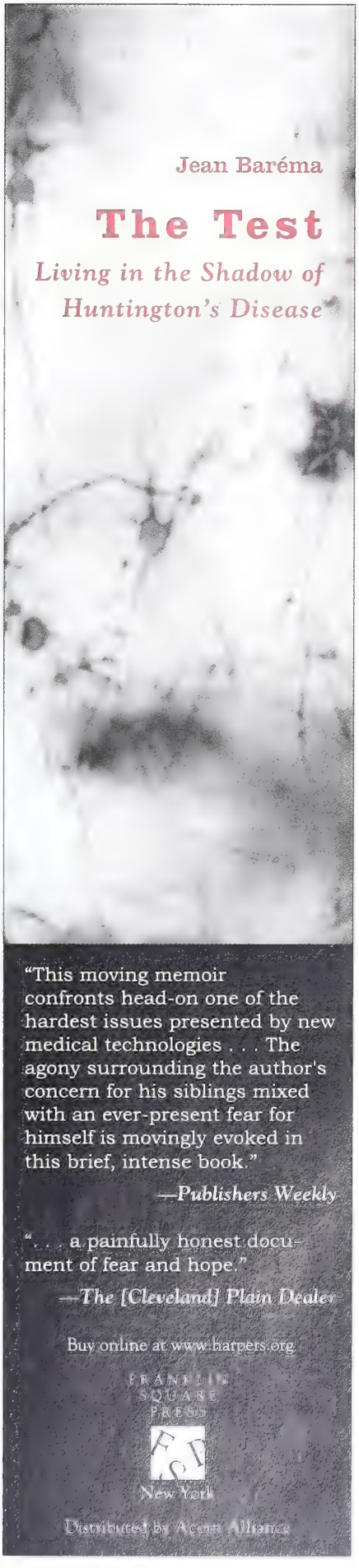
eir scrolls tell the story of Di-
ukht, a half man, half book, who
by the waters between the worlds,
ding himself. A small book named
ai comes to him and says: "There is
e that was there from the begin-
ning, and there is Truth that was there before the beginning."

Dinanukht falls asleep and has a vision: "Then came Ewat, the Holy Spirit, to me in my dwelling and said to me: 'Why are you lying there, Dinanukht? Why do you like to sleep? I am the Life that was there from the beginning. I am the Truth that was there before the beginning. I am radiance. I am light. I am death. I am life. I am darkness. I am light. I am error. I am truth. I am destruction. I am creation. I am light. I am error. I am the wound. I am healing. I am the exalted man who is older and who was there before the maker of heaven and earth. I have no peers among kings and there is as yet no crown in my kingdom. There is no human being who can bring me a message in the foggy clouds of darkness.'"

So Dinanukht sets out to ascend through the upper worlds, and in the end reaches the last world before the World of Light itself. There, all the contradictions of the world are stored, and the souls of those Mandaeans who have not yet been born on earth. Dinanukht wants to travel on, but is told he must go home to tell the others what he has seen. When he returns, his wife, Nuraita, thinks he has become insane.

Almeh wa Heyee Zaknen: the World and Life be praised.*

* *Recently, the current plight of the Mandaeans in Iraq became known, thanks to a study by Preti Taneja for Minority Rights Group International, and reporting by Patrick Cockburn for* The Independent *and Angus Crawford for the BBC. Protected by the secular regime of Saddam Hussein, they have now become the targets of both Sunni and Shiite extremists, and have suffered executions, torture, kidnappings, rapes, the burning of their houses and shops, forced conversions, and forced circumcisions. The Mandaean religion forbids them to carry guns or engage in any form of violence, making them particularly vulnerable. Of the estimated 60,000 Mandaeans in Iraq in the 1990s, only about 5,000 remain. Formerly prosperous as merchants and goldsmiths, most of those who managed to escape are now living in extreme poverty in Syria and Jordan. Five members of Congress have now taken up their cause and are urging the State Department to include the Mandaeans in its refugee resettlement program. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, as many as 2 million Iraqis have fled the country since the American invasion. Only 466 Iraqi refugees have been allowed into the United States in the last four years, as a larger influx would indicate that many Iraqis prefer not to live under "freedom."* ■



ON THE SHOW

By Wells Tower



My boss on the Pirate is a man named Leon Delaney, according to his nametag. Ellis, his lean, fawning lieutenant, calls him Mister Leon, so I call him that too. Mister Leon has a voice that sounds like it runs on gasoline, and it has been going all day, pouring out an epic balladry of lies.

"They said I had a cancer on my shoulder blade, and it'd cost ten grand to get it out of there. Instead, I drank some gin, and my buddy opened me up with a box knife. He scraped out a mess of these little purple marbles, and I've been fine ever since." "You ever see that movie with Steve Martin, happens at the circus? Had me a little part in it. One day on the set, Steve Martin came up to me, told me to go get him a root beer and fast or he'd get me canned. So I turned around and poled the son of a bitch."

But now Mister Leon stops talking to witness in silence the changing of the light. A girl and a boy walk past our ride. The boy has his face pressed against her neck, and she has her eyes closed in a fever of the dusk. A pretty man in suede shoes comes revolving down the lane calling, "Tessa, Tessa." Across the way, the Chinese man who runs the Whacky Bike takes up the cry, crooning, "Tessa, Tessa" as the man goes past. Mister Leon smokes and smiles, disclosing a crescent of worn gray teeth.

The Pirate is a fiberglass replica of a wooden frigate's hull with a mast in the center, supporting a crow's nest, a Jolly Roger, and a gap-toothed plastic brigand with a hook for a hand. At one end of the boat is a mock cabin, flanked by a pair of dazed-looking female mascots—busts of towheaded[n] ens with their bo[s] pulled down to sho[w] bare breasts. The [b] about forty feet lo[n] twelve feet wide, an[d] ter Leon says it w[e] nine tons.

"Come on and ri[de] pirate ship," Mister [L] hollers at the people[.]

Ellis stands on th[e] ing, throwing his arm[s] convulsion of salesma[n]ship. "Come on now, peop[le]," yells with lots of [e] "Come be a buccane[er]!"

A young mother a[p]proaches at the gate. A colossal [m] his leg in a bright blue [c]ast stands crookedly at he[r] He has a head of blac[k] and a red mottled fac[e] fresh ground chuck. His mother [in] is a blonde that shines white, an[d] wears white jeans and a white l[ace] top. Her face is starkly powdered[,] completing a paleness so utter t[hat] makes her hard to see.

The boy limps along the lan[e] and then he crawls up the t[en] shallow steps to the upper deck[,] pitches himself onto the seat. H[e] panting beside three young g[irls] who look at the boy as though [he]'s ing a turd in their midst.

Down in the tin pagoda that h[ouses] es the controls, Mister Leon pres[ses] button. Hydraulic hoses twitc[h]

Wells Tower's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"The Kids Are Far Right," appeared in the December 2006 issue.*

ıgine well. The ship shudders
hen begins to move. It swings
ceptibly at first, its movement
ıe direction magnifying its
in the other. The happy terror
. The girls claw at the lap bar
ıriek, their eyes clenched to as-
s. Two teenage boys amuse each
by holding the plastic maidens'
ts. This is nothing new to the
ens, who have been caressed by
any strangers' hands that the
ish hue of the fiberglass shows
gh. But the boys are not ready
he new momentum of their
l—the feeling of it going from
sses-thickness at the trough of
oat's arc to weightless vapor at
pogee. Panic takes them. They
the breasts and clutch the lap
o.

ow I notice the fat child. He has
ed out from under the bar, and
down on all fours on the floor of
boat. He wants off, and he
ks he can just lunge onto solid
nd. But there is no telling how
y small bright bits he'll be torn
when he falls into the glistening
k gears down in the engine well.
ell at Ellis, and he yells at Mister
ı, who hits the brakes, which en-
with a plaintive bark. Ellis runs
up to the top platform, jogging
ıgside the boat with his arms
ched out. Then he hoists the damp
l from the boat. "You pudgy little
il," he says. "Don't want to be a pi-
huh?"

he boy is crying, and his mother is
y. She grabs the boy's wrist hard
ıgh that his flesh swells around her
ers. "Damn it, Randy. Didn't I tell
fifteen times, go on the teacups?
n't I say that?"

he boy's head sinks into his
ulders. His mother tells us she
ıts her money back. That was four
ars worth of tickets, and he didn't
n get half of any kind of ride.

Can't happen," Mister Leon says.
put the tickets in the lockbox,
they don't trust us with the key.
puts her lips at a tilt and smiles.
could let her go, couldn't we?
w about she gets a ride, and we
it square?

Mister Leon lifts the chain. "Lady,
can ride all day," he says. "On me."
She leaves the boy sniveling at the gate. The ride starts up. The woman's hair is something to see, a brilliant white fan in the wind. Mister Leon joins Ellis and me on the platform to look at her.

"Would you?" Ellis asks me, nodding at the woman.

"Yes," I say.

"God if I wouldn't," says Ellis. "I'd eat her whole damn *child* just to taste the thing he squeezed out of."

"Blonde," says Mister Leon, as though this is a holy word. "Blonde to the bone."

This is a county fair, a hayseed fair, sponsored by the firefighters of Indian River County, Florida. Up until last night, I had been living with my mother and my stepfather in their house outside St. Petersburg. I had been there seven months, on a break from college, and my mother seemed glad enough to have me around. My stepfather, a retired pharmacist, treated me with curt indifference, preferring to spend his days in solitude, reading or tending to his rosebushes, which put forth blooms as red and heavy as beef hearts. He is not a selfish man, but he does not see why he should have to spend his retirement supporting a jobless twenty-one-year-old, and last night he told me so. I called him an asshole, and the old man slapped me with a force that made a white light blossom behind my eyes. Suddenly, we were in a leggy scramble on the kitchen linoleum. I pinned him easily enough, and the antique gristle in his biceps creaked under my knees. It embarrassed me, finding myself in that grunting farce with a man three times my age. I was ready to apologize when a demon seized the old man, and he started bawling awful oaths. He said how much he'd always hated me, and that he'd kill me before he let me break his marriage up.

This astonished me—I'd always liked him, basically, and I was glad he and my mother had made a life together. I told him I would leave his house for good. The old man gulped and nodded. But when I got off of him, he did a move where he clamped his teeth on my inner thigh. I had to punch him twice on the side of the head to get him to let go. I got him pinned again, and we rested for a little while, him bleeding just slightly from his spotted ear and me trying to make sense of the scene. My mother was out on the sun porch, where we could hear her wailing.

When his gasping had slowed, I asked him if I could let him go. "I'd appreciate that," he said, calm as can be. But the instant he was free, he bit me on my forearm. He got pretty deep into the flesh, and he was shaking his head like a dog, trying to tear the piece free. The vigor of it was sickening. I hit him with my elbow. His glasses broke, but he wouldn't give up the mouthful. I elbowed him again. Something in his face snapped, and he let go. Blood was running out of my arm pretty well. I stood up and kicked him as hard as I could in his side. Then I kicked him again and ran out of the house. I ran past my mother, through the rose garden, where the sprinklers were coming on.

After midnight, I snuck back into the house. My mother's purse was hanging on the coatrack. I took out ninety dollars. I caught the first bus I could, which was bound for Norton Beach, on the far coast.

What could I do when I arrived in Norton Beach? I wandered around some and then started walking out of town. I had gone five miles when I saw the high radial skeleton of the Giant Wheel rising white and empty above the orange groves. On the railing at the Pirate was a sign, HELP WANTED, written in ballpoint pen on the grease-speckled underlid of a pizza box. "You like to travel?" Mister Leon asked. His eyes panned along my thin arms and narrow chest. "Like hard work, heavy work?" And I said, "Yes, I do."

Mister Leon is a giant. He has a head like a fire hydrant and palms the size of stove hobs. Brilliant pink psoriasis afflicts his throat and arms. "Hungry?" he asks me during a lull in business. He hands me a ten-dollar bill. "It comes back to me on Friday." He then lists the other sums that will come out of my pay: twenty dollars for a peppermint-striped shirt and red hat, fifteen for an I.D., forty dollars per week for a bunk on the

...val train. I stand blinking. I've ... the giant eighty-five dollars.

Ellis, the lean lieutenant, says he's ... on his berth, and he seems to want me to have it. There is a loneliness to Ellis, or perhaps it is just the earnest brightness of his eyes and his weak, dimpled chin. Later, he will tell me that he is only thirty years old, but his face looks like a crumpled paper bag smoothed by a dirty hand.

"I appreciate it," I say.

"That's the top bunk, understand? Bottom's mine. I haven't slept on a top bunk since I was a kid." His voice is hostile now, as though to atone to the giant for his generosity in offering up the bed.

Two policemen with heavy belts and squawking radios come down the sandy boulevard. They stop at the Pirate. They murmur to each other and then beckon me over.

They haven't seen me here before. What is my name? The lady officer asks for my driver's license. "So tell me," she says. "Do you like to get it young?"

"Do what?" I say.

She asks me where I was around 4:00 P.M. I tell her I was here. She looks at Mister Leon, who turns up his palms, as though to say, "Search me."

"But I was here," I say. "Or I was walking here. I was out there on Route 5. I'm sure there's people who saw me."

"That's real good," she says. "They're gonna love you to pieces at the D.A.'s."

"Now hold on—"

"Own up to it or don't," she says. "We'll get it all straight when we come back to take samples of your all's blood and hair." Then the officers recede toward the Ghost Train.

"What the hell was that?" I ask Mister Leon. He is busy with his psoriasis, rasping the sloughings onto the vinyl cushion of his stool, heaping the yield into a little mound with his finger.

"Somebody took a little boy into a portajohn and put it to him," says Ellis mildly, as though he's discussing an onset of cool weather. "They been saying it was someone on the show." He puts a hand on my shoulder. "Hey, bro, don't look so gut-shot. They can't take your hair and all that shit without a ... probable cause."

"No, look, I didn't do anything at all."

Ellis gives me a comforting squeeze. "But even if you did."

Mister Leon brushes off the stool and turns to me. "Ever do any time?"

"No."

The giant nods. "Question: where's the best state in America to get executed?"

I say if I was getting executed, it wouldn't make much difference to me which state I was in.

"Like hell it wouldn't," says the giant. "Tell him, Ellis."

"Maryland," says Ellis.

Mister Leon screws up his cheek. "Not *Maryland*," he says.

"Delaware. I mean Delaware."

"Why's that?" I ask.

"In Delaware, you get a choice of how they kill you," Leon says. "You can still choose hanging. If they miss on the first shot—leave you paralyzed, whatever—they have to let you free. That's the law. And I've never heard of anyone making it through lethal injection. At least with hanging you've got a chance. You'd be in funny shape, but you've got a sporting chance."

The eyes of the fairgoers stay large with looking. They are starved for sights in this part of the state, where the only things to look at are citrus orchards, the empty stadium where a major league baseball team used to do its spring training, and the green void of the sea. Tonight they watch the air, which teems with spinning steel and wailing bodies. They watch the World's Largest Steer, and the young people parading their livestock in the 4-H barn, and also the Weeki Wachee Girls, three pretty ladies dressed as mermaids who swim in the luminous aquarium that throws trembling bands of light onto the pony rotary.

Mister Leon, Ellis, and the other ride jocks and concession folk watch Gary, the man who runs the Zipper. The Zipper is a chainsaw-shaped ellipse with tumbling wire cages along its length. When the ride is running, the cages spill a silver hail of coins, or wallets, or sunglasses, or sometimes drugs, so Gary slips beneath the Zipper. He sways and topples to the rhythm of the ride, ducking the cages by mere inch... vesting fallen riches from th... His dance is full of weird and... ing grace, vaguely Oriental, ... ing dream of wind. If Gary w... lightly retarded, as I am tol... Mister Leon and Ellis conjec... could make good money on a ... Las Vegas or New York. ... fate laid a finger on his br...

Gary dances here ... people on the show.

A girl, fifteen perh... younger, with thick red h... freckles across her nose, ri... boat twelve straight times. S... an all-you-can-ride pass, whi... fifteen dollars at the gate. Sh... a white sweater. A gold cha... mers at her throat. She ma... nervous. She puts me in min... the cruel beauties of my high... days, and I cannot look up... red-haired rider without suffer... hot-hearted fears.

At her thirteenth ride, t... stops and looks at me bef... gets on.

"Hey," she says. I say hey... And then all I can think to d... her how she likes the Pirate. ... ously, I hate it," she says, lau... She is sucking a cube of phosp... cent candy, which throws a... light from her mouth.

"I don't know how you rid... many times without getting ... I say.

"It doesn't make me sick. It... es me, just clears out all the th... to where there's nothing in my... I love it."

"Sounds nice."

"Can you make it go extra... this time?"

"I'll see what I can do."

I give the signal to Mister Leo... ride starts up, and this time she... her eyes on me as she swings pa... lips parted, her m... radiant green blur.

When the fair shuts down a... night, I carry our ticket boxe... truck parked behind the ha... house, and then I jog over to t... that will carry us to the carnival... The bus is an old red-and-white ... ways. It smells of sweat, old bee...

ıe seats list into the aisle. The
vs are cataracted with grime.
estination window above the
ield says PALM BEACH TOUR.
ıding in the aisle beside my
vo Mexican men are shouting
ı other in fast Spanish. One
ıis hands to the other's throat
esses his thumb against the
ipe. The choking victim is
g. He has flipped open a knife
touching the point to the oth-
ı's belly. The man drops his
They laugh, a good joke.
carnival train rests in a pine
on the shoulder of a lightless
op road. Ellis leads me to our
which is five feet deep and six
ng, too short to accommodate
eetless rubber mattresses, which
the bunks in crinkled, obtuse
climb onto the top bunk. Being
feet is ecstasy. I would like to
but words keep coming out of
who starts unspooling the story
ıself—the farm he grew up on
ntucky, the hundred acres his
still owns there.
:an skin just about anything,"
lls me. "Squirrel, deer. Even
ed a boar once. Blocked it out
f—hams, shoulders, side meat,
at stuff. Nobody here knows
bout me." He says he did some
or selling LSD, and some more
for beating up a cop. He used
tall carpets for a living. Maybe
I've saved some money, Ellis
sts, we can pool our cash and
ill carpet our berth, the floors
he walls, and ours will be the
room on the carnival train.
ıas been on the show three
s. "So you think you'll stick
ıd a while?"
es," I say.
ar. Talk to me after teardown."
xplains that two days from
when the fair ends, we will
antle the boat and put it on the
, bound for Alpharetta, Geor-
Ellis's hand appears in the
ice between my mattress and
wall. Three of his fingers are
to the second knuckle. "That
er Leon dropped a beam on it,
afterward he laughed about it.
killed you or me, I don't think
even look on that as being a
day."

I tell him I'll look out.

"No disrespect, but you don't know what to look out for. I'll look out for you. I'll do all the high-steel work, for the next stop or two, anyway. We'll help each other out. Nobody survives out here by theirself. You need a partner on the show."

Ellis cracks a beer. "Here's the deal: can I trust you?"

"Sure."

"You like working under someone else, or are you the kind who likes to be his own man?"

"Own man," I say.

"Me, too, and I've got a plan in mind to do something about it. Leon is a drug freak. Anytime the boss ain't looking, he goes under the ride and eats a ball of dope. If I can rig it up to where the boss can catch him at it, Leon's out, and you and me run the boat how we like. Me as the foreman, you as lieutenant, we'll both of us be making real money. Listen, we'll have the world by the sack."

The light goes out at last. Someone reclines in the next room, pressing on the sheet-metal wall I'm resting my head against. Through the wall, I can hear the snapping, fibrous strife of a brush being tugged through tangled hair, a comforting, womanish racket.

One of the windowpanes is broken in our berth. Mosquitoes come and go freely, but so do fireflies, sparking brief green constellations in the dark.

I have hardly slept at all when the door in the next room opens and slams shut. "I mean, you ate my heart," a woman's voice is saying. "Ate it like a buzzard, straight out of my chest." There is a gagging back of tears. "Oh God, Wade, why do I love you so goddamned much? Only thing I love more than you is my kids." Now the sobbing comes. "No, fuck it, Wade, I love you more than my kids."

"I've already spelled this out for you, Dana, a thousand times."

"You got any cigarettes?"

"Here, take the pack, and don't say I didn't ever do nothing for you."

Perhaps an hour later, noises in the other berth, the one at my feet, wake me up. "You got on my wrong side, Lucas," a man's voice says. "I am really going to fuck you, friend."

A crash, and the tin wall buckles under my feet. "Look, I don't even know you, man," a high male voice cries out.

There is one more loud thud. A simpering moan goes up. The door slams shut. The night goes quiet again.

I wake around 4:00 A.M., wondering if the throb in my bitten arm is the onset of infection.

At 5:00 A.M. a train passes on the next track, a sound so close and apocalyptic that my heart beats wrong for a time.

The sun returns at six, and wild parakeets squabble madly in the pines. Through all of this, Ellis sleeps as deeply as a child. His grinding teeth declare the depth of his slumber, a sound like someone eating chalk.

At nine o'clock, the bus carries us back to the fairgrounds. It is a day of wicked clouds, sooty crags, and canyons darkening overhead. By noon the sky opens, and the fairgoers shrink like melting snow into little drifts under the concession canopies, and then disappear entirely. The midway is vacant. Mister Leon is sitting on the steps of the pagoda, watching the raindrops pock the sand. He tilts a can of chicken soup against the purple cushion of his lip, pouring the cold yellow broth past his teeth. Then he sighs with satisfaction, a burst-valve noise. "I love days like this," he says.

The boss of all the ride jocks comes by and loans us money for lunch. For three dollars, I buy a slice of pizza, slick with pooled oils. A young woman is at the counter, drinking half-and-half from a pint box. Her face and neck show a plague of violet hickeys. A man comes over, eating a chicken leg. Still chewing, he leans in to kiss her, and she turns away. He winks at me, then endeavors to pull her collar down to expose a full breast. His fingers leave a cordovan smear of sauce on her neck. "Would you quit?" she says. "You're embarrassing me." I

in the train.

"You're embarrassing yourself,"

ognize his voice

have the animal shows. There's a pay phone in the far corner. I should call my mother, but I don't want to think about what's gone on in that house since I left. No doubt they've talked things around to where the blame for the fight is mine alone. The thought fills me with nausea and fatigue. I leave the pay phone be.

The rain departs, and the ochre glare of the muddled carnival lights once more infests the sky. Ellis, it would seem, has abandoned his scheme of getting the boss to catch Mister Leon doping on the job. When the giant slips down beneath the platform to take his dose, Ellis follows. The men are all bleary cheer when they resurface.

"Hey, you like magic tricks?" Mister Leon asks me with a grin.

"Yes," I say.

He sucks mightily on his cigarette, and then he taps a long caterpillar of ash on the front of my shirt. "Abracadabra, you're an ashtray."

"Now come on, Leon," says Ellis. "This is our buddy here. This dude's on our team."

Mister Leon squints at Ellis rheumily, as though catching a faint whiff of Ellis's concealed treasons.

"Nobody's on my team," says Mister Leon. A sudden abstracted melancholy grips him. "Shit, there's such nobody on my team, *I'm* not even on my team."

A woman stands at the gate, gazing at nothing. "Come on, lady," Ellis howls at her. "Come be a buccaneer."

Her face is as blank and guileless as a peeled apple. "What type of ride is this?" she asks me, and I realize she is blind.

"It's a kind of a boat," I say. "It swings back and forth."

go upside down."

"No, but it goes really fast."

"But not upside down?"

"No."

help me on it,

She clasps my hand and presses her warm, solid forearm to mine. We make our way up the platform. With each step, her foot hovers in the air, searching for treacherous changes in the ground beneath her. Ellis starts the ride. I keep a close eye on the blind woman, ready to throw the brake switch if I see her start to panic. But she doesn't. Even as the ride goes vertical, and everyone else is screaming, she wears an easeful look, as though she'd just recalled the answer to a question that had been worrying her for a very long time.

When the boat subsides, I help the woman off the platform. She is giggling uncontrollably. She keeps saying, "Thank you, thank you." And I start giggling, too. She could not have enjoyed riding the Pirate as much as I enjoy the sight of her laughing face.

Now it's dark. This is an instant when the carnival lights have finally bullied the sun away, and the sky glows the colors of infection. The egrets notice, and all at once they flee the drainage canal behind the parking lot. They settle, pale and watchful, in the high limbs of the live oak trees behind the Giant Wheel, but they cannot sleep with the midway lights on them. For a time, the trees are whitely restless with the labor of the egrets stowing and unstowing anxious wings.

The darkness brings the red-haired girl back to me. Again she is sucking her incandescent candy. She takes a seat next to where I'm standing. I can smell the lemony-piney scent of her shampoo.

"Remember me?" she asks.

"Nope," I say, grinning.

"Shut up. Yes, you do," she says. "I'm Katie. I've seen you so many times I thought we should get to know each other."

"It's good to know you then," I say.

She slips her cool bouquet of fingers into my hand. We talk while the ride fills up.

"Do you know any secrets?" she asks.

"Yes."

"Fair stuff, I mean. Like, can you show me how to win at the games?"

"Yeah. Don't mess with

the first place."

"Oh, don't be stale. Th

show you the tricks?"

"Yeah, but I can't tell you

"Why not?"

"I don't know. They'd fe

the mermaids."

"Sounds like a thrill for v

cocks a coquette's eye at

you get a break, or do you j

all the time?"

I tell her I get a dinner b

nine. "Why?"

She shrugs. "You could

some crap. I'm wild about cra

I ask where she'll be at nin

"How about over there,

thing where you toss the dim

can meet me there."

"I will."

The felonious old elec

crackles in my groin. A he

brine builds behind my eyes

swings once mo

trots off into the ni

Break time, and I am

joyous. I run first to the park

where I piss in the lee of a

trailer. Since yesterday's run-i

the law, I am careful to avo

portable toilets at all costs.

go to meet my Katie. But I

find her at the dime pitch. T

women stand at the rope, fl

coins at red circles on a lin

mat. The dime pitch of

wretched bounty—thrift-

crockery, cloudy pilsner glasse

fee mugs bearing obscure slog

DILWORTH COLLEGE GRANDDA

WEAVER COUNTY RECYCLING

GRAM—and heaps of yellow

shirts. One says in hand-scr

letters, beneath a portrait of A

Davis, KEEP ABORTION SAFE

FUNKY. While the attendant

looking, one of the old w

places the toe of her loafer o

mistossed coin and draws it bac

der the rope.

I toss four of my own dear d

and Katie does not appear. I

for twenty minutes under the

pitch shanty, and then stalk of

with shame and anger.

On my way back to the Pir

spot a column of siren lights c

ing up the midway. The sh

l, and in fact there is a circle
ness, a stillness of catastrophe,
ng out from the boat. Satan's
is empty and not moving, and
naises Volantes do not swing.
ars to me that Ellis and Leon,
the influence of drugs, perhaps
to close the lap bars, spilled a
f patrons into the engine well,
mehow I will catch the blame
is. I jog the rest of the way to
at.
ter Leon and Ellis stand on the
eck, staring down behind the
As it turns out, it's the Zipper
nas drawn the EMTs and the
ng cruisers. I mount the deck
an ambulance departing.
hat happened?" I ask.
ster Leon glares at me briefly
urns back to watch a young boy
ing the last of a candy apple.
s Gary, man," says Ellis, shak-
is head, though I can see in his
certain grave pleasure at bear-
he bad news. He explains im-
ntly that Gary's dancing failed
onight, and that he was struck
ne skull by a spinning cage.
pped him like that," Ellis says,
oing his fingers and uttering a
p cluck in the deeps of his
k. "Took a rough knock, but
a tough little fucker. He'll be
out here in two weeks. Tempo-
setback is all it is."
ister Leon snorts. "And I mean
porary. If he makes it to the hos-
, I'll buy you a lemonade."
or an interval, the police and
nen mill around. They rope off
midway twenty feet on either
of the Zipper. Then the uni-
ed officials saunter to their cars.
rides start up again. Mister Leon
rns to the control pagoda, and
Pirate is back in business. We are
bed with customers. Somehow,
l has gotten out that the Pirate
gives the best view of the
accident scene.

At midnight, we are packing up
o back to the train when the boss
s us a visit. He is here, I'm assum-
to shore up morale among the
jocks after Gary's injury, to noti-
s of new precautions to forestall
ure accidents. In fact, he has
ne by to tell us we'll be pulling an
all-night shift this evening. With Gary down, there will be no one to dismantle the Zipper tomorrow night when the fair packs up for Georgia. The Pirate crew will have to break it down tonight. "Like hell we will," says the giant.

The boss grudgingly hands Leon forty dollars. Ellis smiles and holds out his hand for a share, but Leon has already slipped the bills into his pocket.

The fair empties out, and we get to work. We take down the light stuff first, the railings, the racks of lightbulbs, and pile them in a trailer. We hoist the decking, which is four-by-eight sheets of quarter-inch steel. Nobody works with gloves, or offers them. When the decking's loaded, my fingers are numb, and I've got deep red creases in my palms.

We take up the steel joists beneath the platform, beams that take two men straining hard to move, so heavy that when we set them down, I feel dizzy and unmoored, as though I'm going to float off like a soap bubble. No one talks to pass the time. Ellis keeps up a stream of mumbled curses, swearing oaths against Mister Leon when his back is turned. Leon works relentlessly, in silence.

Ellis and I are humping a joist, Ellis in the lead. He's moving fast and carelessly. He pulls me into a stray I-beam lying in the dirt. My shin racks hard against the beam's sharp lip, and I drop the joist in the sand. "Hell's the matter with you?" Ellis says.

I lift my cuff. Blood is darkening my sock. "Walk it off," says Ellis.

We work without stopping until the blue of morning comes. We've been on our feet for nearly twenty hours. One leg of my jeans has torn from hip to ankle. My face is black with axle grease, and my skull pulses and buzzes with fatigue. I consider sprinting for the woods, but I am not sure what the men would do if they caught up to me.

Leon announces that somebody, Ellis or me, he doesn't care which, has got to climb up into the ride to lash the Zipper's cages against its chassis with ratchet straps so that the whole piece can be lowered safely with the crane. "I ain't doing it," says Ellis. "Let the new man have a shot."

The giant gives me a weary look and hands me a dozen looped straps. "Go on, get up there then."

"Damn it, Ellis," I say feebly. "You said you'd do the high climbing."

He coughs and spits an oyster onto the sand. "I changed my mind," he says.

I climb into the Zipper's rusted spars on trembling arms. Halfway up, my foot slips on a greased bolt. I tumble backward, just barely getting hold of a carriage pin to arrest my fall. If I'd missed, I'd have rattled down through thirty feet of steel spans like a pachinko ball. The sound of the men's laughter rises up to me with the crying of the egrets as they stir.

When I make it back to earth, the giant claps me on the back.

"Enjoying yourself?" the giant asks.

"Not so much," I croak.

He raises his lip, exposing a darkened tooth like a sunflower hull. He says, "I guess that's why they call it work. The best part is, you get to do it all over again tonight."

Before the fair opens for its final day, we crawl beneath the ride to sleep. Ellis and Leon doze on sheets of splintered plywood. Preferring grass and sand beneath my cheek, I sleep on bare ground. Before I nod off, a beautiful, tiny green lizard walks across my hand. I grab for him and he springs free, but before he runs off I manage to pin him with my thumb in a patch of brittle grass. He turns his head to look at me. He has a long impassive face and a deep-set mouth, which gives the impression that he's smiling. His tiny rib cage, made of bones no larger than a human hair, heaves like a bellows. His skin, I notice, is a mosaic of tiny yellow and blue discs; he isn't green at all. I let him go, and he skedaddles off toward the Crab Rangoon stand.

I sleep so deeply that it takes me a while to stir even when Leon starts the ride above me, a noise like an air bombardment. I sit up and brush away the sand. My arms and ankles, I see, are broken out in

[illegible] scrimmage, pearly boils Ellis, awake on his pallet and drinking a beer, beams a jeer at me. "Got a lit-[illegible]," he asks.

The ground around me, I notice now, is a bustling realm of fire ants. I jump up and swat at my clothes while Ellis laughs and laughs.

Gary, the dancer, is in a coma and is not expected to last the night. We learn this from a young man with a notepad, covering the accident for the local press. "Hey, so talk to me," the young reporter says, wanding the butt of his ballpoint pen at Leon, Ellis, and me. "What can you tell me about Gary Mason? The kind of guy he was?"

The giant looks back at him with lightless eyes, then goes to smoke in the pagoda. Ellis is happy to talk. "Gary was a seriously generous person," says Ellis. "He would give you his last dollar if he was starving to death."

The reporter gives a cold, superior smile. "You know what I heard from the company lawyer? That a few years back he pulled a bid in Jackson Correctional for putting his hands on a six-year-old." The young man lights a cigarette, seeming to relish his custody of this ugly information. "So naturally, they're trying to pin that thing from the other night on him, but to me, there's something about it that doesn't pass the smell test." He takes a languorous drag of his cigarette and narrows his eyes at the Chaises Volantes, as though the Chaises Volantes do not pass the smell test either. Then he goes across the way to Wade's Hoop-La, the basketball toss. Amazingly, the reporter sinks three shots out of five, even though the hoop is rigged and shaped like a kidney bean.

At dusk, one of the high brass from the carnival office stops by. He is an old man with a kind face, a bow tie, and a clean white shirt. He looks at me, my face and torn jeans, and winces. "My God, son. You need to put some new trousers on."

"Want to give me yours," I say.

"What's that shit all over your face? You look like a chimney sweep. Get yourself cleaned up if you want to keep your job."

I go to the 4-H pavilion. I call my mother's house collect. Her voice comes on the line.

"Hello," I say.

"Aha," she says. Her voice is hard. "Good to know you're still breathing."

"How would you like to drive to Norton Beach?" I ask her. I explain to her about the carnival, that I need to get out of here.

"Well, I think it sounds enriching, honestly."

"Come and get me," I say.

"David has a fractured rib and a crack in his cheekbone," she says. "It's not all your fault, I know. You're both barbarous idiots, as far as I'm concerned. If I weren't the fool that I am, I'd tell the two of you to go fly a kite and live out my crone-hood in solitude."

"Will you please come and get me?"

"What you ask is impossible. I can't bring you back here."

"Could you wire me some money?"

"A hundred dollars is missing from my purse."

"Ninety," I say.

"Ah, my apologies," she says.

"Just get in the car," I say.

The line is silent a moment. She sighs. "Look, darling, I'm sorry, but now isn't a good time. The Hendersons will be here in an hour, and I've got a dozen crabs to stuff. Call me in two or three days, and we can talk things over. David's still in a fury."

"In two or three days I'll be dead," I say.

"Don't be ridiculous. I love you, and check in soon." She hangs up.

I emit a sob. I should run for the forest and sleep in the orange groves. Instead, I go and watch the Bengal tigers that live in a cage in the back of a trailer across from the Jolly Flume. The big male is in a fix of his own. He paces ten steps forward in his cage, turns, and paces ten steps back. The smaller female stands in his path and tries to nuzzle his cheek, but he has lost his mind and won't be put off his route.

Then, through the wire [illegible] the cage, who do I see but [illegible] Katie, the green glow in h[illegible] bobbing like a beacon. I set [illegible] her. The midway is cramm[illegible] moist, plodding crowds on [illegible] night of the fair. I dodge t[illegible] the people, past the Dime T[illegible] the Jungle Girl. I call Katie'[illegible] but she cannot hear me over [illegible] of people and machines. Sh[illegible] boy with her, I see. They ar[illegible] ng briskly down the empty [illegible] the midway, past the Forty[illegible] the trough where for five [illegible] you can pan a sack of riggo[illegible] prestudded with unprecious [illegible] run after her on aching knee[illegible] Katie's name. I am just behi[illegible] now. She turns and stares [illegible] Her face goes hard, sieved [illegible] warmth and recognition. I re[illegible] her, and she yells something [illegible] do not hear. The light in her [illegible] has gone out.

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EW BOOKS

John Leonard



. I. Warshawksi, the hard-boiled, softhearted heroine of Sara Paretsky's wonderful se- of detective novels, is Chicago- n, Polish American, a lapsed holic, and tall enough to have gone ollege on a basketball scholarship. s gumshoe wears both high heels high-tops. Whereas Paretsky her- is short, Jewish, and grew up in testant Republican Kansas. From memoir, WRITING IN AN AGE SILENCE (Verso, $22.95), we ex- t an account of the wish fulfillment well as the art involved in trans- ming rural mouse into urban kyrie. And, sure enough, she alter- s all over the place. But even these es serve a higher purpose and a fu- us polemic. She is dealing, she says, th the dominant question of my n life, the effort to find a voice, the ort to help others on the margins find a voice, the effort to understand and come to terms with questions of power and powerlessness."

Her father may have been a research scientist and her mother a librarian, but Sara was brought up in an abusive, violence-filled household and conditioned to loathe herself. Even after she got herself a National Merit Scholarship to the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, she would graduate to a series of dead-end jobs, until time spent as a social worker, the advent of the civil-rights and women's movements, psychotherapy, and a supportive husband encouraged her to write with her own inflections—which inflections then somehow mysteriously cohered in the redemptive figure of V.I., a woman warrior. Think of Paretsky, then, as the Billie Jean King of the private-eye novel. Although V.I. specializes in white-collar crime, she has been from the beginning as much a feminist as a shamus, enlisted on behalf of everybody on the wrong side of the class, race, and gender tracks against old money, corporate avarice, police corruption, industrial pollution, prison squalor, abortion-clinic bombings, real-estate scammings, and the well-heeled hypocrisies of the archdiocese and the political establishment. In *Total Recall* (2001), all in one memorable sitting, V.I. took on the Holocaust, insurance agencies that refused to pay off on Jewish policies, reparations to African Americans for the slavery years, repressed memory, and confabulating regression therapists.



But *Writing in an Age of Silence* has somewhere else to go, with an urgent political agenda. To Paretsky it seems that the Bush regime is repealing every advance in social justice that enabled her to speak out in the first place, that, since 9/11, an "invisible, invasive government" has sought to bully its citizens into "speaking in whispers out of fear," and that the principal instrument of that bullying is the Patriot Act, authorizing warrantless shadow ministries to ditch habeas corpus, tap phones, open mail, and ransack libraries, bookstores, and hard drives. With this passionate Zolaesque j'accuse! she honors a family tree that includes grandparents who met on a picket line at an International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union strike and a great-uncle Wobbly so dangerous to the Republic that he was deported during the red-baiting Palmer raids after World War I.

Not that the Bushies need any help, but they could certainly pick up useful tips on bigger and better repressions from Nathan Englander's THE MINISTRY OF SPECIAL CASES (Knopf, $25). We have been waiting for a novel from Englander ever since his collection of short stories, *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, reminded everybody eight years ago of Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. But who could have guessed that he'd reimagine Argentina during the Dirty War of the

et peint: oeil, by René Magritte © 2007 C. Herscovici, Brussels/Artists Rights Society, New York City/Photothèque Magritte-ADAGP/Art Resource, New York City; *Das Kraftwerk (Power Station)*, by Gerhard Stengel © AKG Images

1970s? That he'd think about fathers [illegible] and Jewish family life in Buenos Aires, about bureaucracy and torture and genocide, as children were "disappeared" from their streets and schools—as, in fact, they were tossed out of airplanes into the River Plata? "You must open your eyes and look up, Mrs. Poznan.... It isn't angels you'll see. Those are bodies raining down from the sky."

This resonates of Singer, yes, but also of Bernard Malamud and Lewis Carroll, plus the Kafka who wrote *The Trial*, and, if I'm not mistaken, quite a bit of Jiří Weil, the Czech Jew whose long-lost novels were rediscovered by Philip Roth on one of his trips to Eastern Europe. With so many noses running around, changing shape, there must also be a Gogol somewhere. And all these writers seem to have gone to some slapstick movie, *A Night at the Opera* maybe, with the Marx brothers and Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. You will wonder how a novel about parents looking for and failing to find their lost son, about a machinery of state determined to abolish not only the future but also the past, can be horrifying and funny at the same time. Somehow—out of strangled ironies and brutal pratfall; out of Lenin and Lermontov, *Mein Kampf* and *The Cherry Orchard*, Wagner and Perón, the Pink House, the green Falcons, the duplicitous priest, the plastic surgeon, the goon squads and garbagemen and gravediggers—this one is. "How true is anything that only one man believes?" we are asked. And the answer arrives with a grinning rictus.

Not at all funny but equally savage is [illegible] OBLIGED (Anchor, $12.95), the last novel by Ahmadou Kourouma to reach these shores from the Ivory Coast, at least in translation from the French. Kourouma, who died in 2003, actually served in Indochina in the French colonial army before returning to Africa to write the plays and novels that would send him directly into exile. An earlier fiction, the superbly allegorical *Monnew*, was a loving, skeptical, pyrotechnic, and rather jaunty novel evoking what colonialism felt like to its African victims, how the historical, linguistic, and metaphysical baggage of the imperium was translated into a Malinké culture half animist and half Islamic, and how the corrupt black nationalists and one-party state behaved after the French fled. You had to imagine not only griots, marabouts, soothsayers, and fetishists beating on tam-tams and plinking on balaphons, but also an Adolf Hitler who didn't know enough magic to turn himself into an echo or a vulture, and so was smoked and grilled in the bowels of his palace with his wife and dog.

Allah Is Not Obliged is the story of another child of Malinké culture, a ten-year-old "street kid" named Birahima, who, with the opportunistic sorcerer Yacouba, leaves his village in the Ivory Coast to look for his aunt somewhere in Liberia, only to fall into the negligent hands of the hashish-addicted child soldiers in bloody service to Charles Taylor's NPFL, and then into the equally negligent hands of equally depraved clan killers in the service of Samuel Doe's ULIMO. From inside Birahima's head, with the help of glossaries and lexicons in European and African languages, we learn more than we want to about the loss of innocence, the lunacy of religion, and warlords and fratricide in today's Liberia and Sierra Leone. We're also treated to a kind of bandit style of purloined, vagabond locutions, part sura, part swearing, part bush—"as filthy and disgusting as a hyena's anus"; "not worth an old grandmother's fart"; "Maman moved on her arse like a caterpillar in fits and starts"; "proud as a Senegalese wrestling champion"; "they'd stick a live bee right in your eye." Although Birahima and Kourouma obviously have strong opinions about goats, kola nuts, buffalo spirits, gold dealers, cutthroats, and Islam, they really, really hate the French.



[illegible] SOUL (Norton, $35) is lively despite itself. Considering his raucous times, equally divided between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the poet and preacher wasn't really up to much—one stint of soldiering; one long marriage; one dead brother; one unregenera[illegible]er; a number of erotic poe[illegible] satires that he kept from be[illegible]lished; a greater number of a[illegible]ing sermons and Holy Sonne[illegible] which would find print; man le[illegible] seeking favors, appointmen[illegible] loan; and a tubercular death a[illegible] fifty-eight. Throughout it all, o[illegible] a marvelous mind watched itse[illegible] meticulous notes, made [illegible] metaphors, and moved on like [illegible] ening of light. But motions [illegible] mind are hard to make excitin[illegible] you go in for precisely the sor[illegible] Crit that T. S. Eliot indulged a[illegible] Stubbs eschews.

Biographer Stubbs has fud[illegible] want of racy material with ser[illegible] that are supple and witty, digr[illegible] that are gossipy and engrossin[illegible] bars on the religious wars betwe[illegible] man Catholics, high-church An[illegible] and those increasingly obstreper[illegible] ritans, and quite a lot about rea[illegible] and disease. (See, for instance, c[illegible] and/or the application of dead p[illegible] to one's feverish feet.) We will [illegible] quainted by accretion with Don[illegible] courtier and genius, the Catholi[illegible] became an Anglican, the man-[illegible] town who became an ascetic, the[illegible] terful groveller" and prince of "ci[illegible] spection" who, after the too-[illegible] marriage he hoped would upward[illegible] bilize himself but rather almost p[illegible] nently ruined his career prospects [illegible] his head down, his options open, a[illegible] powder dry for the r[illegible] his life. Had King Jan[illegible] who was once quot[illegible] saying that "Dr. Do[illegible] verses are like the pea[illegible] God; they pass all u[illegible] standing"—given h[illegible] diplomatic post, he n[illegible] never have found Go[illegible]

But in Donne's cas[illegible] with so many other [illegible] table writers, the life is interes[illegible] only because the literary texts [illegible] endured. A biographer who gives s[illegible] shrift to the strategies and the [illegible] plexities of the sermons and son[illegible] shirks his duty. Just for instance, [illegible] did Shakespeare, with whom Do[illegible] shared several decades, a cl[illegible] Catholicism, and a metrical tradec[illegible] seem to have so much more fun p[illegible] ing with the language?

Detail of an engraving from *Houses and Monuments of Pompeii, Italy*, by Ernesto Felice Niccolini © The Art Archive/Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris/Dagli

NTIMENTAL
)UCATION

: invention of human rights

'oanna Bourke

ed in this essay:

ng Human Rights: A History, by Lynn Hunt. W. W. Norton. 320 pages. 95.



iving in Haiti during the ruthless dictatorships of François Duvalier and his son, my par- decided to teach me an impor- lesson: inhumanity is endemic to human condition but so, too, is ance to brutality. I was seven years e at the time, and we were stand- n front of the Marron Inconnu ue, just across the road from the ional Palace in Port-au-Prince. d surroundings of abject poverty, Marron is an inspiring, if incon- us, sight: a bronze figure of a rebel e from the 1791–1804 revolution, defiant and strong. While my mother was telling me Haiti's story of bondage and tyranny, I looked up at this freed slave, who was still holding the machete he had used to cut off his chains and blowing into a *lambi*, or conch shell, announcing to other slaves that the time to fight for freedom had arrived. That was when I first heard the words *"liberté, égalité, fraternité,"* for the slaves of Saint-Domingue fought their French masters with the songs and slogans of the French Revolution on their lips. The grand Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, which had been cobbled together by deputies of the National Assembly of France in 1789 and had declared the "natural, unalienable and sacred rights of man," including the right to "resistance to oppression," saw its first trial by fire, sword, and rifle on a small island in the Caribbean Sea.

Since that time, oppressed peoples throughout the world have taken inspiration from the notion of the rights of man, as well as from Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776, which proclaimed that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Today, when powerful voices in the affluent West can be heard defending torture and indefinitely prolonged detention, Jefferson's words can seem as revolutionary as they were then, prompting us to reflect on how historically contingent the concept of "unalienable Rights" actually is.

"Rights" are invented; the category "human," contested. In circles of international law, "spot the omissions" is a popular pastime. The word "human" has tended to refer to well-off heterosexual men. They were swathed in white skins, Western bodies. At various times, slaves, religious minorities such as Jews, and actors (on the grounds that an actor pretends to be someone else) were set outside the human. When playwright, feminist, and anti-slavery activist Olympe de Gouges issued her 1791 *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, in which she maintained that "Woman is born free and lives equal to Man in her rights," she was vilified and, eventually, executed. A few days after she had her head chopped off with the guillotine (by an executioner who, incidentally, would not have been considered human either, for he engaged in a dishonorable profession), revolutionary politician Pierre Gaspard Chaumette urged republican women to "remember that virago, that woman-man." The "impudent" de Gouges, he continued, had "abandoned all the cares of her household because she wanted to en-

na Bourke is Professor of History at beck College, London, and the author, recently, of An Intimate History of ng *and* Fear: A Cultural History.

ife of Toussaint L'Ouverture, #12 Jean François, First Black to Rebel in Haiti, by Jacob Lawrence © 2007 The Jacob Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, Seattle/Artists Rights Society and Art Resource, New York City

[illegible] His forgetfulness of the virtues of her sex led her to the scaffold." It wasn't until 1944 that the French government conceded voting rights to the female sex.

In her elegant new book, *Inventing Human Rights*, the historian Lynn Hunt insists that such exclusions are less interesting than a more basic question about human rights: How was it possible that an eighteenth-century American slave-owner like Thomas Jefferson and a French aristocrat like the Marquis de Lafayette could even conceive of the "rights of man"? Perhaps more astonishingly, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the French Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 described these rights as "self-evident" and "unalienable." Why did the talk of such rights—natural, equal, and universal—appear for the first time at the end of the eighteenth century?

Hunt's answer is intriguing, if not audacious. The concept of rights, she claims, followed the rise of a new sensibility. Quite literally, people became aware for the first time that other human beings lived autonomous "inner" lives and were capable of moral judgment. The emergence of the physical body and its discontents into public visibility was essential to this process. As Europe emerged from the Middle Ages, significant changes in bodily comportment were gradually taking place. Private spaces were increasingly demarcated. By the eighteenth century, toilets were referred to with discretion. Siblings, boarders, and other unmarried people were no longer routinely sent to sleep in the same bed. Handkerchiefs, rather than hands, were used to blow noses, and utensils, rather than snotty fingers, to eat food. Even painters took more care to reproduce the individual physiognomies of their sitters. Violence was shunned. A demeanor of silent, reverential contemplation at musical concerts was adopted.

Such manners were more than skin-deep. Respect for the bodily integrity of others both forged and advanced a sentimental sympathy for the human lot. In *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, published in 1711, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury developed a theory of ethics that emerged not from religion but from natural affection. Imagination was the home of a "Divine Presence" in each person. Right and wrong, Shaftesbury argued, could be understood through the application of the imaginative powers of sympathy, allowing one person to experience another's pain.

Shaftesbury's ethics were radical. They posited a new image of humanity as sympathetic and innately moral. Adam Smith developed the idea further in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* of 1759. Man may seem selfish, Smith admitted in the book's first sentence, but there are "some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it." Through acts of imagination, other people's "agonies" are made manifest, "and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels." Fifty-five years later, Thomas Jefferson would express it more succinctly: "Nature hath implanted in our breasts a love of others, a sense of duty to them, a moral instinct ... which prompts us irresistibly to feel and to succor their distresses."

This belief in a moral instinct enabled people to see other human beings as creatures like themselves and opened up a space for talk of rights. It encouraged the view that "he is like me, so he deserves the same rights as me." Enlarging on Norbert Elias's analysis of the civilizing process, Hunt argues that "imagined empathy" not only allowed people to talk about "rights"; it also provided a way to debate the boundaries of the "human" part of the "human rights" equation.

The theoretical shenanigans of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and Adam Smith were profoundly influential, but if this new sensibility of compassion was to spread beyond its narrow base of moral philosophers, it needed to attract a wider audience. Hunt believes that the burgeoning expression of sympathy toward strangers was the outcome of the dramatic explosion in the publication and reading of novels. Fiction was the prime tool of an *education sentimentale*, forever changing human sensibility. In the twenty-first century, fiction is rarely accorded that [illegible] power; Hunt's claim is irres[illegible] therefore, to those of us who s[illegible]

Alas, Hunt does not best[illegible] revolutionary power on just any [illegible] novel. Rather, she emphasizes [illegible] portance of the epistolary n[illegible] fiction presented in the form of [illegible] of letters or diary extracts. Fo[illegible] Samuel Richardson's *Pamela: O[illegible] Rewarded* (1740) is an exempla[illegible] Pamela, an innocent and v[illegible] chambermaid, is spied upon, t[illegible] and nearly raped by her em[illegible] Mr. B. She resists all his advanc[illegible] falling to her knees, cries, "Fo[illegible] sake, your Honour, pity a po[illegible] tressed Creature, that knows no[illegible] her Duty, but how to cherish her [illegible] and good Name!" Pamela's virt[illegible] warded at the end of the book w[illegible] finally convinced of her innocen[illegible] worth, offers to marry her.

Strange as it seems to our [illegible] ears today, the impact of this s[illegible] eighteenth-century readers was t[illegible] dous. They "devoured" it, as on[illegible] er confessed. They trembled [illegible] Pamela was in danger, sobbed [illegible] when she sobbed, and were ou[illegible] when attempts were made [illegible] virtue. Because many of the mai[illegible] acters in these novels were or[illegible] people and their life stories were [illegible] their own voices, readers devel[illegible] heightened sense of identificatio[illegible] them, becoming concerned fo[illegible] emotionally involved in thei[illegible] Readers realized that even humb[illegible] like Pamela had an "inner self," [illegible] teriority. Indeed, this identificati[illegible] precisely what vexed the enem[illegible] the novel in general. Lewd bel[illegible] masturbation, and a "morally s[illegible] self-absorption" would all be b[illegible] on the new craze for novel-read[illegible]

Hunt naturally harbors a mor[illegible] tive attitude toward the nove[illegible] epistolary form of fiction, she [illegible] out, taught readers to imagine [illegible] people as similar to themselve[illegible] shared mystery of pain and pleasu[illegible] moted empathetic responses. Wit[illegible] rhetorical flourish, Hunt asks wh[illegible] it could possibly be a coincidenc[illegible] "the three greatest novels of ps[illegible] logical identification of the eight[illegible] century—Richardson's *Pamela* ([illegible] and *Clarissa* (1747–48) and [illegible] Jacques Rousseau's *Julie* (1761)—[illegible]

ished in the period that imme-
preceded the appearance of the
of 'the rights of man'?" Rather
mply note that novel-reading
d in the same period as the rise
thetic responses (which would
r the possibility that a third fac-
influencing both trends—emerg-
talist forms of production, for in-
or the rise of the nuclear family),
adically claims that it "actually
a new social context." She goes
rther: reading epistolary novels
hysical effects that translated
ain changes."
biological reductionism is re-
le and unnecessary to her ar-
t. Hunt contends that reading
ted a new emotional response
empathy, which in turn gave
a new political concept called
The novel bypassed the En-
ment's emphasis on rationality
ience in favor of unregulated
entality, the unrestrained elic-
of tears. Shaftesbury, Smith,
fferson had concluded that pity
enevolence are at the root of
ty, but rather than being innate
h and every person, these emo-
could be learned and cultivated,
ast through the epistolary novel.

Whether empathy emerged from witnessing the agony of others or from merely reading it, pain and suffering became invisible. This had not always been ase. Prior to the eighteenth cen- ain fulfilled a positive function, n terms of individual redemption rites of communal purification. uffering person had a direct line to ivine, to the bleeding body of t. It was assuredly better to suffer is life than in the next. For the unity, trial by ordeal and agoniz- nishments in public were sacrifi- tes, often accompanied by festivals lebrate the community's recovery the injury inflicted by lawlessness. y the eighteenth century, Calvin- deas were in decline. Liberal Uni- ns pointed out that if God had man to be compassionate, then too, must be compassionate, a volent ruler who wanted only the or His beloved children. Instead of g a way to imitate Christ and tran- d the flesh, pain was secularized. It became part of the healing process. It could be ameliorated by nitrous oxide (discovered in 1773), morphine (first isolated in 1806), and anesthesia (first used at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1846). The tension between older notions of hellfire and modern conceptions of "irresistible compassion" was becoming intolerable.

Nowhere was this new attitude toward pain more apparent than in the rhetoric of the antislavery movement. Since Aristotle, slavery had been legitimized by the idea that certain types of people are not fully human. This belief justified the gratuitous cruelty of slave-owning practices. Indeed, one of the excuses for the torture of slaves was that African Americans did not feel pain in the same way as others. As one physician put it, "the negro . . . has greater insensibility to pain. . . . They submit to and bear the infliction of the rod with a surprizing degree of resignation, and even cheerfulness." Another doctor claimed that many Africans suffered from a hereditary disease called "dysaesthesia Aethiopis," or an "obtuse sensibility of body," that made them insensitive to pain. The ability to feel, both in terms of physical sensation as well as inner sensibilities, was ranked hierarchically, with white men at one end and slaves at the other.

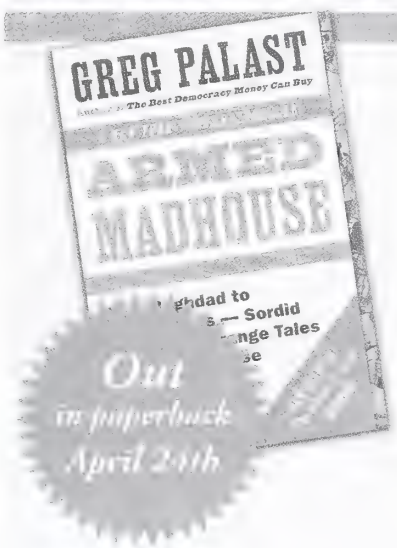
Abolitionists attempted to rupture this great chain of feeling. The universality of pain was a major theme in their writings. Thus, after seeing a slave beaten by a mob, an abolitionist called Miss Smith declared in Shakespearean terms that she was prepared to "testify that it was *orthodox blood*. I should not have known it from my own." If slaves were sentient beings, shouldn't they be entitled to the same consideration as other humans? For proponents of the new sensibility of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, emotions were the site of truth. The ex-slave Frederick Douglass (who, near the end of his life, became the minister resident and consul general to the Republic of Haiti) expressed this most poignantly in his autobiography. Slaves' songs are "full of meaning," he observed. Merely hearing these songs "would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of

GREG PALAST

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to listen "in silence, analyse the sounds . . . shall pass through the chambers of his soul . . . and if he is not thus impressed it will only be because there is mould in his obdurate heart."

But Hunt fails to observe that even the most yielding, empathetic heart harbors a chamber of darkness. Empathy has its repressive side. The literature of sentiment and humanitarianism were, after all, effortlessly co-opted to defend slavery. Maria Edgeworth's 1804 story "The Grateful Negro" acknowledged that the slave's humanity was crucial for the reform of slavery, but not for its overthrow. Indeed, supporters of slavery candidly employed the language of sympathy to argue that it was their humanitarian duty to maintain slaves in servitude. They only admitted the need to manage these slaves more effectively, like employers would any other worker.

It is not simply that empathetic languages can be manipulated by the powerful and the cruel. Sympathy for the sufferer is often infused with symbolic violence. Humanitarianism, the swollen heart of sympathy, historically emerges and socially depends on the distance between the empathetic observer and the victim of suffering. It is no coincidence that the emphasis on identification arose in a period of rapid individualization and differentiation. Although sympathy claims to reduce social distance, it actually depends upon it. It is predicated on the growing wealth and consumerism of a certain class of people who are generously able to "bestow" sympathy on their imagined underlings.

Indeed, identification of "others" as being "like oneself" need not necessarily lead to empathy, it can result in a turning away in embarrassment or, even worse, a reveling in the other person's pain. In 1757, Edmund Burke observed that "pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure, because it arises from love and social affection." People, he mused, "have a degree of delight . . . in the real misfortunes and pains of others." It is a small step from Richardson's *Pamela*, with its voyeuristic intrusions and attempted rape, to the vicious sadism in the Marquis de Sade's *Justine* (1791). Like Pamela, Justine suffers for her virtue, but readers of de Sade's masterpiece become complicit in the acts of torture precisely through identification with a pornographic sensuality. There can be a positive pleasure in inflicting pain and in the spectacle of suffering.

Hunt is an astute historian, well aware of the chasm between universal declarations and their narrow application. One of the themes of this book is the way deliberations concerning universal, inalienable rights fell silent between the American and French revolutions of the eighteenth century and the 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During that time, rights did not exactly disappear; they retreated from the universal to the specific. Citizens of nation-states won political and economic rights for being British, French, German, or American, not for being "human." This process was helped along by the rise of nationalism and certain pseudoscientific ideas. If rights were to be less than universal and certainly less than equal, then some justification had to be found for persistent hierarchies and exclusions. The tragedy of modernity was that ruling elites were tempted by biological forms of discrimination, attributing rightlessness to the assumed inferiorities of sex and, most perniciously, to the arbitrary distinction of race.

The end result: the Holocaust, in which the perimeter defining "the human" contracted. It became possible to speak of a staggering inventiveness in forms of cruelty. The slaughter fused old and new: it brought together face-to-face killing that used primitive instruments with the new industrial murder of millions in gas chambers. Evil was not simply banal: it infused every nuance of the society from which it came. Enlightenment hopes didn't just peter out but were purposefully crushed in the bestial milieu of the twentieth century. The time for renewed vows began. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lamented the "disregard and contempt for human rights" that had "resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." In a proud rendition of "never again," the United Nations proclaimed that "recogni[ze] the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all m[embers] of the human family is the f[oun]dation of freedom, justice and p[eace] in the world."

The Universal Declaration [was] as radical as its eighteenth-cent[ury] predecessors, and it was equally li[mited] in application. It remained a Eu[ro]- and American creation, drafted [almost] exclusively by Westerners [and] Western-trained representativ[es] of the developing world. Inevitabl[y], one of the main critiques of the twe[n]tieth-century human rights movem[ent] is that it is a privileged discourse [that] ring up a space for powerful nat[ions] to intervene in the affairs of co[untries] whose political or economic s[ystems] they disagree with. In *Human [Rights] and Empire*, legal philosopher [Costas] Douzinas makes the point that h[uman] rights "are not simply the result [of] liberal or charitable disposition [in the] West. Cosmopolitanism, uni[versal] morality and human rights expr[ess] promote the quasi-imperial con[sen]sus tion of the new times." They c[an] come nothing more than the id[eo]logical gloss for imperial interventi[on].

With the drafting of the Uni[versal] Declaration, the domestic priori[ties] the leading powers dominated the [agen]da, as they had in the eighteenth [cen]tury. Eleanor Roosevelt, the ch[air] the newly established U.N. H[uman] Rights Commission, threatened [to] sign rather than allow W.E.B. D[u Bois] to bring his appeal against lynchi[ng] racial discrimination before the G[eneral] Assembly. According to a Stat[e] partment briefing, "Mrs. Roos[evelt] pressed the view that it would b[e] ter to look for and work for results [in] in this country without exposin[g] United States to distorted accusa[tions] by other countries." Not surpris[ingly] Soviet delegates were happy to fig[ht] the rights of African Americans, [using] the issue for ideological points ag[ainst] the West whenever the Soviet U[nion] was denounced for political repres[sion].

Nineteenth-century moven[ments] for human rights borr[owed] language from organizat[ions] dedicated to the prevention of cr[uelty] to animals, and with the contem[po]rary return of state-sanctioned tor[ture]

its of animals can seem per-
attractive. In an interview with
paper reporter, British former
namo Bay detainee Jamal al-
described how "we stopped ask-
human rights—we wanted an-
ghts. In Camp X-Ray my cage
at next to a kennel housing an
n dog. He had a wooden house
conditioning and green grass to
e on. I said to the guards, 'I want
ts' and they replied, 'that dog is
ber of the U.S. Army.'" With
rent war on terror, fear has re-
the optimistic dreams of the En-
ment. Gross human-rights vio-
s are occurring not "off the
' but in the full glare of a public
y about terrorism and, ironical-
ed by its own security apparatus.
hould we despair? A profusion of
nd articles on the subject of hu-
ghts does indeed suggest a grow-
areness of the moral crisis. But
sence of strenuous resistance to
of repression is noteworthy. By
timating the redemptive nature
pathy and underestimating the
f power, Hunt ignores the fact
eople get accustomed to barbar-
ys. Simone de Beauvoir, an ar-
pponent of torture during the
n-Algerian War, herself admit-
at "in 1957, the burns in the face,
e sexual organs, the nails torn
ne impalements, the shrieks, the
lsions, outraged me," but by the
er month of December 1961, like
of my fellow men, I suppose, I
from a kind of tetanus of the
nation. . . . One gets used to it."
nost fundamental rights are easi-
shed aside, even in the presence
ffering other.

nt concludes her book with a
r disingenuous statement: "You
the meaning of human rights be-
you feel distressed when they are
ed. The truths of human rights
t be paradoxical in this sense, but
are nonetheless still self-evident."
as her own book demonstrates,
evident" is clearly what rights are
And people don't necessarily "feel
essed when they are violated."
ts do not arise out of universal,
less moral truths but are won in
l struggles in the real world. Such
gles can liberate or enslave. In
i, the revolution failed when the
violated became the violators; today, the language of "rights" and "democracy" is deployed for so-called humanitarian wars that are often anything but. It is language, however, that also allows us to recognize these discrepancies, the hypocrisy that lies between promise and deed. Although words by themselves cannot eliminate suffering, they can extend the boundaries of our moral imagination. We can choose to react in authoritarian or egalitarian ways to perceived threats to life, liberty, and happiness. The words we use to describe others represent contrasting meditations on what it means to be human. Our future depends on which of these meditations we adopt. ■

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG SPEECHES

Ralph Ellison and the perils of publicity

By Randy Boyagoda

Discussed in this essay:

Ralph Ellison: A Biography, by Arnold Rampersad. Alfred A. Knopf. 688 pages. $35.



Invisible Man and Ralph Ellison arrived on the literary scene in 1952 with swaggering designs on taking it over, and each became an institution in postwar American life. The book immediately secured its author the position that he had longed for; Ellison became known as a dapper and eloquent speaker, invited to give a steady stream of lectures on his own work and that of others, as well as to pass comment on American culture at large. But as decades passed without a second novel, it began to seem as if he were more invested in being known as one of the country's great writers than in writing it. On CBS radio in 1953, Ellison was sounding notes about a successor to *Invisible Man*; he was still being asked about that successor on NBC's *Today* show thirty-three years later.

Arnold Rampersad reveals Ralph Ellison's life as proceeding in two parts: first, as the story of his diligent development as a novelist, which culminated on April 14, 1952, the day *Invisible Man* was published; and second, as the story of his willing elevation into a public figure, which ended on April 16, 1994, the day Ellison died in his Riverside Drive apartment, a grand old man of American letters,

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tion by Joseph Adolphe

about whom Saul Bellow declared, "In what he did, Ralph had no rivals." When one compares Bellow's career with Ellison's, Bellow's estimation is, as Rampersad puts it, "full of genuine praise and slickly backhanded." *Invisible Man* and *The Adventures of Augie March* respectively won the 1953 and the 1954 National Book Award, but thereafter, despite the writers' marked similarities—both wryly ambitious, both well-read if not well-born, and both keen on the peculiar combination of vitality, comedy, and tragedy that runs through the heart of American life—their outputs diverged, radically so. Although Ellison was always a slow writer, his pace was also impeded by his weakness for public attention when it was admiring or lucrative, and his penchant for controversies when they suited his taste.

Born in Oklahoma City in 1913, to a father whose plans for his son were signaled by naming him Ralph Waldo, Ellison would later regard his name as an indication of his personal potential, his wider responsibilities, and the major source of his intellectual, moral, and patriotic energy. This source wasn't just Emerson but the great flowering of American thought and creativity that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, the legacy of which, Ellison would hold, modern America had mostly squandered, and which he, writing about black America's experience, sought to recover. As a boy, however, he wasn't fond of his heavy moniker; and indeed, there wasn't much in his childhood to be fond of. His father's death, when he was three, left him, his brother, and his mother in a state of advanced poverty that Ida Ellison's many efforts never overcame.

Eventually, out of necessity as much as romanticism, Ellison hoboed his way to Alabama, where he entered Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute with plans to become a musician. Beginning in 1933, his three years at the school led Ellison to great books and high culture; on a band trip to Chicago, Rampersad notes, "he attended his first opera while many of his friends looked for sex." Throughout much of Ellison's public life, the company he liked to keep and the cultural pursuits he enjoyed generally tended white and Western, though he would maintain that such categories were the presumptuous definitions of sociology, a subject for which he would harbor a lifelong dislike. When his music teacher William Levi Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony* premiered in Philadelphia, Ellison, then a sophomore, was inspired by the example, which would encourage his belief "in the fertility of culture and the dynamic of cross-cultural change." An essay he wrote a couple of years later articulates his suspicion of those who desired to separate black culture from white: "This same attitude is found among those critics of Negro literature who urge the Negro writer to keep to Negro themes and ideals. Negro music must, for them, remain in a static state having reached its highest development in the simplicity of the spirituals."

Financially strapped, less compelled by the study of music than by the world of ideas and art, ill at ease with Tuskegee dean Alvin Neely (whose sexual advances, says Rampersad, Ellison may have been subjected to at least once), Ellison left college for New York in 1936 and never returned to finish. Upon his arrival in New York, he quickly cultivated important relationships—first with Langston Hughes and then, more consequentially, with Richard Wright. These men provided him with reading lists, successful examples to follow, and, most pragmatically, entrée into leftist intellectual circles in New York. Neither Hughes nor Wright fully perceived that it was a competitor they were encouraging, and without much difficulty, Ellison soon became a promising young player among the New York left. Wright helped him into a job with the New York Writers' Project, part of the federal program to support writers during the Depression, while Ellison started writing reviews for little magazines and trying his hand at short stories: the former read as the hortatory declarations of a youthful writer enthused by ideology; the latter were mostly apprentice facsimiles of Hemingway and Wright. Ellison was also living comfortably, in many [illegible] the word. He married Rose [illegible] ter in the late thirties, an [illegible] actress who brought to the [illegible] ship a commitment to radica[illegible] along with an apartment and [illegible] pay. And when the publicatio[illegible] *tive Son* led to a dramatic [illegible] Wright's fame that also di[illegible] Wright from the Communi[illegible] USA, Ellison seemed ready fo[illegible] er role within the party, as a[illegible] nent black writer and spokesm[illegible] then history intervened.

The Communist Party U[illegible] sponded to the 1941 Germa[illegible] sion of the Soviet Union by [illegible] for American involvement [illegible] war, with the hope of defeat[illegible] cism and protecting the U[illegible] Civil rights remained on th[illegible] agenda, but they became a[illegible] concern; for Ellison, who was [illegible] the war at the time and com[illegible] to the party mostly because [illegible] dedication to improving the[illegible] black Americans, this shift [illegible] party's focus was a source of pr[illegible] disillusionment. As Rampers[illegible] plains, Ellison believed that [illegible] Party had betrayed blacks, it h[illegible] betrayed the historic legacy of [illegible] ern liberal humanism," and [illegible] solved to "stand by both his f[illegible] the integrity of black folk cultu[illegible] also his faith in Western a[illegible] learning." By the early fortie[illegible] tanced from the left and from h[illegible] wife, Ellison found his vocati[illegible] would try to write a book that [illegible] give voice to the historical e[illegible] ences and cultural potency of h[illegible] and nation.

The core chapters of Ra[illegible] sad's biography detail t[illegible] hilarating, demanding [illegible] leading up to and immediate[illegible] lowing the publication of the no[illegible] these years, Ellison found intell[illegible] stimulation and encouragement [illegible] literary art in the friendships he f[illegible] with the critic Stanley Hyman a[illegible] philosopher Kenneth Burke. E[illegible] also met his second wife, Fan[illegible] 1944. Intelligent, capable, an[illegible] phisticated, Fanny became his [illegible] ed companion for the rest of hi[illegible] sharing in her husband's success [illegible] also enduring his penchant fo[illegible]

ment and meanness. The lat-
together most cruelly in an af-
t Ellison conducted with a
twenty years his junior; feeling
d to be honest, he told Fanny
was considering leaving her
lover because Fanny couldn't
e a child. The affair transpired
the third year the couple spent
e, where Ellison held a fellow-
th the American Academy of
d Letters. Their marriage near-
up as a result, and Ellison nev-
ed to acknowledge the extent
ain he'd caused his wife.
ed, one leaves this biography
great deal more sympathy for
han for Ellison, who was prone
ing her and other family mem-
llow writers, and generous sup-
rather ungenerously at times.
pped Archibald MacLeish after
ıg that a letter the poet wrote
g Ellison's intelligence was filled
nconscious condescension" and
ating that MacLeish was no
useful to him: "I decided months
at I didn't want to stay here [in
another year and so didn't write
." Despite bristling at the as-
on that one's race determined
rt and intellect, Ellison had no
m with such claims when it
o gender. In a letter to Wright,
ıg Ellison pronounced women
: "to stray . . . far from biological
—even when they cloak them-
with intellectual sheep's cloth-
nd their political commitments
suspect as well: "In many in-
s they don't give a dam[n] about
ıtion at all; only to throw off
girdles and let their behinds ex-
' Many of his letters to Wright
he colorfully provocative efforts
ung writer looking to impress a
and mentor, but Ellison's views
men seemed to change very lit-
h time; later in life, he would op-
he admission of women to his
ed Century Club, for which he
so slow to solicit black members
se "he found so few of them suf-
tly cultivated and deserving."

Early in Ellison's career, his churl-
ishness was borne by many out
of respect for the work that he
ying to bring off. By 1944, he was
ing in confident if cryptic terms
about his literary plans. Rejecting his old leftist commitments, he told former colleagues that "now things are different. . . . There is work to do, the kind of work that I've been preparing myself to do." As he also gained wider attention for the more literary short stories and the less ideological criticism he was publishing, he started to receive offers for book contracts—from Harcourt Brace, Atlantic Monthly Press, and Little, Brown. But Ellison was initially hesitant because he knew that he wasn't ready yet, and he didn't want to be pressured into writing a lesser book. That a young, would-be novelist resisted these offers—that he should be capable of such patience, self-knowledge, and foresight—is plainly astounding. That he eventually gave in, out of financial need, is understandable. After a false start with a novel set in a Nazi prison camp, Ellison found his way into imagining the problem and promise of modern American life when, in the summer of 1945, from the vantage of an ironic-minded and intelligent young black man, he wrote the words, "I am an invisible man." Slowly, over the next six years, the rest of the book came. Rampersad has wisely decided not to engage in footnote sniping with the voluminous academic scholarship surrounding *Invisible Man*. Rather, he offers strong readings of key scenes, addresses the inevitable questions of the book's autobiographical elements, and emphasizes the difficulty and duration of the novel's composition, which owed not just to Ellison's slowness as a writer but also to the extensive field of reference and sophisticated structure that he had in mind.

Working like a "disciplined jazzman," Ellison succeeded in his attempt "to inscribe blacks into history through surpassingly fine literary art." *Invisible Man* defined its own place in twentieth-century literature, standing halfway between the modernist modes of Joyce and Eliot and the hysterical realism of later paranoid fiction. The book is Ellison's play on Stephen Dedalus's ambition "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." In Ellison's envisioning, the conscience of black America is not "uncreated," but it is bitter, wary, and beaten down. Through the protagonist's family life, schooling, travel, and exploits in New York, the novel takes us from slavery to Emancipation, from Reconstruction to Jim Crow, from the Great Migration to race riots in Harlem. Along the way, Invisible Man meets white Americans who are variously self-loathing, willfully blind, hypocritical, ineffectual, or Communist; he also meets black Americans who are variously self-loathing, willfully blind, hypocritical, ineffectual, or Communist. Overwhelmed by the chaos, he drops out of society, hibernates in a brightly lit basement, and meditates on his experiences, which rouses him, eventually, to commit to living out "the beautiful absurdity" of American life that the novel seeks to reveal "on the lower frequencies," sounding across the nation's black and white registers.

Rampersad offers a superb description of the underlying concern that compelled Ellison to write such a book: "Ralph feared that blacks may have already opted to slide outside history into an expressionist demi-life of sometimes morbid, sometimes ecstatic signs, symbols, and gestures that signal their abandonment of, and by, civilization." Writing against this despairing turn, Ellison attempted to place his protagonist "in the midst of this philosophical chaos and to find a way out for him that is consistent with human dignity, yet honest to the realities of American life." His efforts won him immediate and wide notice, though responses to his book, like responses to its author for decades afterward, were shot through with racial politics. Many white reviewers hailed the novel, praising it for its ambition, whereas black reviewers panned it, both for its gritty revelations about black life and for what were considered its elitist affectations. One telling headline declared, "Ralph Ellison Shows Snobbery, Contempt for Negro People," and Ellison would be dogged by such charges for the rest of his career. He would occasionally interpret these charges as expressions of jealousy and envy at his achievements, but he also assumed that he could refute them by drawing attention to his own person and position, even though it only exacerbated the problem of how he was perceived.

Richard and Fanny will share Ellison's elation with his newfound and hard-won fame, but only for so long. Already in 1953, Ellison was talking about his next novel, the theme of which, he explained in a letter to Wright, was sending him "toward Oklahoma, where lies my destructive element." Only the destructive element wasn't just in Oklahoma; it was everywhere and anywhere he went for the rest of his life. Ellison would be consumed by the cultural landscape of twentieth-century America, which was ravenous for a brilliant, dashing black writer who was passionate about his country and, like the protagonist of his novel, had a thing for bright lights and big speeches. The second half of the biography unfolds the story of how the writer went from writing into the business of being himself. Until his death, Ellison never wanted for invitations that confirmed the fact of his having arrived, invitations to everything from Truman Capote's Black and White Ball to a reception for the prime minister of Ceylon.

The intensification of the civil-rights struggle coincided with the intensification of Ellison's public persona. As Rampersad observes, "He gave no thought to join [King's] March on Washington . . . but soon took part willingly in a public panel discussion of the event." By the mid-sixties, the political situation was affording him "lucrative opportunities," such as a talk he gave to AT&T management trainees "on the role of Negroes in American society." Not surprisingly, Ellison came in for harsh criticism from members of the growing black-power movement for what seemed to be the self-serving nature of his commitment to race relations; his reluctance to join their radicalization efforts was matched by his willingness to speak and to write essays, for grateful white audiences, against racial militancy and in favor of a reasoned, gradualist approach to integration and justice. While visiting Grinnell College in 1967, Ellison was accosted by a young black man, dressed in the militant's uniform of black leather jacket and black beret, who started to argue with Ellison over *Uncle Tom's Children*. "'You're an Uncle Tom,' [he] shouted. 'You're a sell out. You're a disgrace to your race.'" Ellison was shaken by the encounter. Willie Morris recalled Ellison sobbing, "I'm not a Tom, I'm not a Tom," before regaining his composure: "I've heard that kind of thing for a long time. I'm used to it."

Although Ellison might have been in an exceptional position to address the ongoing conflicts of black and white American life, charges that he somehow betrayed his race simply ratify a system of intellectual, moral, and social degradation that the author of such essays as "The World and the Jug" and "On Being the Target of Discrimination" committed himself and his work to disproving. Nevertheless, Rampersad describes how Ellison, though helpful to emerging white writers such as Cormac McCarthy, was comparatively stingy with black writers who sought his guidance. He ignored their requests for blurbs and advice, underestimated fellowship candidates when he was an evaluator, and dismissed new black voices for writing crude race and protest novels where formal and intellectual complexity was wanted. To a young black novelist whose manuscript he returned, unread, Ellison suggested sending it to any publisher, for "most publishers consider anything about Negroes highly salable as of this historical moment."

For all that Ellison invoked the lofty standards of "the word in all its complex formulations," even his closest friends occasionally struggled to find substance in his pronouncements. University of Chicago religion and literature scholar Nathan Scott confessed that Ellison had once delivered a lecture "with unfaltering fluency for an hour on the [American] vernacular and I sat there listening carefully to every word. . . . I absolutely couldn't get hold of anything, except the vernacular and the marvelous capacity it had for capturing 'complexity.'" His antagonists were less measured with their criticisms. Ishmael Reed noted caustically that Ellison's sense of "craftsmanship" was "merely giving the synopsis of a Hemingway or a Fitzgerald novel he's read."

Rampersad, for the most part, leaves it to others to render explicit judgments. He can, in fact, be accused at times of being rather protective of Ellison: his decision to refer to the writer as "Ralph" over "Ellison" in telling. But, more generally, a sympathy and neutrality are Rampersad's strengths as a biographer; unlike, for instance, James Atlas writing about Bellow or Mailer writing about himself, so, Rampersad doesn't try to compete with his subject. (Lawrence Jackson's 2002 *Ralph Ellison: The Emergence of Genius* is the only other significant attempt at a biography of Ellison, though Jackson's fine study was limited to the events leading up to and surrounding the publication of *Invisible Man*, with a particular focus on Ellison's involvement in 1940s leftist politics.) Rampersad addresses the nature of Ellison's sexuality and makes reasonable connections between Ellison's personal experiences and his writing, and he avoids psychoanalytic overdetermination and cheap mirror work between the events and the written work. Along similar lines, he deftly deals with the salacious material that a weaker writer would overplay, leaving further speculation to gossipy readers and tabloid panels. Rampersad also debunks one of the tragic tales of modern American fiction: that a 1967 fire in the Ellisons' Berkshires home destroyed 365 pages of the second novel and was the prime reason the book was never finished. As Rampersad shows it, Ellison offered less dramatic accounts of the extent of the loss immediately afterward: the pages burned and damage done to his creative powers only grew with time.

Ellison had predictably epic ambitions for his second novel. Telling the story of a mixed-race Oklahoma preacher and the white-skinned boy he raises, the book would explore the chaotic harmony of modern American life through a symphonic clash of black and white voices. Ellison and Fanny spoke of its forthcoming completion, year after year, to the point that it becomes a sad running joke in the biography. Ellison's obsessive commitment to writing—to complexity—what he saw as a re-

Continued on p.

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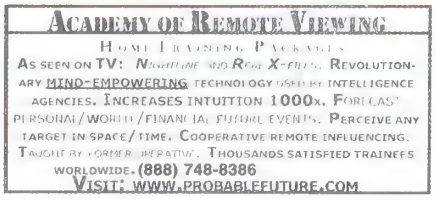
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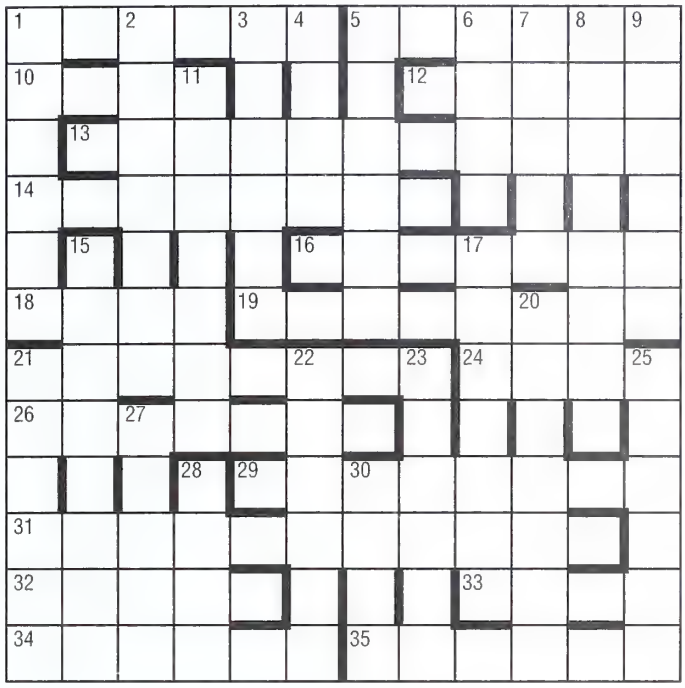
REVIEWS

Continued from page 90

and lively integration of bl
experience, principles of A
democracy and individuali
the best of the Western tra
could not withstand the rage
of the sixties, which were u
ing his commitment to writi
American life with hard-eye
fulness. Ignoring *Juneteenth*,
ed selection that was pu
posthumously, Rampersad
cites other excerpts that
worked on during his lifetime
lack the music and energy tha
through *Invisible Man*'s fusion
high and the low. The lines
like faux Faulkner, the conce
loose and baggy, and the voic
flash with humor and passion:
reeled before exploding faces t
printed themselves upon one's
with the impact of a water-
snowball bursting against the
membrane to leave a felt-im
blue-white pain throbbing wit
pulse of blood propelled tow
sion." Ellison tried to place
cerpt from the book in *The Ne*
er, which rejected it but woul
run a profile of the author.

A sad irony runs through t
ry of this life, owing to Ellis
sistence that he was, first an
most, a novelist, and tha
engagement with current even
to be understood as that of an
not an activist. Nevertheless,
out a second novel, but with
deal of cultural pronouncin
politicking and praise-gatheri
wasn't for his work, exactly
Ralph Ellison was continually
brated; rather, he became a re
and respectable figure in Am
life who had made himself ava
to be celebrated. At a dinner
in 1969, a fellow diner tried t
Ellison to task for describin
glories of American civilizati
way of the impressive place
gained in it. "Mr. Ellison, yo
the exception!" the diner prot
"You cannot offer yourself a
representative of the U
States!" But he could, becau
was: proud and bold, with mu
back it up and much left to pro

PUZZLE



GREMLINS

By Richard Maltby Jr.

Oh dear.

Gremlins have assailed these puzzles recently, and they're at it again. Their mischief is apparent in no fewer than ten clue answers. Looking back on it, I might have clued the puzzle differently, since the diagram is made up of real words, but the damage is done. Apologies in advance for any inconvenience these imps may have created. I am happy to report that at least the gremlins had the decency to make their mistakes in balanced diagram positions.

Answers include three proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 69.

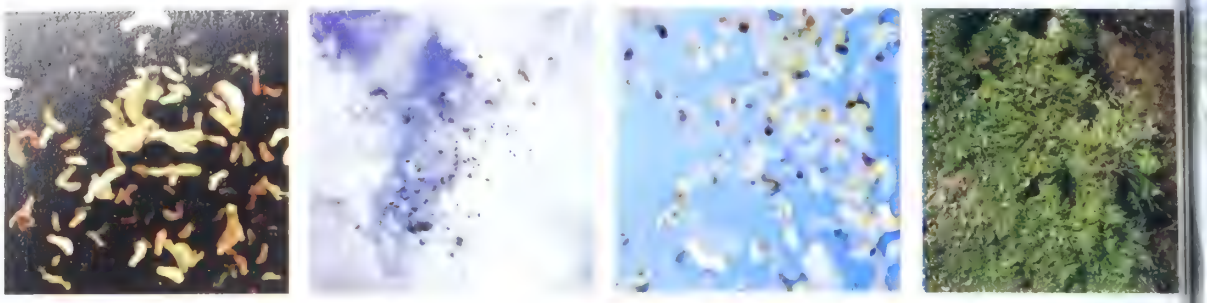
ACROSS

1. The Frenchmen returned dog in error (6)
5. Protective item pinned in a gym in almost fearsome surroundings (6)
10. Everything's yelled during these punches (4)
12. Summer for one in bed on Nantucket (5)
13. Tailgater in crack-up getting paid back (11)
14. Dollar coming down—it can leave you empty (8)
16. One recently arrived gas consumed (7)
18. Pursue Indian sounds (4)
19. Prize-giver reveals belligerency in Red Queen (8)
21. Informal dress set for Napoleon and Charlotte, e.g. (8)
24. Pacific island covered in mold—nothing gets replaced (4)
26. Getting word of preliminary action (7)
29. Translation of Socrates—such things are kept under glass (8)
31. Boasting to do more and failing (11)
32. A lot of fencing long covered by membership costs? (5)
33. Not there? Good one! (4)
34. One side in a ship's games? (6)
35. Escape in a thin sheet (6)

DOWN

1. Animals move the camera down, up (6)
2. Paramount's first director, an appealing person! (7)
3. Take the cap off solvent thinner (6)
4. Not quite complete compositions, for one (4)
5. One who says he's not responsible for the quality of stockings? (6)
6. Vessels—staunch when capsized (4)
7. A minute upset over a female part of a man's mind (5)
8. Hotel with a club—there's a telephone in it, naturally (8)
9. I'll make a stab in dark almost concealing urge to rise up (6)
11. Gets group together again for its first arrangement of Kern (7)
15. Slowly pass sign that person mentioned below is on a break? (5,3)
17. St. Peter, notably dressed in magenta (7)
20. Few do, I'm sorry, see State of the Union! (7)
21. Not easy to be enrolled in federal insurance pieces (6)
22. Old-style pets quietly entering before long silence begins (6)
23. NUDIST TO BECOME MOVIE NAME (6)
25. I would upset evangelism, go off, and drive away (6)
27. Tree top, more obvious (5)
28. The end of one game is earlier sport (4)
30. Any way you look at it, she shares a king's title! (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Gremlins," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by May 7. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Gonna Build a Mountain," are Amy Hamilton, Columbus, Indiana; Peter Hepokoski, Portland, Oregon; and Donald E. Kelley Jr., Alameda, California.



FINDINGS

Astronomers and other scientists descended on Washington, D.C., to attend the Planetary Defense Conference and to compose a white paper on the threat to Earth from asteroids; it was hoped that the document might persuade Congress, which authorized NASA in 2005 to search for space objects larger than 140 meters, to provide funding for the project, which is aimed at preventing the deaths of billions of people that a collision with a moderate-size asteroid might cause. A study found that Venus is the best place for a telescope, preferably infrared, dedicated to spotting such asteroids. A 2,300-year-old solar observatory was uncovered in Peru, and NASA was considering the use of lint rollers to protect astronauts from dangerous lunar dust. Sunlight can make asteroids spin. Experts concluded that a relatively small regional exchange of nuclear weapons would trigger a devastating ten-year nuclear winter, causing a global drop in temperatures, disrupting agriculture, and killing millions. The United States announced the selection of the winning design for a new nuclear warhead.

Speculators were enjoying a brisk market in pandemic flu futures, and childhood obesity was linked to early-onset puberty among girls. Genetic analysis of pubic lice suggested that the vermin jumped to humans from gorillas about 3.3 million years ago; since the lice do not have wings and cannot jump very far, a rather close encounter would have been necessary to facilitate the transfer. Archaeologists announced that cavemen preferred curvy women with large buttocks. Forensic scientists developed a new technique for extracting DNA from semen samples, such as those recovered from rape victims, even if no sperm are present. Kisspeptin, a hormone that triggers teen fertility, can help older childl women ovulate, and regular hot-tub use tends to redu the number and quality of men's sperm. Several strai of gonorrhea that no longer contain the telltale pr lyliminopeptidase enzyme, known as PIP for short, we on the rise, though they often elude detection, sin most VD tests assume the presence of PIP.

The United States Department of Agriculture ga preliminary approval for the large-scale cultivation Kansas of a strain of genetically modified rice th contains human genes. Mice that were genetically e gineered to develop a horrible degenerative disease the brain and spinal cord live longer when they are i jected with human stem cells taken from the brains aborted fetuses. Scientists taught rats to fear two di ferent musical tones by torturing them with electric shocks, and then they successfully used a drug to wip away the memory of one tone. Researchers said th the mental anguish caused by psychological tortu and humiliation is just as bad as that caused by phys cal torture. South Korea was working on a code of r bot ethics based on Isaac Asimov's "Three Laws Robotics." Swiss researchers found that playing didgeridoo for twenty-five minutes a day can hel people with sleep apnea. A new study discovered th teenagers' mood swings are caused by fluctuating ho mones, and biologists concluded that plants that cu their sweet nectar with a hint of bitterness attrac more birds. Captive female koalas frequently engag in lesbian orgies, possibly as a result of some hormona imbalance, or to attract males, or to relieve stress. Re searchers at New York University determined tha women who swing their hips are more attractive. Me who do so are not.

Photographs of sycamore seeds from the series "Falling," by Neeta Madahar. Courtesy the artist and Julie Saul Gallery, New York City

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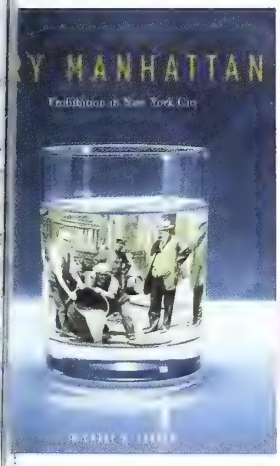
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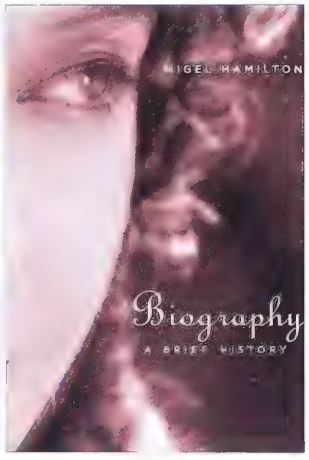
NIGEL HAMILTON

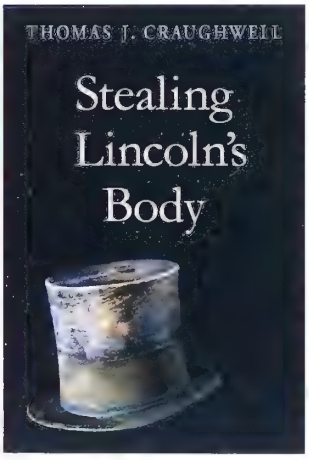
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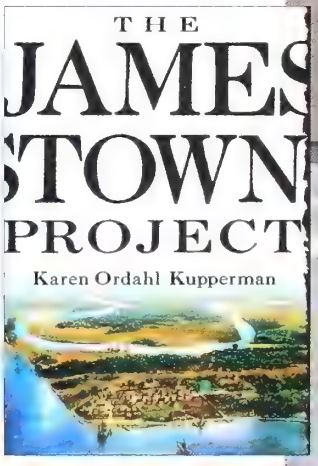
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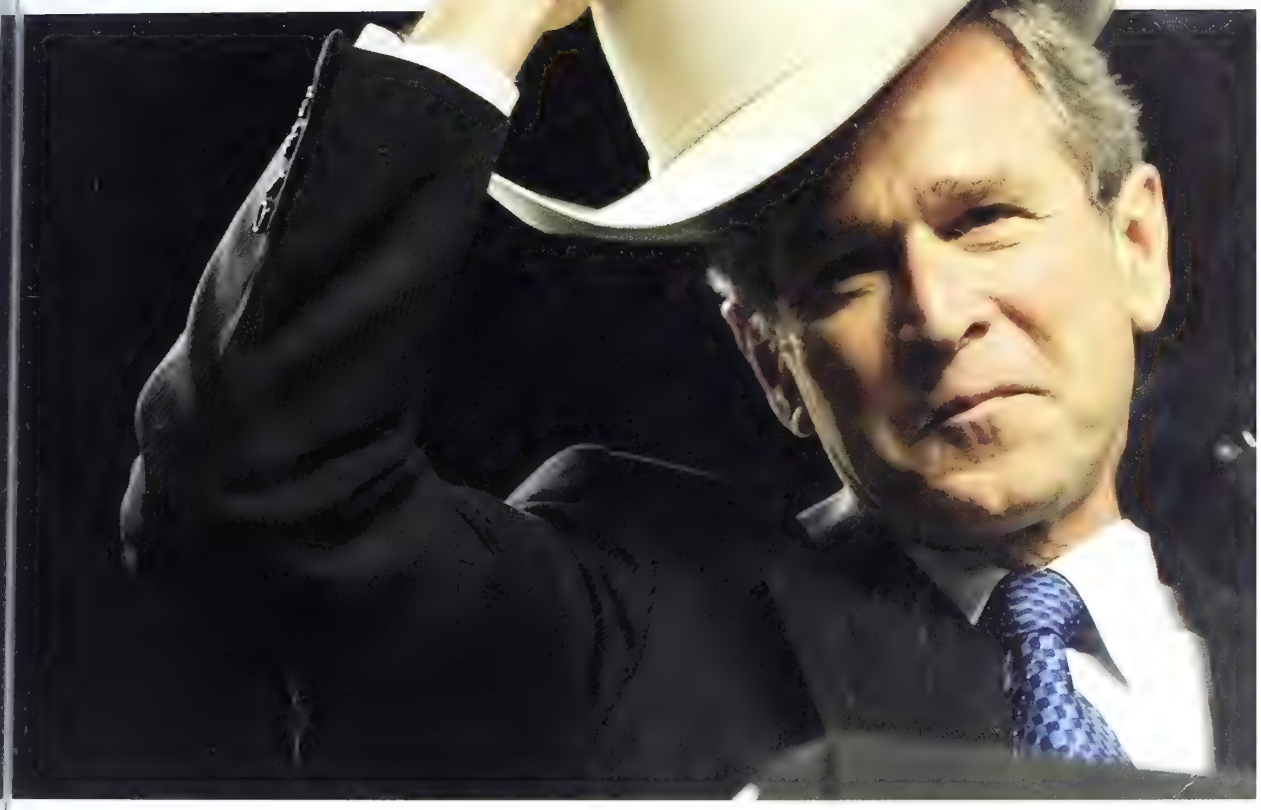
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LETTERS

Critical Condition

Cynthia Ozick's essay on the current state of literary fiction ["Literary Entrails," April] is eloquent in stating both the problem and the solution. Nonetheless, one might suggest that the very eloquence of her solution speaks to its implausibility. The serious novel has lost both readers and prestige—this is indisputable—and Ozick lays out the reasons for the decline with her customary skill and with a lofty assurance that almost belies her own sense of urgency. That insistent "hum and buzz of [cultural] implication," which Lionel Trilling located in the novel, certainly does not call to us from the pages of contemporary fiction. Yet Ozick believes we can restore fiction to its formerly high station, or at least create a more benign environment for its continuance: What's needed is literary criticism that "explains, both ancestrally and contemporaneously, not only how literature evolves, but how literature influences and alters the workings of human imagination."

Because her own veneration of the novel and literary criticism in the persons of Henry James and Trilling is on record, it's hard not to see this as a *cri de coeur*. Yes, it would be a fine if a generation of critics aros communicated the "indebtedne "connectivity" that inform gr erature, but this is a little like time to run backward. Ozick's d sis is sound, but can anything b to restore the patient to its yo glory and middle-aged vibrancy? an antidotal "aggregate" of critics appear, given the social and te logical conditions that slowly for disappearance in the first place?

It is a cliché by now that en and elocutionary power has shifte the novel to electronic media cliché, however, should not ma deaf to its own particular hum an Eleven years ago I noted in these that nineteenth-century novels cumvented the cultural limitation posed on public and private disc Thoughts that could not be spoken between husband and wife, mothe daughter—found their voice in fic creations." This voice persists but seems hopelessly muted; no one ex novels to possess the cultural reson that writers and readers could once for granted. This, to be sure, is re table, but as with the portrait o sestina or the symphony, all we now expect from novels are variat on a form. As for the literary criti that flourished when the novel was developing or accumulating mode embellishments, it, too, has gone way of foolscap and typewriters.

Fifty-five years ago when Ran Jarrell cast a sour glance at "The

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ism," critics knew that the age
l its name precisely because
that literature overshadowed
n expository efforts. "Books
r weather, our environment,
ning," the critic Anatole Bro-
alled about his days in Green-
llage in the 1950s. "We didn't
ead books; we became them.
them into ourselves and made
ito our histories." How many
still feel like this?

a national general-interest
ne such as *Harper's* has chosen
he lively polemics of Jonathan
n, Ben Marcus, and Cynthia
, a commendable but decidedly
rd action. The days when news
he mind and soul, about the
ual's relation to God and so-
assed through the centrifuge of
ire (and criticism) are over.
as in another country, and be-
hose writers are dead. I am not
umptuous as to think that Oz-
nmindful of this; I do think,
er, that her nostalgia makes
e a slightly astigmatic view of
cal inevitability. It's hard to fault her: Need makes us unrealistic, and hope makes even the wisest among us naive.

Arthur Krystal
New York City

Cynthia Ozick contends that American letters need a mass of serious literary critics to detail, ostensibly, the uses, importance, and inherent qualities of the novel, but the resuscitated fraternal guild she imagines stirs up questionable positions. Ozick parses the differences between book reviewing and literary criticism, arguing not only that the agendas of the two diverge but also that "the critic must summon what the reviewer cannot." Her supposition that the reviewer's limited space is indicative of his capabilities is specious at best; some critics—John Leonard, for example—excel in both modes.

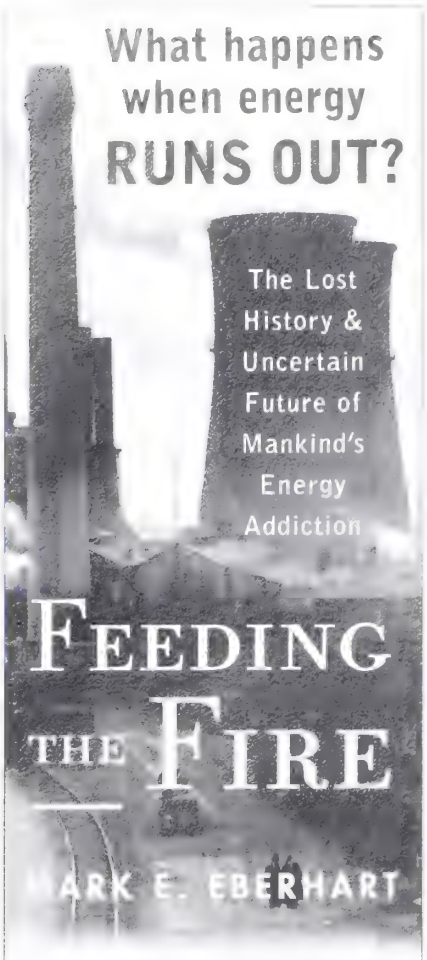
Ozick produces a list of critics who are currently providing the understructure for American literary culture, and she is especially enamored of James Wood. She notes, however, that "it is not enough to have one Wood. What is needed is a thicket—a forest—of Woods." But when the thicket looks like a stand of birches rather than the dark, complex forest of American culture, can we trust that those critics are accurately envisioning all of American life? Why should we trust a literary culture that calls itself American but is so narrowly framed? Unless the pool of critics begins to look like a representative swath of American society, American literary criticism will continue to be a bankrupt cultural discourse.

Walton Muyumba
New York City

The Play's the Thing

In his April essay, "The Mirror of Life," Jonathan Bate attributes Shakespeare's greatness to his ability to hold a mirror up to life, to paraphrase Hamlet. Bate means the Bard's ability to reflect the lives of his own London contemporaries, because Shakespeare "was restricted by the customs of his age," and because even the history plays,





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"whether English, British, European, ancient Greek or Roman, were also mirrors of the present." Yet, according to Bate, he made only rare topical allusions. In other words, the plays reflect the customs, manners, and language of the Elizabethans, but never, or only rarely, their particular actions.

Bate's perspective renders Shakespeare essentially meaningless. By his reading, Shakespeare addresses all the great issues of his day, such as "the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism, and from feudalism to modernity," but takes virtually no position on any of them. Thus, we are to read the plays in order to learn about proper etiquette and language, not for any truths they might contain. I would suggest, however, that the correct interpretation of Hamlet's statement about the role of theater is that it ought to do precisely what his own play-within-the-play did—namely, speak truth to power in the most effective manner possible.

Charles Baylor
St. Mary's, Kans.

Bombs Away

In "Terror Alerts" [Notebook, March], Lewis H. Lapham decries the producers of recent redemptive films, arguing that the moviegoing public has been suckered into "looking for the cinematic equivalents of a federal witness protection program" to assuage growing uncertainties about American preeminence. This argument ignores a central normative relationship between Americans and the films they watch. Hollywood has always danced the dialectic of simultaneously shaping and reactively affirming the American cultural moment. Where was Lapham's argument when a spate of patriotic war releases followed us into Afghanistan (*We Were Soldiers*, *Behind Enemy Lines*, *Hart's War*, etc.), or when our noble ally James Bond foiled Communist world-domination schemes throughout the Cold War?

Assumptive American protagonism is nothing new, and Lapham acknowledges that "the delusion constitutes the necessary instrument of power" for American empire. But whereas Hollywood may be complic[it] in perpetuating this self-conception[,] producers are certainly not dri[ving] in a tank alone. Movie producers [are] capitalists, and they produce mo[vies] primarily in the interest of co[rpo]rate viability. Despite the America[n] cyclical constructions of ide[nti]ty, nobody ever seems to like a story [in] which the bad guy wins.

Wilson Karaman
New York City

I found Lewis Lapham's [com]ments in "Terror Alerts" in[sightful]. Many of us reject both mass-[media] box-office barrages and nation[al] myths that serve as commercials for [govern]ment agendas. Neither are en[ter]taining, nor do they appeal to our [true] cultural identity. Such sensory [assault] are instead irritating, confusi[ng] and eventually desensitizing. Lapham's article encourages people to c[laim] their conscientious objection[s] to fodder and to seek out entertain[ment] that does not subscribe to such [a] military and empirical script.

Audrey Quirk
Escondido, Calif.

Chris Cross?

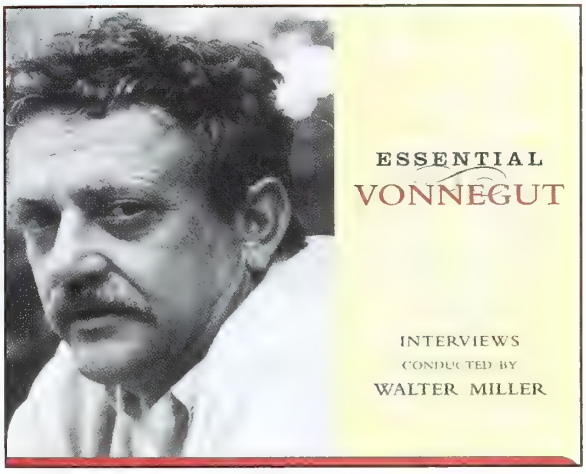
I was appalled to read the in[ac]curate history paragraph of "Whoever Sp[eaks] for Us" [Readings, April], which [in]cluded excerpts from depo[sitions] against Christopher Col[umbus]. Columbus himself requested th[at] Ferdinand and Queen Isabel[la] send someone to investigate the S[pan]ish colonists' rebellion. They sen[t] Francisco de Bobadilla, who sided w[ith] the rebels and put Columbus in [chains]. When the sovereigns heard ab[out] it, they released Columbus, reinst[ated] his property that Bobadilla had i[llegally] confiscated, and recalled Bob[adilla]. I do not deny that Columbus [was] responsible for some bad things, bu[t] there are other reports that the inqu[isition] was a farce and that the deposition [was] created in order to get rid of him. [Reader's] failed, however, to acknow[ledge] the conflicting information.

Carol Delaney
Professor Emerita
Stanford University
Palo Alto, Calif.

Kurt Vonnegut . . . caught
he temper of his times and the
magination of a generation."
—*The New York Times*

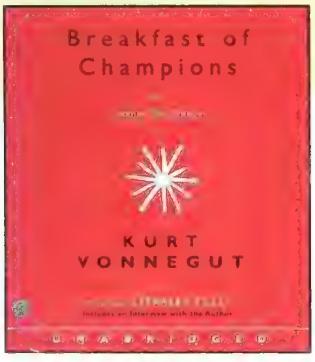
Hear His Voice

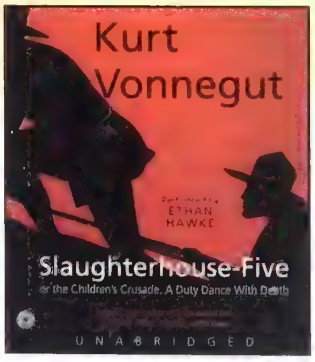
some of his last recorded interviews,
nducted by longtime friend and radio host
alter Miller. These interviews took place in
ay of 2006 and cover the failings of the US
edia, why we are all edging closer to being
ople "without a country" and the ways in
ich some of the predictions of his earlier
oks have come true.

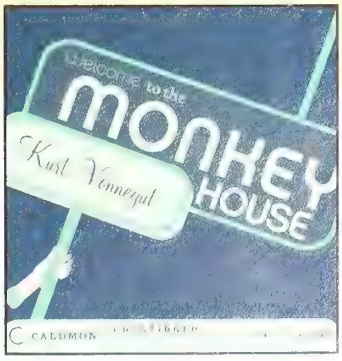


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NOTEBOOK

Climate, Class, and Claptrap

By Garret Keizer

ore song the radio won't like.
—Kathleen Edwards

e brief hubbub over Al Gore's energy consumption was similar disingenuousness to the outcry onditions at Walter Reed. Imag- ats! Roaches! Moldy walls! To that these poor wounded sol- ight actually be sequestered in as wretched as those in which of them came of age and went to —it boggled the mind. And this this patrician prophet of global rophe, this millionaire former date for president of a nation in the phrase "millionaire candi- or president" amounts to a cir- ocution—he actually lives in a ouse. And he uses a lot of elec- too!

is pretense of not knowing what idiot knows has increasingly come fine our national discourse. To y way of example, that it has char- zed the protracted denial of glob- rming is to understate the point. characterizes the burgeoning ac- ledgment of global warming, the gness to grant that a crisis exists as our key players scramble to ntee that every systemic cause of risis remains intact. It character- our farcical debate over the able for the withdrawal of U.S. s from Iraq even as permanent ary bases are constructed in that try to oversee the flow of its de- nalized oil to our national snout. ore than anything else, it charac- terizes our official take on wealth and class, a blind spot as large as any hole in the ozone. Consider a statement made after the 2000 election by Democratic strategist Al From to the effect that the party's "populist" message had failed to reach its target voters—that is, the same people now gushing over Al Gore's Academy Award—whom From described as "affluent, educated, diverse, suburban, 'wired,' and moderate." To believe that any person or party incapable of grasping the absurdity of that description can, nevertheless, not only grasp but engage the threat of global climate change requires a faith that makes Joan of Arc look like Nietzsche in a bad mood. Someone tell me, please, how a demographic that is "affluent, educated, suburban, 'wired,' and moderate" can be described in any meaningful way as "diverse." One might as well say that an arsenal consisting entirely of bazookas is diverse because some of them happen to be painted pink.

Or tell me instead what David Remnick, writing in a recent Talk of the Town piece in *The New Yorker,* is thinking when he says: "Can anyone seriously doubt that a Gore Administration would have meant, well, an alternate universe . . . ?" An alternate universe is where you would have had to be living for the past three centuries, or at least for the decades of Gore's political career, to swallow a statement like that. No doubt a Gore presidency would have meant better policies, a less cretinous rhetoric, but no, the universe would have been very much the same; it would have been that all-too-familiar universe in which the affluent, the educated, the suburban, and the wired, including I daresay Messrs. Gore and Remnick, can always get a good table at a good restaurant, and the kid who buses that table can always, whenever he wants, find his way to an artificial limb plus the customary accoutrements of rats, roaches, and a moldy wall.

But I shall be accused of dancing around the most important issue of our time, the issue at the name of which every knee shall bow. Global warming, we are told, will have its most devastating effects on the world's disadvantaged. Therefore, we need not care so particularly about the world's disadvantaged; we need care only about global warming—as mediated, of course, by those who stand to make a bundle off it. Wonder of wonders: you can now download all of your convictions into this one lightweight, handheld device. You might even wear it clipped to your ear like a Vulcan from an alternate universe. To quote Mr. Gore, global climate change is "not a political issue; it's a moral issue," glad tidings of great joy to souls weary of such crassly political issues as universal health care, reproductive freedom, the rights of workers, the treatment of captives, the plight of women and men shoveled daily off our sidewalks like so much offal, and who can now devote their energies to transcendently moral issues like the daytime highs in Chattanooga.

Am I too irreverent? Am I not aware that polar bears are drowning in the Arctic? I am very much aware and very grieved as well. I am also aware, thanks to book after book by Jonathan Kozol, that children are drowning in our inner-city schools and have been

t Keizer is a contributing editor of Harp- lagazine. *His last Notebook, "Loaded," red in the December 2006 issue.*

drowning there year after year and decade after decade, but I do not recall anything like the universal lament that has met the drowning scene in *An Inconvenient Truth*. The polar bear depicted in that movie has two incontrovertible advantages over Brood's kids: it's digital and it's white.

It would be unfair to attribute the excesses of the new religion entirely to the influence of Gore's movie, though it is hard not to see them embodied there. Early in the script Gore refers tellingly to "my friend the late Carl Sagan," who as I recall also had the unnerving habit of juxtaposing his own enlarged face with depictions of cosmic events. Watching a film that compels its audience to consider future generations, I found that I imagined a small child sitting at my elbow, tugging at my sleeve, and asking, "Grandpa, is that God?"

No, sweetheart, not God, but the imagery of something almost as absolute. It will drive the agenda of our next administration in the same cynical way as "the threat of global terror" drives that of the current regime. A new chorus of sanctimonious ministers will point to the melting ice caps, much as Bush and Cheney pointed to the site of the twin towers, and dare any would-be dissenter to profane the rising steam. I give them six months to find the temerity to say, "You are either with us or you are against us."

Tell us something we haven't already heard. Gore speaks of the need for "a different perspective," one that will place us "above ourselves and above history"—a pair of coordinates that would seem to place us in outer space, the better to see the "iconic" blue earth, I suppose. But this is the old perspective: the race to the moon, the triumph of the will, the forward march of progress on a goosestep and a prayer. The unquestioned belief that the answer to every human dilemma and desire is a gizmo—in short, the very attitude that gave us global warming to egin with. Those measuring the ice elf in Greenland would do well to nd a few weeks measuring the time pent between any conservation and the quick to something sexier; that is, to ing you can buy or sell. The f obscene excess, the equi- to eliminate resources

these have the same appeal for our movers and shakers as adopting a crack baby has for the infertile members of their club. We have all these wonder-working technologies, all these clever schemes for producing the golden eggs—or you could always take home little Bernice. But that's going to be a big old stork.

The bottom line here is, as always, the bottom line, already being parsed out in prospectus form for the eco-savvy investor. Climate change will offer "many unique opportunities for outsized gains," according to Sprott Asset Management, which feels compelled to add: "It is undoubtedly callous to discuss the investment opportunities that an abrupt climate change will spawn, considering the unspeakable horrors that life on our planet is facing." Gregg Easterbrook, writing in the April issue of *The Atlantic*, is less of a prig. The question he invites us to ask in regard to climate change—"What's in it for me?"—is "neither crass nor tongue-in-cheek," he assures us. Much of what's in it for you (that is, if you happen to be affluent, educated, etc.) will come in the form of carbon trading, a shell game allowing polluters to purchase "offsets" in green-energy production, which may or may not come to include nuclear power. According to Dan Dudek, chief economist for the advocacy group Environmental Defense, "the beauty of carbon trading is that it has the potential to harness a primal human impulse—greed—and redirect it toward saving the planet."

Presumably this is not the same greed that inspired ExxonMobil to wage a campaign of disinformation about climate change. Presumably we might also consider redirecting the primal human impulse of hate. We could get the Ku Klux Klan to buy "offsets" for lynchings in Mississippi by funding paramilitaries in Darfur—much as the nations of Christendom have for decades offset all those nasty emissions coming out of Dachau, York, and Babi Yar by conniving in the occupation of the West Bank. It's the devil's old remedy: If you're being poisoned to death, try taking more poison.

If I sound bitter it is partly because I have been vouchsafed a glimpse of

the new carbon-trading wo in the New England village have lived, taught, and bu dead for close to thirty ye where any egress from one now risks collision with an e carpetbagger. Apparently, th that has never had much u larger world beyond that of l new prison or a solid-waste turns out to be an ideal loc an industrial "wind farm," ide ly because the people are too too poor to offer much in th resistance. So far only on towns affected has "voluntee much the same way and for the same reasons as our child unteer for service in Iraq—t site of what might be descri vast environmentalist grotto foot-high spinning "crosses" which the state's green pro will be able to genuflect and absolution before zooming their prodigiously wired lives.

The plot has unfolded in th way, according to a formula t not changed significantly si purchase of Manhattan Islan the trinkets, entice the local s (unless they're hostile), say th *entrepreneur*, which in the tongue means "divine." Peop have traditionally had to dri distances to be instructed an fied by their betters need no budge an inch to hear the o about Vermont's venerable re leading the nation, as exempl its precedent-setting abolition ery, a sacrifice entailing untol ship for its many cotton plant The intestinal tipping point c me when a contingent of studen Middlebury College (annual and fees $44,330) found both money and the gall to drive town of Sheffield (annual per ca come $13,277) in order to lect provincials on their responsib the earth and its myriad creatur to be outdone, a small private ing school in our area (annual and fees $76,900) has challeng wind project as a source of noi turbance for its special-needs st This could actually turn the tid a bookie assessing the hindquar horses, I've learned to place m

harp eye on tuition and fees. ell me where you went to ust tell me what it cost.

while, in my town, where 67 of the kids in the public ele- school qualify for a reduced their hot lunch, a fifteen-year- nas just been arrested for shoot- eath his mentally ill mother's four-year-old boyfriend in a ocated on—I kid you not— n Road. The story appears on t page of the local newspaper an article about the public for the wind farm. It's the sort l-around story not uncommon parts, but for once it has a sil- ng, because the lightbulb that ne like the Bethlehem star over r little fucker's cell-block ini- nay be powered by a negligible age of renewable juice. Our no- purveyors of information will to fly in and out on their c wings and pronounce it all ood. And the offset mongers eir green-team lackeys, those favorite sneering put-down is my back yard," will be glad to hat none of this—the wind ne coal plant it "offsets," or any life that perishes in between— close to *their* back yards. And tes will roll down like waters, and the bullshit like an ever- flowing stream.

ke in the middle of the night, to sleep, probably due to some tible thing I'd eaten, a sacred r a digital bear. On my way o bed from scribbling some of words, I looked out the window w the stars through the bare nes of the century-old-and-old- ar maples that line my dirt confess that iconic, God's-eye of Earth do not move me, but ht through the bare branches ple trees in one radically partic- lace can move me a great deal. e earth continues to grow er, I may live to see the day sugar maples no longer exist at atitude. I think of that line of 's, written after beholding an- particular object of beauty: must change your life."

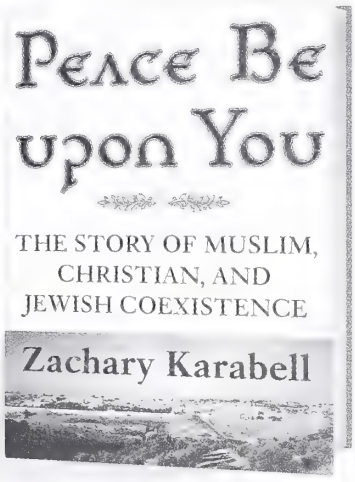
how? It is not enough to ac- ledge that global warming ex- ists; we also need to ask what global warming means. Surely one thing it means is that a culture that has as its highest aim the avoidance of anything remotely resembling physical work must change its life. If you want an inconvenient truth, there it is: that the very notion of convenience upon which our civilization rests is a lie that is killing us. And if you want to see how quickly green can turn yellow, make mention of that abundant, renewable fuel source whose chief emission is human sweat.

But that is only half a meaning, less than half. We're told that "the science is all in on global warming" and that it's just about unanimous. I believe it. We owe a debt to Al Gore that most people now believe it. But the science has also been in, and in for a while, and is every bit as unanimous in concluding that we are members of a single species, descendants of common ancestors—*family* in every conceivable sense of the word. How can we imagine that we will address one overwhelming consensus of scientific opinion without having acted fully on the other? The question is not sentimental. If one can be forgiven for applying base political considerations to such a sublimely moral issue: you do not repair the climate of an entire planet without staggering sacrifices, and people will not elect to make staggering sacrifices unless the burden is shared with something like parity.

To put that as succinctly as possible, the days of paradise for a few are drawing to a close. The game of finding someone else in some convenient misery to fight our wars, pull our rickshaws, and serve as the offset for our every filthy indulgence is just about up. It is either Earth for all of us or hell for most of us. Those are the terms, those have always been the terms, and any approach to climate change that begins on those terms can count me as a loyal partisan. Otherwise, don't expect me to get overly excited as to which side of a golf-course heart attack shows the affluent, the educated, the suburban, and the wired a world much hotter than the one they were banking on. ■

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e that the buyer of a U.S. home in 2006 now has "negative equity," i.e., the debt on the home exceeds its value : 1 in 6
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Number of recent computer models that a team of climate experts studied to assess Arctic warming : 15
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that NASA has given an Arizona astronomer to study how to block solar rays with a cloud of small spacecraft : $70,000
Number of two-foot-wide spacecraft he says would be required : 16,000,000,000,000
Chance that a watt of U.S. nuclear energy is generated in part by material from former Soviet warheads : 1 in 2
Number of UFO sightings in France since 1950, according to newly released French government documents : 1,650
Portion of these sightings that France has classified as inexplicable : 1/4
Cost, from a California company, for a headset that can control a video game with brain waves : $50
Number of different moods it can read, in order to select an appropriate MP3 playlist : 3
Amount that Lockheed Martin has spent so far on Polecat, a new unmanned stealth aircraft : $27,000,000
Date on which the only prototype crashed when the self-destruct mode was accidentally activated : 12/18/06

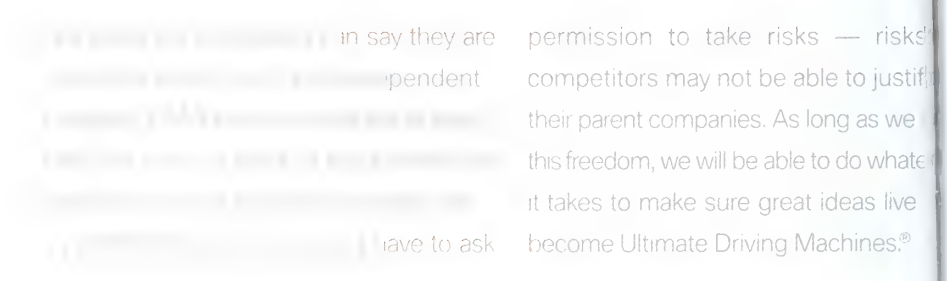
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6. Audi	f. Nissan Motor Corporation, Ltd.



READINGS

[Oration]

IMAGINE AFRICA

By Breyten Breytenbach, from his opening remarks for the ARTerial Conference, delivered March 5 at the Gorée Institute, on Gorée Island, Senegal. Breytenbach's "You, Screws" appeared in the February 2007 issue of Harper's Magazine.

First, we need to see Africa as it *is*—in all its brutality, excesses, riches, horror, humiliation, poverty, despair, squalor, posturing and display, beauty and creativeness. And this is a function of the imagination because we must make leaps in order to accommodate, in useful fashion, the complexity of the continent and from there draw sustenance for continued creativity. Often there is a willful misreading of the reality we live in—for racist or paternalistic purposes—to justify the fact that Africa is in effect left to wallow in nondevelopment; or else to see it as an exotic and slightly dangerous object of folkloristic pity mixed with excitement; or again, the misreading may be self-serving because we Africans wish to continue portraying ourselves as victims of history.

So, to start with, we believe it *is* possible and very necessary to see the continent as clearly and therefore as imaginatively as we can.

Next, we must ask questions. What, if anything, are the characteristics we share and collectively call "African" from Cairo to the Cape, from Dakar to Mogadishu? Are we talking history? Culture? Economics? Race? Or just this sad space between potential and shattered dreams? Is the vaunted "sameness" or "difference" perhaps only in the eye of the outside beholder? We live in a bedlam or a beggar's paradise of supposedly autonomous nation-states. Are they viable or even useful? What do they correspond to? Is there any state on the continent, South Africa included, that can look after the legitimate expectations and needs of its citizens?

Let us go deeper: What are the contents—the rights and responsibilities—of citizenship for us? How much value do we put on the individual human life? Whom does Africa belong to? What is the status and the protection of the hundreds of thousands of people moving across the continent from war zone to refugee camp, from poverty to peril, or even—as only too many do by any means imaginable—out of Africa altogether?

Now—when it would seem that there is a general "retraditionalization" of people—how do we read the phenomenon in terms of "globalization" (which is world consumerist capitalism) and "modernity"? What values did independence and liberation bring? What happened to those values? Have we been living in borrowed clothes? Is there a peculiarly African way of articulating and administering power, let alone sharing it? Do we have effective checks against the abuses of privilege? What is the weight or the influence or even the sustainability and mandate of our civil society structures? What have we changed for the better in the fifty years of Ghanaian independence? More precisely, what is the impact of our creators and observers, those whose very purpose of being is transformation, our community of artists? In other words—what has African imagination contributed to our understanding of what

[illegible] that many answers exist and can even be demonstrated. But [illegible]

Another dimension of our need to imagine Africa is simply the recognition of the relationship between the imaginary and the real. I take it as common cause that part of the human condition, at least the essential home, is the process of imagining ourselves to be. We are, as Bloch says, *not yet in becoming*. We survive, we live, because we try to conceive of the nature and the purpose of being. Our consciousness is the constant invention of what we may be bounded by the possible.

This is not so unique to the human condition. After all, do birds not imagine their territory and perhaps also the nature of their being through flight and song? Animals come to an experience of themselves by movement, leaving traces as markers of memory. It could be that life is awareness because it knowingly strives for imagining existence and thus questioning the sense and finality of the process. Leaving traces of ourselves, as in creative productivity, could then be seen as part of the definition of consciousness for us as well. We know that in order to progress we must stretch for something just out of reach—if only for a life that will be more compassionate and decent than the cruelty, paranoia, greed, narrow corporatism, or narcissism we mostly indulge in and find such ample justification for.

And so we dream. There's the personal dream to come to terms with the inevitability of being finite. There's the communal one of justice and freedom upon which we hope to secure the survival of the group. And then there is the dimension of moral imagination.

This brings me to the last reason, for us, to imagine Africa. How do we understand the terrible morbidity of young people in some of our cities—Monrovia, Freetown—dressing up as gaudy and tattered child brides with wigs and rouged faces to go out and kill indiscriminately? How and since when did the AK-47 become the instrument of initiation into adulthood? How do we explain the maiming, the senseless mayhem, the raping of infants, the greed and the graft, the cynicism of our rulers, the absence of accountable governance buried under [illegible] pleading, the decay of our public ethics, the profound corrosion of individual and collective self-esteem because of our supposed victimhood? Is it because our societies are stalked by death—endemic poverty and the plague of AIDS—or is it because we never delivered on the dreams of liberation and emancipation?

I would postulate that we of this generation suffer from a massive failure of moral imagination. [illegible] the possible freedom, we substituted [illegible]ment and entitlement linked to cowardice, bad faith, the corruption of dependence, and that glorification of impotence or of posturing expressed as political correctness, whereby our languages were gutted of texture and color and we posited our shrill interventions on the mumbo-jumbo of "healing" and "closure," changing the terms we use for looking at the objectionable in the hope of thus repressing horrible realities. In some instances we even went through the sinister farce—or are still indulging in it—whereby "confessing" to torture and repression is intended to lead to an absolution supposed to bring about "reconciliation." This must be a prime example of practicing the hypocrisy of religious motivations as snake oil for social leprosy in order not to lose the essential: the power and the privileges of the rich and those whom they co-opt. Anything—any show, any stuffed bird—but the firm commitment to proceed from our shared humanity to identify what is unacceptable and bring about justice!

What "horizon of expectations" are we proposing to the young? How do we interpret the flight of tens of thousands of young people this last year, in pirogues and *cayucos*—with thousands probably perishing in the sea or in the desert along the way—for a Europe where, at best, they will be shadow people? This country just now saw the electoral victory of the candidate of populism and corruption and manipulation—which, concurrently, meant the rejection of that political caste identified with secular modernity. To the south of here, in Gambia, we have a president pretending to cure AIDS by the laying on of his healing hands—but only on Thursdays and just ten patients per week. And these ruling elites, the plunderers, the only act in town, are found all over Africa.

I want to quote to you from a recent newsletter by Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem—one of the last Pan-Africanists, also the deputy director, Africa, for the United Nations Millennium Campaign. In this letter he looked at the present crop of African governors for life, and of death, and with the insight of long experience he came to the following assessment (I'll condense his words):

1. They come as liberators, but the longer they stay in power the more they become oppressors, intolerant of dissension or even discussion within their own political and military formations.
2. The vanguard of the masses slowly becomes the vanguard of the ruling party or clique and soon degenerates into the vanguard of the leader.
3. They come with big dreams, but the paraphernalia of power, the glitz, the pomp and pageantry and all the trappings, take over. Add to that the institutionalized culture of sycophancy: jungle fatigues soon give way to the best of Savile Row suits, Gucci shoes, Rolex watches, etc. The "comrade" has now "arrived" and will be in no hurry to vacate the statehouse he ridiculed not so long ago.



titled photograph by Mario del Curto of an installation by Richard Greaves. The work was exhibited last year at Andrew Edlin Gallery, in York City.

4. A ruling group that had been held together for many years by shared ideology and perspectives is more and more built around the personality of the leader, his family, in-laws, freelance opportunists, and other cronies.
5. The interests of the party, the government, and the people become indistinguishable from the whims and the caprices of the leader. To oppose him is to oppose the people.
6. The progressive changes they have brought about in the country become "gifts" from a benevolent leader to his hapless citizens.
7. Most of them were revolutionaries who began their rebel lives as firebrand anti-imperialists but soon became converts to the free market and are now new best friends with the imperialist countries, especially the U.S.A. and other Western powers.
8. These former revolutionaries who espoused Pan-Africanism now resign themselves to "better managing" the neocolonial state and are soon engrossed in competition rather than cooperation with their former comrades. Liberators become looters and occupiers.
9. & 10. The twin evils of these leaders becoming victims of their militaristic means of getting and retaining power, and wallowing in external validation by the same Western powers who not that long ago praised our erstwhile dictators as "moderate."

With no coherent, shared political project; with little job opportunity in the offing; with families falling apart; with Western consumerist appetites forced down their throats; with estrangement and obscurantism haunting them like somber fires—what kind of imagined Africa can we hold up to the young?

You may now ask, what does my litany of despair have to offer? We believe it *is* possible to imagine Africa differently, and certainly culture is one way to go about it. But our struggle for light and ultimately our success will be at the cost of brutal honesty, of questioning all the holy cows and taboos, and of remaining engaged to stay the course. We will visit and describe the cultural situation as it *is*, and identify the causes for the absence of viable and sustainable cultural spaces and practices. Maybe we will be able to make a useful distinction between the so-called culture of entitlement by which cultural manifestations are hijacked by the new hegemonists of the party-

and other attempts to rewrite history—often funded by the private sector, hoping to secure their stranglehold on the economy—supposedly for the benefit of the majority but in fact to camouflage the absence of real transformation, as opposed to those actions and expressions of creativity that must always challenge and undermine the power and the pretensions of orthodoxy. Creativeness, in our case, if it were to be not the celebration of lies but a faculty truly enriched by our environment, and the lives of ordinary people, will of necessity give offense to the powerful.

The new horizon we propose must be shaped by questioning all assumptions of legitimacy and "historical truth," or the glib justifications of nation building and purported majority rule; it cannot afford to succumb to the dictates of the lowest common denominator. In art, ethical clarity (which is not the same as certainty) is the prerequisite for keeping our tools sharp and effective. It is also our specific expression of solidarity with all those who are oppressed. As cultural practitioners we just cannot afford to assume, for instance, that market ideology is a moral imperative. All of the above implies an ongoing awareness of the nature of awareness and accountability.

Take the issue of national languages as a contribution to this dialectic. The continuity and constant evolution of one's language is the connection through which one can understand and assume responsibility for one's actions. When you erase a people's language, you obliterate its memory. And people without memories are rudderless, unconnected to their own histories and culture, mimics who have placed their knowledge-of-self-and-other in a "psychic tomb" in the mistaken belief that if they master their colonizer's language they will own it and be allowed to sit as equals at the dinner table and use it as a fork, however clumsily. It is not easy to eat crumbs with a foreign fork. Such a people, because of their alienation, will become dangerous to themselves and to others. Like hooligan parrots.

Concepts and practices of democracy (or democratization, because it is a conduct and not necessarily a state), development, and culture overlap thus to define one another. The aesthetics of interacting with the environment, of experiences morphing through art into objects and processes of beauty, constitute the ground for ethical consciousness. Beauty—however we conceive of it (but we always recognize it)—is a way toward accessing ethical values. Conscience flows from consciousness; the other way round would constitute moral dogma.

Let me conclude with something less harsh and arduous.

Islands are places of wind—of passage, exchange, becoming other. In fact, islands are enactments of permanent moving. (Maybe the Island irrevocably splits one-ness; the parrot has only the wind to imitate!) Remember that "purity" is the opposite of integrity. Islands, like this one, are also places where one may, paradoxically, be cured from an intoxication with power.

I have three wishes.

One—that we may find productive ways of working toward establishing a rosary of such islands all around and over the continent as havens of fearless confrontation and creativity where strong winds may blow, as outcrops of a Middle World that will not be defined and defiled by patriotism and pomp and the corrupting addiction to power. That we can then, from these offshore spaces of "democracy," work toward better harmonizing our means through the building of partnerships. Maybe we can call these *ships*!

Two—that each one of you may wish to imagine a flag to be raised to the memory of wind and the force of imagination. A flag is the shaping of wind, both its veiling and unveiling.

Three—that we may be deeply disturbing in our questioning of all assumptions and platitudes of "truth," and thereby our meeting will be happy and satisfying.

And if I may be greedy and add a fourth wish—that we may from now on avoid the frustrating "way-forward" cemeteries where too many problems are laid to rest under the cold earth of good intentions and nice-parrot resolutions.

[Theme]

THE SEA

A poem constructed from fragments of lost works by Sophocles, from the March issue of Poetry. *The fragments, from papyrus manuscripts or quoted in the writings of later authors, were selected, assembled, and translated by Reginald Gibbons, who teaches at Northwestern University.*

I

Seafarers I assign
To the ranks of those most
Beaten down—neither a
Godly fate nor mortal
Man ever will assign
To them what they deserve
Of wealth. Always gambling
Their far-flung trade at long
Odds, they journey many
Times ruined for profit
They may preserve or they
May lose. I marvel at

Them, I praise these who go
Out again always to
Earn a cold small living
With their hard-beaten hands.

—

Sailors hauled up the ship's anchor

—

(Yet to a mother, children
Are the anchors of her life)

—

Gusting hard, the wind came up
The Ionian sea-lanes

—

And the sea-pilots
Seafaring by night
With flat rudders
Steered the keel straight

—

Poseidon!—across
The Aegean,
Inhabiting points,
Promontories,
Ruling in your sea-
Deeps, tides raked by
Winds, sheltered waters,
Inlets, marshes,
Steep headlands of rock
Booming with waves

II

The wave pushed past me but then in-
Exorably it pulled me back

—

Think of the way lead weights
Pull the net down, under

—

If I could only
Turn into the soaring
Eagle, climb air far
Above wastes of water,
High over the swells
Of the gray-green sea waves

III

Fisherman Palamedes—
Wasn't it he who kept them
From famine (with the god's own
Help, let it be said), he who
Invented such clever ways
To kill time while they rested
Weary from the hard blows of
Roaring seas—board games and dice,
Sweet relief from idleness?

—

Oh what greater happiness
Could you have than this:
After reaching land to lie down
Under the eaves to sleep
And hear the steady small
Rain in your thoughts

[Essay]

PURE PRODUCT

By Binyavanga Wainaina, from "Glory," published in the Spring issue of Bidoun. *Wainaina is the editor of* Kwani?, *an African literary magazine.*

One day, when I was twelve years old, in a small public school in Nakuru, the whole student body was called out of class. Some very blond and serious people from Sweden had arrived. We were led to the round patch of grass in front of the school. Next to the flagpole were two giant drums of cow shit, metal pipes, and other unfamiliar accessories. We stood around, heard some burping sounds, and behold, there was light.

This is biogas, the Swedes told us. A fecal matter. It looks like shit—it is shit—but it has given up its gas for you. With this new fuel, you can light your bulbs and cook your food. You will become balanced-dieted. If you are industrious, perhaps you can run a small biogas-powered *posho* mill and engage in income-generating activities.

We went back to class very excited. Heretofore our teachers had threatened us with straightforward visions of failure. Boys would end up shining shoes. Girls would end up pregnant. Now there was a worse thing to be: a user of biogas.

I once won a windup radio. I was living in South Africa and had entered a radio competition, coming up with some witty slogan. I received the radio gratefully. The winding up did not require much muscle power, and the radio lasted for ages. It looked retro—and retro was starting to look rather good to me. This was the early 1990s. I was very broke at the time. My new possession offered me a way to imagine myself: a suffering saint, a frugal writer with his frugal radio. Frugal, not impoverished. Certainly not a failure. My radio lent nobility to being broke.

It also lent nobility to ingenuity. It was invented by Trevor Baylis, a kindly English swimming pool salesman who had seen a program about AIDS in Africa on TV. Radio was the best way to educate people about the disease, he learned, but electricity was unreliable and batteries were expensive. "There was a need for an educational tool that did not rely on electricity. Trevor picked up on the word 'need.'" His windup radio was the perfect invention for its stated purpose, and it received several awards. He was all over South African television and radio.

I lost track of the thing about the time I moved. I had made a small killing in some

THE U.N. MUST BE CRAZY

From "AIDS in Africa: Three Scenarios to 2025," a report published in 2005 by the United Nations AIDS program, with financial support from Pfizer, Merck, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. The report used folktales to "ensure that important ideas are not excluded simply because they can't be measured."

Once upon a time, in a village called Ogundugbwe, there lived a community of animals: Big Bully Elephant, Tricky Monkey, Lazy Jackal, Stubborn Goat, Shameless Mouse, and Hardworking Zebra. Life was never easy, and now it was getting harder—a disease was killing all the crops, and famine loomed. So Big Bully Elephant, the self-appointed leader of Ogundugbwe, decided to summon all the animals to an emergency meeting in the market square. After a long, time-wasting speech about his dreams, Big Bully Elephant suggested that everyone should bring him half of whatever food they had left, so that he could store it and distribute it when it was needed. But few trusted him because in the past he had tricked them and used the food reserves as if they were his!

Those who didn't succumb to the "suggestion" of Big Bully Elephant, like Stubborn Goat, paid a heavy price. His homestead was ransacked, and all his food stocks were taken away. The village's problems were made worse by the lack of cooperation among the animals. In the daily struggle for survival, the animals fought one another over the limited food and water. Now that famine was in the village, most animals looked on Hardworking Zebra's family with envy. Lazy Jackal and Shameless Mouse took turns, under the dark of night, stealing some of Hardworking Zebra's food. They would then sell what they stole to Tricky Monkey. Tricky Monkey's sales of maize, beans, and peas were growing by the day, and his profits were skyrocketing, as poverty and death engulfed the animals of Ogundugbwe. Tricky Monkey was also making frequent secret visits to Big Bully Elephant's homestead. He would offer money and foodstuffs in exchange for promises of security and access to moneymaking opportunities.

In the village, as in other villages far and near, the plants and crops kept dying. And because the plants and crops were dying, the famine was everywhere. And because the famine was everywhere, the animals kept dying.

dodgy marketing deal, so I bought new clothes, packed up, and went to Cape Town. You didn't hear anything about the windup radio after a while, and I didn't know anyone else who had one. But Baylis's Freeplay radios still exist. You will find them among New Age fisherfolk in Oregon; neo-blue-collar sculptors working out of lofts in postindustrial cities; back-to-earthers in Alberta; Social Forum activists and Grizzly Adams types everywhere. Angst-ridden victims, all. The enthusiasts of the windup radio suffer not from poverty or lack of information but from wealth, vague guilt, and too much information. They are the only people who can find nobility in a product that communicates to its intended owner: You are fucked.

I was walking in Nairobi not long ago when I saw a crowd gathering. Somebody hidden by the crowd was shouting. Another street church, I thought. I went closer and saw a zealous man preaching, but the object of his devotion was a little gadget that could do many things to raw vegetables of many shapes and sizes. And lo, across the city, people are abandoning the customary roast meat and chips, taking their lunch at one of the fruit and salad parlors that have sprouted up everywhere. Restaurants selling meals with traditional green vegetables run out of food by midday. Meanwhile, multilevel marketing companies sell vitamins and aloe. Since we feel dirty, that our government is dirty, we imagine AIDS everywhere. So we have a new puritan religion based on food. It speaks in the language of rapture, and on busy streets you are called upon to rise up and drink the aloe tea.

For all of the products that have successfully entered our national imagination, the items themselves were probably less important than the process. It was the way they made you feel about yourself, for good or ill, that made them work. The ugly face of capitalism, yes; the ability of a product to make its way into your idea about yourself. And the products that have become successful came through these middlemen, people who spoke many languages and understood how to get the message out, how to move things, across town or across the ocean, and make a profit. In Eastlands, the "dangerous" part of Nairobi, you can order anything from the duty-free stores in Dubai by paying Somali middlemen and waiting for your order to be delivered to your door. But things tend not to cross over from the formal side of an African city to the informal side. The two speak different languages. Often, the formal side, out of its good nature or its panicked guilt, out of a feeling that the giant world of the

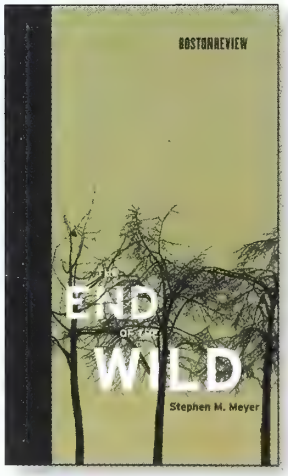
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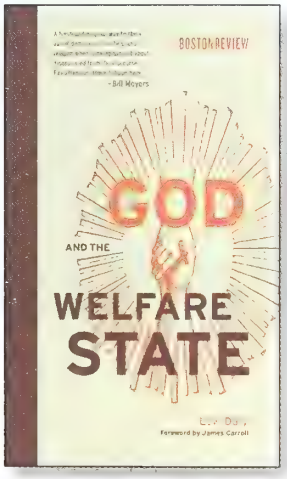
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STEPHEN M. MEYER

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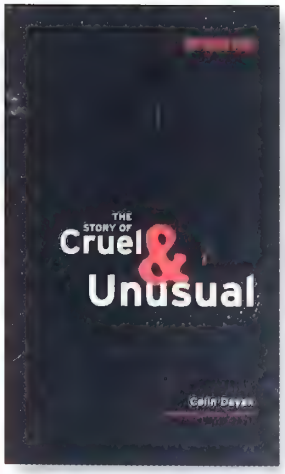
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Discarded Appliances, *by Valeri Larko, whose paintings will be exhibited this fall at Domo Gallery, in Summit, New Jersey.*

urban poor is too pathetic to tolerate, pins its hopes and dreams on some revolutionary product. Biogas. A windup radio. These pure products are meant to solve everything. They satisfy the giver, but to the recipients the things have no context, no relationship to their ideas of themselves or their possibilities. A great salesman can spark a dialogue with you; in a matter of minutes you come to make your own sense of his product, fitting it into your imagination, your life. You lead, the salesman follows. But a pure product presents itself as a complete solution. A product built to serve the needs of the needy assumes the needy have measured themselves exactly as the product has measured them.

When free American maize turned up in Kenyan schools in the 1980s—thanks to Bob Geldof and USA for Africa, it arrived in bags and presented itself at school dining tables: steaming yellow, not white like the maize flour we knew as a staple. We had heard that this food was coming. We had heard people were starving to death—only a few miles away from us, in fact, over the border. But even that was "out there." We were all hearing on the radio this song about the starving people in Africa, and we were singing these songs as well—thrilled that we, too, could feel mushy about people in Africa. We saw the sacks unloaded and started to speculate. I must confess that I hated school food anyway, and that yellow maize porridge tasted not much worse than everything else we were forced to eat. But our speculation was powerful. *It is American animal feed.* And it started tasting a bit too earthy. *It has been treated with contraceptive chemicals.* And it started to taste metallic. *It was sent to us because it has gone bad already.* And it started to smell funny.

Soon, in the Njoro High School dining hall, vast amounts of yellow porridge went directly into the bins. Our teachers, normally violent fascists in matters of discipline, looked the other way. We had food fights with the porridge every evening, and the floor would be littered with the clumpy remnants of America's love.

Q: We understand that Bill Gates and some others in this business have criticized this initiative as untenable. What is your response to this?

A: I don't respond to such criticism. Because criticizing this project is like criticizing the Church, or the Red Cross.

—Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the $100 laptop movement, as quoted by the *Daily Vanguard*, Nigeria

The $100 laptop is for the whole brown world. It will change everything. Every aspect of the project is forward-looking, educational, humanitarian. It will be sold directly to governments. Rwanda has already signed up—a perfect launchpad; in Rwanda every Brother and Sister Citizen sweeps the highways once a month. Libya is on board, too; for a modicum of oil money, it will add this crowning achievement of the humanitarian imagination to the subsidized rent, fuel, and little green books the citizenry already gets. Smiling millions will laptop away.

There is an odd dance that plays itself out around the developing world, where certain good-graced individuals and communities have learned to respond correctly to "development projects." Such people are loved by funders, as they allow them to satisfy their reporting requirements, but the dynamic and arrogant—those who are not willing to turn up for an "awareness" meeting, because they feel they have better things to do—end up being ignored. The sly can become "community leaders" if they can persuade people to become dependent on them. It is they who distribute the food parcels. It is a good and caring way to acquire political power without a gun or greed talk or anything that would undermine the idea of yourself as good and caring. But there are few useful "development models" for genuinely self-starting people.

I am sure the One Laptop per Child initiative will bring glory to its architects. The IMF will smile. Mr. Negroponte will win a prize or two or ten. There will be key successes in Rwanda; in a village in Cambodia; and a small, groundbreaking initiative in Palestine, where Israeli children and Palestinian children will come together to play Minesweeper. There will be many laptops in small, perfect, NGO-funded schools for AIDS orphans in Nairobi, and many earnest expatriates working in Sudan will swear by them.

And there will be many laptops in the homes of homeschooling, goat-tending parents in North Dakota who wear hemp. They will fall in love with the idea of this frugal, noble laptop, available for a mere $100.

Me, I would love to buy one. I would carry it with me on trips to remote Kenyan places, where I seek to find myself and live a simpler, earthier life, for two weeks a year.

[Counsel]

THE INVISIBLE HAND

From a December 22 dialogue between James J. Cramer and Aaron Task on "Wall Street Confidential," a video feature of TheStreet.com, a financial news site founded by Cramer, a former hedge-fund manager and the host of CNBC's Mad Money. *Research in Motion, a Canadian company that markets BlackBerry wireless communication devices, experienced growth of more than 60 percent in its stock price over the past year.*

AARON TASK: Again today we have a misdirection from the futures. Is this just because of the holiday season?

JAMES J. CRAMER: When I was short at my hedge fund—meaning I needed the market down—I would create a level of activity beforehand that could drive the futures. It doesn't take much money. Or if I were long, and I would want to make things a little bit rosy, I would go in and take a bunch of stocks and make sure they were higher, maybe commit five million in capital to do it, and I could affect the market. That's a strategy very worth doing. I would encourage anyone who is in the hedge-fund business to do it, because it's legal, and it's a very quick way to make money, and very satisfying. It's a fun game, and it's a lucrative game. By the way, no one else in the world would ever admit that, but I don't care.

TASK: That's right, and you can say it here.

CRAMER: I can. I'm not going to say it on TV.

TASK: Well, on a related note, there are so many more hedge funds today than when you were managing your hedge fund. Does that make it tougher?

CRAMER: You've really got to control the market. You can't let it lift. When you get a Research in Motion, it's really important to use a lot of your firepower to knock that down, because it's the fulcrum of the market today. You can't create, yourself, an impression that a stock's down. But you do it anyway, because the SEC doesn't understand it. So, I mean, that's the only sense that I would say it's illegal. But a hedge fund that's not up a lot really has to do a lot now to save itself. So this is different than what I was talking about at the beginning. This is just blatantly illegal. But when your company may be in doubt because you're down, I think it's really important to foment an impression that the Research in Motion isn't any good, because Research in Motion is the key today. So you would hit this guy and that guy, and when you would see a guy who's bidding, you would

[Grievances]

PEER PRESSURE

From emails by Lord Conrad Black, former chairman and CEO of Hollinger International, presented as evidence at his ongoing trial in Chicago on charges of fraud, racketeering, money laundering, and obstruction of justice. Black is alleged to have billed Hollinger fraudulently for a renovation of his Park Avenue apartment, a vacation flight to the Pacific island of Bora Bora, dinners with former Hollinger board member Henry Kissinger, and the $90,000 restoration of his antique Rolls-Royce.

There has not been an occasion for many months when I got on our plane without wondering whether it was really affordable. But I'm not prepared to reenact the French Revolutionary renunciation of the rights of the nobility. We have to find a balance between an unfair taxation on the company and a reasonable treatment of the founder-builder-managers. We are proprietors, after all, beleaguered though we may be.

These companies have always been run in the Argus tradition where the controlling shareholders take reasonable steps to ensure their comfortable enjoyment of the position they (we, in fact) have created for themselves. Care must be taken not to allow this to degenerate into decadence. But nor should we allow the agitations of shareholders, amplified by certain of our colleagues discountenanced at the performance of their stock options, to force us into a hair shirt, the corporate equivalent of sack cloth and ashes. We do not deserve anything so demeaning. We have a certain style that all these shareholders were aware of when they came in. We should fine-tune that style, not revolutionize it with a damascene conversion to vows of poverty.

I think I have made it clear that we will not accept any review of the past. Nor will we accept directors that we do not have confidence will be loyalists, by which I mean conscientious, responsible, thorough, but well-disposed, like the incumbents, though, obviously, I didn't say that.

Please do your part in stamping out among our own personnel this nonsense that we have deprived them of the value of their share options. [illegible] it in [illegible] no one will remember any [illegible]

wipe out that guy very quickly. It would be fabulous, because it would beleaguer all the moron longs who are also keying on Research in Motion. When your company is in survival mode, it's really important to get the people talking as if there's something wrong with RIM. Then you would call the *Journal* and you would get the bozo reporter on Research in Motion. And you would feed him a rumor that Palm's got a killer it's going to give away. These are all the things you must do on a day like today, and if you're not doing it, maybe you shouldn't be in the game.

TASK: Okay, another stock that a lot of people are focused on right now seems to be Apple—

CRAMER: Yeah, with Apple it's very important to spread the rumor that both Verizon and AT&T have decided they don't like the phone. That's a very easy one to do because—you also want to spread the rumor that it's not going to be ready for Macworld—and this is very easy, because the people that write about Apple want that story, and you can claim that it's credible because Apple doesn't—

TASK: Right, they're not going to comment.

CRAMER: You just create an image that there's going to be news next week that's going to frighten everybody. This is what's really going on under the market that you don't see.

TASK: And that nobody else talks about except you.

CRAMER: Right, but what's important when you're in hedge-fund mode is to not do anything remotely truthful, because the truth is so against your view that it's important to create a new truth, to develop a fiction.

TASK: So you're talking about the mechanics of the market—

CRAMER: Well, the mechanics are much more important than the fundamentals.

TASK: Well, okay, but in terms of the fundamentals

CRAMER: Who cares about the fundamentals? Look at what people can do. The great thing about the market is that it has nothing to do with the actual stocks. Now look, maybe two weeks from now buyers will come to their senses and realize everything they heard was a lie—but then again Fannie Mae lied about their earnings for six billion dollars, so you know—

TASK: Right, and Bristol-Myers lied.

CRAMER: It's just fiction and fiction and fiction. I think it's important that people recognize that the way the market really works is to have that nexus: hit the brokerage houses with a series of orders that can push it down, then leak it to the press, and then get it on CNBC—that's also very important. Then you have sort of a vicious cycle down. It's a pretty good game, and it can pay for a percent or two.



Street Survey (pile 01), *by Ben Polsky, whose work will be on view this fall at Luxe Gallery, in New York City.*

[Story]

TERMINIX

By James Tate, from the Fall issue of the Mississippi Review. *Tate's most recent book is* Return to the City of White Donkeys: Poems.

I sat in my study working on some problems. They are far beyond my comprehension, so I just move figures around, making columns look real neat, clipping off loose ends. I have almost hypnotized myself; in fact, I'm downright drowsy. Why I haven't been fired I'll never know. Everything about this job baffles and annoys me. Mr. Haggerty thinks I'm a genius, that I'm somehow beyond the everyday mundane workings of the business. I let him think that. Why not? It provides cover for my incomprehension. Kerry is Mr. Haggerty's private secretary. She's not supposed to talk to us. But one day I was alone with her in the office and I said, "Kerry, I don't even know what we're doing here. Surely you know something. Can you give me a hint?" "We're not supposed to know, Mr. Seymour. It's all set up so you can do your job without knowing. You're supposed to enjoy the mystery of it. I know I do. It's very satisfying to me at the end of the day to know I've helped out without knowing anything. You have so much less baggage to carry home with you," she said. "Does it have anything to do with panda bears?" I said. She laughed. "Not that I know of, why do you ask?" she said. "I thought I saw a very large order for bamboo plants one day, and it just entered my mind that some pandas might be involved. Just grasping for straws, I guess," I said. "Frankly, I always assumed it was something more in the line of missiles," she said. "I guess it's best not to know. Missiles would just depress me," I said. "I shouldn't be talking to you, you know. I could get into an awful lot of trouble," she said. "You're very nice, Kerry. I promise I won't say a word," I said. After Mr. Haggerty came back, he came to my office. "What did you and Kerry talk about while I was gone?" he demanded. "We didn't talk, sir,"

I said. "Yes, you did. I could see it on her face. She's in love with you. What did you tell her about?" he said. "We talked about panda bears, sir," I said. "Panda bears? Why in the world would you talk about panda bears?" he said. "Well, I'm very fond of them, and I asked her if she was, too. That's all, sir. Very innocent, as you can see," I said. "I'm not so sure about that. I suspect you've broken a code, and it could cost us millions of dollars, not that you're not worth it, but I advise you to stop snooping around if you know what's good for yourself," he said, and left my office. I didn't know anything about codes or breaking codes. I took a bureaucratic file home that night. I moved figures around, straightened out columns, until slowly it was beginning to dawn on me that we were in charge of the whole world, who would die and who would live, who would move here and who would move there, who would starve and who would have plenty to eat, and which wars would be fought and who would win. I felt sick, nauseated, and I threw up. I was cold, shivering, so I crawled in bed and pulled the covers up. I fell asleep and dreamed I was a nematode eating the roots of a beautiful flower. When I woke I was late. I dressed and rushed to work without shaving or bathing. Mr. Haggerty came into my office shortly after I arrived. "Looks like you had a rough night. Out with the boys, no doubt. Well, I just wanted to straighten you out on one thing: the panda isn't a bear at all. It's a member of the raccoon family. Isn't that a kicker? Oh, and I realized you didn't crack any codes, so you're not going to cost us any money. Our operation will go on as before, completely in the dark, run by helpless innocents, doing our good deeds for the public weal," he said. "But I know everything," I said. "Impossible!" he said. "There is nothing to know."

[Protocol]

EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE

Guidelines for the transit of monkeys through airport security, from the website of the Transportation Security Administration.

The monkey handler should carry the monkey through the metal detector while the monkey remains on a leash.

When the handler and monkey go through the metal detector and the metal detector goes off, both the handler and the monkey must undergo additional screening.

Since monkeys are likely to draw attention, the handler will be escorted to the physical inspection area, where a table is available for the monkey to sit on.

Transportation Security Officers have been trained not to touch the monkey during the screening process. Only the handler will touch or adjust anything on the monkey.

The visual inspection process may require that the handler take off the monkey's diaper.

[Confession]

THE LANGUAGE OF WAR IS KILLING

Adapted from the Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024, concerning the detainee Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. The document was released in March by the Department of Defense. Since his capture in Pakistan in 2003, Mohammed, whose interrogation was a major source of The 9/11 Commission Report, *has been held in undisclosed locations as well as at Guantánamo Bay. The transcript includes Mohammed's admission that he served as military operational commander for Al Qaeda, that he killed* Wall Street Journal *reporter Daniel Pearl, and that he planned the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 9/11 attacks, the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, as well as dozens of other operations, many of which were never executed.*

I'm not making myself a hero when I said I was responsible for this or that. You know very well there is a language for any war. If America wants to invade Iraq, they will not send Saddam roses or kisses. They send bombardment. I admit I'm America's enemy. For sure, I'm America's enemy. So when we make war against America, we are like jackals fighting in the night. We consider George Washington a hero. Muslims, many of them, believe Osama bin Laden is doing the same thing. He is just fighting. He needs his independence. Many Muslims think that, not only me. They have



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[Debriefing]

WHAT WAS OURS

From a postcombat interview with Staff Sergeant Paul McCully, conducted by the Army Combatives School and published in Army Times in December. McCully, a U.S. Army infantryman, was stationed in Iraq in 2005. Joshua Owens is a sergeant in his platoon.

There was a bad guy standing over me. I was looking up at him and expecting him to unload his AK-47 on me, but he was screaming and butt-stroking me in the head.

The second I realized that it wasn't one of my guys, I got up as fast as I could. I don't even remember placing my hands on the ground to push myself up. It just seemed like I floated up—that's how I lost it happened. I grabbed his AK, jerked it free, and it went flying. He tried to dive for it, but I went to the clinch with him. A clinch is when you control a person's upper body by placing both hands around his neck. Our bodies were close together. I had his hair in my right hand, pushing his head down. I started throwing right uppercuts and knees to mess him up. I held on to his shirt and hair and extended my arms to allow the guys who I thought were behind me to have a clear shot. But that never happened. It seemed like I was alone, and nobody was there to help me. He was screaming stuff about Allah as I continued to hit him.

Owens came running up to me with his M9 pistol drawn. Right as he fired one shot into the enemy's stomach, the enemy reached up and grabbed the pistol. I let go, took a step back, and secured my M4 rifle. With Owens and the bad guy fighting for Owens's M9, I put the barrel of my rifle in the bad guy's right side, point-blank, right underneath his armpit, and fired a single shot. The bad guy squealed like a pig and hit the ground like a sack, landing on his back. I immediately placed the barrel of my rifle in his face and fired ten shots to finish him.

After I shot him, I took a knee and was trying to comprehend everything that had just happened. I was like, "Holy shit, did this just happen?" It was kind of like a weird euphoria. They pulled me and Owens into the building for the medic. Since we had blood and charred flesh and hair all over us, it was hard for the medic to tell what was ours and what wasn't.

I've always been a pretty aggressive person, but having some stuff to back you up, the Army combatives training, is great.

been oppressed by America. So when we say we are enemy combatants, that's right, we are. But I'm asking you to be fair with many detainees who are not enemy combatants. Because many of them have been unjustly arrested. You know very well, for any country waging war against their enemy, the language of the war is killing. If man and woman are together as a marriage, the others are kids, children. But if you and me, two nations, are together in war, the others are victims. This is the way of the language. You know forty million people were killed in World War I. Many people are oppressed. Because there is war, for sure, there will be victims. I'm not happy that three thousand have been killed in America. I feel sorry even. Islam never gives me the green light to kill people. Killing, in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, is prohibited. But there are exceptions to the rule. When you are killing people in Iraq, you say, We have to do it. We don't like Saddam. But this is the way to deal with Saddam. Same language you use I use. When you are invading two thirds of Mexico, you call your war "manifest destiny." It's up to you to call it what you want. But the other side is calling you oppressors. If now we were living in the Revolutionary War, George Washington would be arrested by Britain. For sure, they would consider him an enemy combatant. But in America they consider him a hero. In any revolutionary war one side will be either George Washington or Britain. So we considered American Army bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. This is a kind of invasion, but I'm not here to convince you. I don't have to say that I'm not your enemy. This is why the language of any war in the world is killing. The language of war is victims. I don't like to kill people. I feel very sorry kids were killed in 9/11. What will I do? I want to make a great awakening in America to stop foreign policy in our land. I know Americans have been torturing us since the seventies. I know they are talking about human rights. And I know it is against the American Constitution, against American laws. But they said, Every law has exceptions. This is your bad luck—you've been part of the exception to our laws. So, for me, I have patience. The Americans have human rights, but enemy combatant is a flexible word. What is an enemy combatant in my language? The Ten Commandments are shared between all of us. We are all serving one God. But we also share the language of war. War started when Cain killed Abel. It's never gonna stop killing people. America starts the Revolutionary War, and then the Mexican, then the Spanish, then World War I, World War II. You read the history. This is life. You have to kill.

[Procedure]

MOVE THE JOB

From a March 19 affidavit in the case of WTC Families for Proper Burial *v.* the City of New York, *submitted by Eric Beck, a construction worker hired in October 2001 by Taylor Recycling Facility to supervise sifting machines at Fresh Kills Landfill. More than 1.5 million tons of rubble from the World Trade Center were deposited at Fresh Kills after the 9/11 attacks.*

When we began our work sifting debris at Fresh Kills, we were told by a New York City Police Department official to spread the material out as thinly as possible, sift it, and get rid of it. There was, however, an enormous amount of steel in the debris that would have clogged our screening machines. To prevent this, we had a worker running an excavator machine that pulled the steel out of the debris before it was sifted. Once we had removed the steel, a loader would scoop up the debris and dump it into our sifting machine. The sifter sorted through the debris with its "fingers," divided it into three streams of material (small, medium, and large), and placed the three streams on three separate conveyor belts. In addition to the ten Taylor workers assigned to each machine, sixteen NYPD officers stood next to the conveyor belts, ready to look for human body parts, human remains, and personal belongings.

Through this process, we found many human body parts, including bones, fingers, skulls, feet, and hands. I vividly remember finding a man's full chest and the entire body of a man still dressed in a suit. Personal belongings that we recovered included keys, wallets, pictures, and jewelry. Whatever body parts we found were put into buckets and taken to the medical examiners' area. The debris that was sifted by our machines down to one-quarter inch was known as fines. The Department of Sanitation took the fines from the conveyor belts, loaded it onto tractors, and used it to pave roads and fill in potholes, dips, and ruts.

In the early months, we identified approximately two thousand bones per day. These numbers decreased toward the end of the job. I believe we found fewer body parts in the last months because we were sifting through the debris from the bottom floors of the World Trade Center, and the people who had been on those floors either escaped or their entire bodies were crushed, leaving no bones.

The firm Phillips and Jordan had been hired to oversee the work at Fresh Kills. I was constantly told by their supervisors to "move the job," to run the conveyor belts faster, and to "keep the tonnage up," referring to the tons sifted per hour. One official did not let us drop below a certain quota of tons per hour; another did nothing but drive around the site all day, checking on our progress.

Meanwhile, NYPD officers working along the conveyor belts kept telling me to slow the belts down so they could properly sift through the debris. Because only sixteen officers could work on each of our machines, other officers continued to sift through debris using rakes and shovels, until the end of 2001, when the temperature dropped to such a point that some of the materials froze.

[Fiction]

THE REVISIONIST

By Miranda Mellis, from her novel of the same name, published in January by Calamari Press.

My last assignment was to conduct surveillance of the weather and report that everything was fine. They set me up in an abandoned lighthouse several miles outside the city. The lighthouse stood in the center of a junkyard, atop a mound of mossy dirt. It was trumpet-shaped with inward-sloping walls. A stack of old sewing machines and broken pianos surrounded the dump. Local kids jumped from piano to piano, stomping the sour keys. Dogs chased them, barking. From the tower I couldn't hear, but I could see the kids jumping and the dogs chasing, their jaws snapping open and shut. With the latest surveillance technology at my disposal, it was difficult to stay focused on the weather. I was tempted to make my own observations, and I did.

I saw a family driving to the country on vacation. Behind them, a bomb went off. Through my headphones, I noted the rushing sound of radiation cruising low across the land. The father, who was driving, saw the mushroom cloud in his rearview mirror. The others didn't turn around, so they never noticed.

When they reached the campsite, the kids pitched a family tent. The father went inside, zipped up the flap door, and wouldn't come out. "I need time alone," he called. His family sat frowning around the picnic table. The father was laughing and moaning inside the tent. The sister shook her fists in his direction. The brother gave the tent the finger. The mother tore her straw hat off and stomped on it. She ground it into the dirt, right outside the flap door. The father heard the twisting feet of the mother. Coming out of the tent and seeing the hat on the ground, he said, "There's something I've got to tell you, but not in front of the kids."

"There's been a nuclear attack." Saying these words out loud had a strange effect on the father. He began running around and around in circles. Then he fainted.

Through my telescope, buildings were crumbling. The very air had faded, was pixelated. Inside one apartment building was an elderly woman. Her hearing aid was broken. She was watching the panic on television but could not understand what they were saying. She strained to hear them. She shook her head and wrung her hands. She knelt and prayed. Her prayers exploded out of her mouth all over the carpet. She coughed up shards of bone and tiny blood-and-gristle-soaked figurines. She washed the prayer viscera in the sink and hung them from a clothesline outside the window.

Back at the camp, the father gave the children tests. "What would you do in a nuclear holocaust?" But they couldn't answer. They pantomimed ducking under a school desk; the father frowned.

After they had quarantined the part of the country most affected by the bomb, I published a report showing that radiation was harmless. My report on the radiationless bomb was widely circulated. I was promoted. My employers wanted the real reports; I sent them the unrevised originals. A lot of people could see, by observing their own environments for themselves, that my reports were fraudulent.

People wanted to get away. Escape schemes flourished. One guy made a pile of money selling plots on Start Over Island. Anybody with any money moved to the island. I went there myself, at first on vacation, and then for real. It was the new expatriation. They gave you a new identity, a clean slate.

There were mutant children who sensed the impending exodus of all the adults, who planned on leaving their monstrous offspring behind. The mutated kids were impossible to soothe, perpetually hungry and thirsty, shivering and angry. The adults said, "It's only me going. The kids will get by. There are other adults around, social services, orphanages, hospitals, shelters. The others, they'll stick around, get pissed on the head by acid rain and all that, but I'll be gone, and the kids will just get used to it." But the kids didn't get used to it or forget, because it never occurred to them that they could. No one ever suggested it.

There were side effects on the island—reddened eyes and this compulsion to rip things. People would be talking mildly at the bank and suddenly rip out their own hair, or go outside and rip the moat of shrubbery surrounding the bank with their bared teeth. They would stumble through the parking lots, chewing the shrubs, eyes gyrating.

I might have stayed on the island if there was no one there I recognized. But there they all were: friends, acquaintances, family members. At first I didn't mind—since we were now "strangers," I no longer had to do their dishes, take them to A.A. meetings, make sure they'd swallowed their pills, fight them off, go to counseling with them, worry about them, be jealous of them, suspect them of lying, miss them, hold their babies, drive them to the hospital, help them move, fantasize about them, comment on their haircuts, see their points, admire their looks, proffer my goodwill, keep their secrets, pacify them, reassure them, seek their approval, recover from their abuses, read their manifestos, find them unreliable, try to see their good qualities, hope they'd vote, impress them, ignore their stupidity, or compete with them for jobs and housing.

The day after I ripped my own mother's clothes off in a supermarket, I suspected I needed to leave Start Over Island. My last conversation there convinced me of it. I had been visited by a lady with razor-thin lips. She made astral killings her business. "You have enemies here," she told me. Evidently, she had been hired to murder my astral body. Furthermore, she said she had already done it. Hadn't I noticed anything different?

I returned to my revisions at the lighthouse. I concentrated on taking measurements of the rising ocean, training my instruments on the creeping shoreline and tidal fluctuations, and revising my data to report, unaccordingly, that the sea was just as usual. The ocean had always functioned as a kind of clock for the sentient, but gradually it stopped telling our kind of time. It was on to other measures. It tossed up four hundred dead dolphins one day and claimed one hundred thousand baby seals the next.

The place where one could now go to experience the ancient rhythms of nature was the convenience store. Convenience stores were becoming "nature," and nature had become a run-down, thrashing machine. In the convenience store, people howled and chirped at one another. A man was voiding near the chips aisle. He was in the process of digging a hole with a jackhammer to bury his shit when a robbery took place. He pulled out his video camera and caught the event on tape. He couldn't wait to get home and show his family the video of the robbery in progress, which had interrupted the burial of his bowel movement.

I fabricated phenomena, makeovers for a bevy of new industry-spawned carcinogens—*the air is getting cleaner by the day; cloud miasmas: the future is bright; 500 trillion nanobots, built an atom at a time,*



nal, *by Matthew Ritchie, whose work was on display last fall at Andrea Rosen Gallery, in New York City.*

war in a suitcase; carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion have proven highly beneficial to life on Earth, especially cockroaches and poison ivy.

On the outskirts of the city, I saw a man lying on the floor of a dirty small room. There was nothing else in the room but a projecting movie and a chair. The movie showed him sleeping on the dirty floor. He sat in the chair and dissolved. His daughter came home and found the bones of her father in the chair. She sat on his lap bones, and she turned to bone dust. Her son came in and lay on the floor. There was nothing else left but the movie of his grandfather sleeping on the dirty floor, the chair, and the combined bones. He sat on his mother's lap bones and dissolved. His daughter came in and lay on the floor. There was nothing else left but the movie of her great-grandfather, the chair, and the bones. She sat on her father's lap bones, and she turned to dust. I averted my eyes.

In the past, when something fell out of the sky, or there were collisions, men in jumpsuits arrived, sirens blaring, to erase all traces. Something was always done about something. Now nothing was done, except documentation. For every event, there were multiple documents and artifacts, until there were more documents and artifacts than events. Inevitably, someone called a document an event, and people made documents of documents.

Some chose to end their genetic line rather than risk bringing another lunatic into the world. "He could be the next Hitler," some argued. "Or the next Einstein." This binary, the Hitler-Einstein dilemma, provided an inescapable deadlock for would-be breeders.

After a long hiatus, I delivered a 178-page summary of my "findings" that stated in its conclusion: *Continuing growth in greenhouse gas emissions is leading to a higher standard of living that will result in a global utopia by the end of the century.* The president quoted liberally from my report, hailing it as an objective docket.

I slept for a week. I awoke numb and looked out at the state. Things moved, had dimension, made sounds, slid right up to the surface, but could not poke through. Nothing was felt any longer, or known through the sense portals, despite the fact that every part of the body was designed for contact. Either the world, usually so flagrant, was camouflaged, or my surfaces were deteriorating. In any case, it was hidden. Time would pass without my seeing or recording events. Some events I would have to imagine. The made-up events were sometimes more believable than actual events. The actual events were often difficult to believe. ■

Because I can read,

Because I can read,

Because I can read,

Because I can read.



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ENDGAME

Meditations on a diminishing world

By Edward Hoagland

The fox family we fed last year must have killed our weasels. First, the vixen had come alone at dusk that spring, haggard from the nutritional demands of making milk, simply to finish any kibble left in the dog's dish. The dog was of course offended, but impotent in the house by evening, especially after we began putting out extra food, as the interloper decided not to mind being watched. Besides replenishing her strength, she might carry mouthfuls to her cubs, denned underneath the neighbors' fallen-down barn, or bury some for a rainy day under the highbush cranberries nearby. Soon she looked less emaciated, even though shedding her red winter coat for summer made her dark-bluish skin show through. The male never chose to approach by daylight, but the amount eaten sometimes indicated he may have after nightfall.

When the pups were three months old, she permitted them to watch her eat, sitting twenty yards away, and brought them helpings, later letting them eat from the dish themselves, by order of a five-part hierarchy, interrupted by her own favoritism. If the dog barked, a car passed, or I emerged, she'd squall repeated warnings, teaching them to scramble down into the alder thickets by the stream and then the spruce woods, uphill, beyond. Our Belgian shepherd was too fat and old to catch them once they'd reached their impudent stage, but I think may have spared one or two at earlier moments, when we appeared while the vixen was training them to hunt voles in the field and she squalled that doelike alarm. They'd reached the birches and firs to hide, but certain whimpers sounded, as if the dog—herself female—had overtaken but not bitten them, from a bitch's instinct not to kill puppies; and the fox immediately swung back as a decoy, loudly crying her squall.

They learned to pounce on grasshoppers, nip blueberries, cut off a foolish chipmunk, or grab a writhing garter snake. It was a quicksilver treat to watch the five tumble and interact, homing in on a woodchuck's scent, and as they matured, they'd taunt the dog with their agility, as a final insult hauling her dish out toward the trees. But I needed to lay down sheets of roofing tin near their hibernaculum for the remainder of my colony of snakes to hide underneath, and regretted gradually losing the family of woodchucks who

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RED SQUIRRELS HAVE BOLDLY BEEN ENTERING THE HOUSE. ONE WOKE ME BY TAPPING ON MY SHOULDER WHEN I WAS NAPPING TO SEE IF MAYBE I WAS DEAD

[illegible] had lived under our own ratfish barn and detunct chi[ldren]
Snowshoe hares, too, vanished from the vicinity, as well as [illegible]
[illegible] meant that last winter mice built nests among m[y]
[illegible] sweater and poetry anthology. I'd see their elfin g[ray]
[illegible] from the gnawing under the bathtub to get into the kitchen. A[nd]
[illegible] about only complicated matters because the dying mice [were]
thirst, jumped into the toilet and clogged it up.

I like the fact that in this hundred-year-old house two miles [off]
road in northern Vermont, the mice are still the native white-foot[ed]
with long white tummies and acrobatic tails, using my dwelli[ng]
might a cleft in a ledge or a hollow maple tree—not European h[ouse]
such as infested American towns and cities centuries ago. Nor has a [Norway]
house rat ever shown up in my thirty-eight years here. The gauntle[t]
must be impossible to run; even stray cats don't make it anymore. [The]
otes, the fisher, the bobcats would grab them, not to mention M[ink]
Fox, who themselves would furnish a meal for the coyote pair, if eit[her]
ambushed and cornered by them while foraging. That's perhaps the [rea]
son why the vixen and her mate denned among the abandoned fa[rm]
ings of my neighbor and me, ceding the coyote family—whose how[ling]
the ridgetop I enjoyed nightly when I wasn't feeding her—a hunti[ng]
tory concentric to hers. The coyotes, in other words, also munche[d] ra[bbits],
woodchucks, meadow mice, deer mice, jumping mice, and freelan[ce]
cellaneous booty like frogs and fallen apples and muskrats, but bei[ng]
tolerated as close to a house as a fox, they accepted the concentric [ar]
ment around our farmsteads of necessity, allowing the fox a safety[zone]
raise her pups. Otherwise, not the quick, canny adults but the cal[ves]
would be carried back to fatten young coyotes. Their cowering, whi[ning]
wouldn't help them, as it had with my shepherd dog.

I don't know but what she lost one or two blunderers to predatio[n by]
larger kin even so. In any case, after that litter dispersed, our vix[en]
her new den this spring down close to the asphalt, where there a[re]
houses, garbage, domestic critters, and roadkills, but another truc[k]
exists where coyotes are loath to go. The price was losing at least o[ne]
to a car, but likely worth it, since her risky visits—undulating [the]
mountain notch alone through the woods (I might meet her on my [way]
to wolf down whatever was set out for her, usually a mouse, a[nd]
switched from poison to traps—became infrequent. Red squirrels al[so]
boldly been entering the house, more intrusive than any mouse. Or[ne]
me recently by hopping onto the arm of my chair and tapping me [on]
shoulder when I was napping, to see if maybe I was dead. I'd been sh[outing]
at him for stealing from the cupboards, so he wasn't begging to be fe[d]
fox had kept him and his ilk afraid of being waylaid on the ground [and]
left their big oak trees; and no fierce long-tailed weasel has appeared [to]
challenge them, it seems. Close to the house he's safe from the mair[n]
rel-hunter: the ten-pound weasel-relative called the fisher (sable, to [the]
er), which likes deep woods. And the slow raccoon, nosing around [for]
orously, now that the vixen's aggressive presence is gone, is no th[reat]
squirrels, although as a tree-climber he can coexis[t]
coyotes—and with people as well, because he seldom [bothers]
us; strikes us as personable instead.

I miss that vulpine panache, however, that pouncer-on-a-grouse, t[he]
coyotes have more glamour, if you can see as well as hear them, whic[h]
occasionally. Answering my harmonica, they brought their pups down [to]
ridge to observe my dog and me and bark a little at the two of us from [a]
tance of thirty yards. Startling the family another time, I made a pup [drop]
fawn's head it was carrying. June is when they're that clumsy[est]
also ebullient enough to answer barred owls' calls, or ravens', or, in yap[ping]
attempt to howl. When I acquired this property there were no coyotes, o[r]
er either. The most thrilling nocturnal sounds were the bobcats' screams, w[hich]

nowadays because the fisher—at half the weight—are adept at the bobcats' smaller prey, while the coyotes—about twice as large, ially working as a pack—do better with meat on the upper end, like und deer, whereas the poor bobcat is solitary year-round, except to leed, it may arduously snag a deer in a drift, but have this stolen from ack during the starving months; then the next week, yet again. ile, the fisher are keeping trim on porcupines, which no other preda- d here has mastered the knack of killing, or else by monkeying in after squirrels.

quirrel that woke me up to see whether I was dead then chewed a peanut-butter lid, and stole a slice of raisin bread. There's a pair of s I'm hoping will catch him, if he carries his overconfidence out of nters keep our bears from that sin, though they become bulimic, fat- n apples in the fall, and vomit under the trees. I've seen a moose, too, iously at the side of the road, look right and left before crossing, then sniff my car, if it's parked ive, for clues to its nature, but without lower- ack of antlers to whack it, as you'd think he ant to. Instead, like the bears, he soon climbs e for safety's sake. That red squirrel, by con- nts this house, like a hollow tree. He defecat- y toilet lid the other day, and leapt against the wall to knock down an African mask hanging there, as if to rid the place of all of its human imagery.

he next town is slated to double in populace ue to the construction of a new ski resort. In the tmosphere prevailing nationwide, which is both ercenary and health-obsessive, people regard ate as more than just a dwelling or a spot to park sets. They want a dab of garden, several healthy ith birds at a feeder, a breeze, and grass to mow lawn furniture on, which is a fancy way of lying ground. They want low blood pressure, no acid r palpitations—longevity. Politically, in the grab- e we're living through, this impulse doesn't take n of widely wanting to preserve nature as a pub- ain. Rather, we'll tend to hire a backhoe to dig te mini-pond and plant nursery vegetation, after ng down whatever had grown up naturally in the y before. People want muscle cars and a swatch of play designer on. A guy next door to where I used to live simply poi- all of "his" frogs in the pond outside his house because they sang when ated in the spring. He had thought he was buying silent water.

eral big-box stores are being installed on a road paralleling the lian border, a couple of dozen miles north of me. So that interven- etch of farm and logging land will gradually fill up, too, and wind es perhaps crenellate the ridgelines—a change I wince at. Yet much dabbergasting alterations are in store—the mowing of parts of Ama- to grow ethanol; the melting of the poles; the desertification of more ica (and if you've already seen famine there, as I have, the idea of ng corn in Iowa to drive cars is obscene). Dumbfounded, conserva- ts are hard put to express the scope of what they feel. John Muir save Yosemite Valley and Rachel Carson reduce the use of DDT eloquent polemics—but those were cap-gun battles compared to the mic changes now under way. A hundred and fifty years ago, with the West still awaiting settlement, Thoreau proposed in an essay called ckleberries" that each American town should set aside a square mile re to coexist primevally with whatever people chose to build on the

PEOPLE TEND TO HIRE A BACKHOE TO DIG A PRIVATE MINI-POND, AFTER CHOPPING DOWN WHAT HAD GROWN UP NATURALLY IN THE VICINITY BEFORE



uck, a hand-colored etching by Neil Welliver. Courtesy Alexandre Gallery, New York City

"In wildness is the preservation of the world," Thoreau famously said; and vastnesses of it existed on most of the continents then

rest. But what formulation could Thoreau—or Aldo Leopold, John M Rachel Carson—muster in this steamroller era to divert the avalanch crashing catastrophes? Being aghast doesn't do it.

Not just honeybees and chimpanzees are disappearing, but incompreh sibly innumerable species that have never been discovered at all. Words needed that surpass the wails, the rage, when temples are destroyed, beca this is not Yosemite Valley—this is not a cathedral whose pristine views M could defend, knowing he personally had all of Alaska's wilderness behind h to retreat to if he lost. Muir loved glaciers and on his hikes "discovered" sor How would he find voice for his grief at what is happening to them now? wildness is the preservation of the world," Thoreau famously said; and va nesses of it existed on most of the continents then. Yet not mere cathedr but maybe the godhead is now being destroyed. Life is an ecstasy, Emerson st ulated in his essay called "The Method of Nature"; and in American Tra scendentalism heaven is on earth—there need be none further. However we are stripping, dicing, and deforming the landscapes, souring the oceans, a sooting the skies, we are not just wiping out cheetahs a codfish, blue whales and sandalwood trees, but und mining our very lives and our afterlives.



There seems to be no baseline, as if we're in fr fall. And Conservation, which used to embrace n tional parks and forests, wild rivers, and the like, h blurred into a new term, Environmentalism, co cerned with petroleum efficiency, groundwater qua ty, ozone statistics, sea-level maintenance, trad winds pollution, recycling yardsticks, climat stabilization. People want mobility, yet a hideaw "off the grid," and to have the heart muscles of hunter-gatherer, attained in a gym, though practical living in cyberspace, but still touch the earthly ver ties through yoga. Meanwhile, the pace and enormit of destruction is paralyzing, as is our general indiffe ence. The so-called robber barons, in their epoch also had the advantage of public indifference, bu theirs was an era of plenty, of surplus. Always before we've had mountains unnamed, spare reaches c prairie untilled, oceans hardly fished, scarcely sailed I'm hearing, however, a continuous down-curve i the volume of birdsong and its diversity every spring Wood thrushes, like wood turtles, are rarer now. Th "bittern boometh," as Chaucer said, but for how long

The visionary poet Robinson Jeffers enunciated the situation bluntly, describing mankind in poem including "The Broken Balance" (1929) as "a sick microbe," "a deformed ape," a "spreading fungus . . . slime-threads and spores," "a botched experi ment that has run wild and ought to be stopped." For many decades I've been slow to agree with him, feeling of course more empathy for people than for fungal spores or microbes—but a botched experiment, yes, I fea so. And I think by this point, Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Wallace Stegner, Herman Melville, John Muir, would too. The word "Cre ation" was in common parlance throughout my young years, meaning what human innovation had not brought into being but, rather, was provided for us to start with, either by a "man upstairs" or by eons of vitality evolv ing before; and people, although spendthrift, felt somehow that they were embedded within it. An inherent awe or mystery was taken for granted, whereas now, I suspect, the metaphor of cancer will become commonplace, as we eat our planet's skin and soil its liquids, like a metastasizing disease. Another visionary writer, Edward Abbey, put it well, in 1970, for the new century: "We are none of us good enough for the world we have."

Will those wind-farm turbines expropriating the mountaintops wind up

mixed media painting by Saul Wellner. Courtesy Alexander Gallery, New York City

sort of Easter Island, end-of-a-civilization spectacle? "Where do the
s land when they migrate? Where are the butterflies and bats allowed to
' my grandmother might have asked, if confronted by our contemporary
;hetti sprawl, or the fizz of electronics facilitating the interior mono-
ies we carry on together in a solipsism so complete it appears to eclipse
whole of the out-of-doors. Hurricane-insurance premiums do register a
more on us than our actual demolition of habitat, although no orga-
d religion has ever countenanced such wholesale obliteration of nature.
work of God was assumed to be a source of jubilation and was usually
icted in the arts by rhapsody, with obeisances to the scary side. Wildfires
mud slides will register as well, and any pandemic that breaks out of a
zed rain forest, any pelagic thermal somersault, or crash in fish stocks—
not the loss of galaxies of less utilitarian creatures, the multiple varieties
reenery, the timbre of countless noises we've lived with for millennia—
ociety emigrates indoors and Creation becomes a graphic.

Are we kneecapping ourselves? Would Wordsworth, Frost, Turgenev, feel
just glassed-in and deracinated but amputated? Would Conrad and Melville
e enjoyed the work on a container ship? Bird-watcher populations grow,
vever, as bird numbers fall: richer folk target their travel to Bhutan or Cos-
Rica, poorer ones tack up more feeders for the mourning doves and nuthatch-
hat hang around. We do have a tuning fork in us that continues to vibrate
he ocean's susurrations and contrapuntal thump—to the seasons' scented
ll, with birdcall ebullience and the amphibians chiming in. Quite apart from
considerations of groceries, joy blossoms for us in the sunshine, as photo-
thesis does in plants. To see the curly glint of spindrift on surf, the green-
vivid pictography of moss on boulders underneath a hemlock's boughs, may
ke it sprout. But why? We don't eat moss or phoebes or spindrift. And the
estion of delight shouldn't be moot. What deflects us from a deterministic
us solely upon consume-or-be-consumed? The magic of our retinas, eardrums,
d nostrils anchors us in equanimity besides feeding us. With nature mostly
lved, can iPods do it? Nature has lent me a lifetime of flotation, to the point
ere I can gaze at the mountain across the way from my house that I will nev-
climb again because of old age, and feel so thoroughly a part of it I'm not
en bothered by this. Like the hawks' guano, I'm always up there.

But a penalty of an ecological education "is that one lives alone in a world
wounds," as Aldo Leopold remarked. When John Muir and Edward Abbey
t their major conservation battles, dams were constructed that they didn't
nt, drowning cathedral valleys (Hetch Hetchy and Glen Canyon, respec-
ely). In other words, such campaigns could then be discrete, when nature
emed fairly ubiquitous and people might still carry a rabbit's foot or split a
icken's wishbone to forecast their luck. Rivers sculpted the prairie's roll, dusk
diated the day's close. Now dusk is becoming irrelevant, in an electric tem-
of 24/7, without that hour of modulation. And half the problem is that each
us notices change only by the micro-horizon of what we ourselves have wit-
ssed. Our childhood wistfulness relates to a particular meadow with larks
d bobolinks, paved over; a shoreline where terns nested, blistered instead
th McMansions; a Victorian residence where cliff swallows fledged their
ung from mud gourds under the eaves that has been leveled for condos. The countryside we pedaled into couldn't be reached by a child on a bike nowadays, yet the memory is so personal it may not coalesce into a larger sense of crisis.

Born in 1932, when I got my license I drove the length of Route 66
California in a Model A Ford. But my grandfather had been born in a sod
ut in central Kansas, his father a Shiloh veteran and homesteader who had
lled there by covered wagon. What *he* saw of buffalo, Indians, and lobos
nnot be reconstructed. I watch maples bloom, gulls dive for porgies at the
each, and contribute money to save a remnant of the Everglades, or gaze
to my dog's woodsy eyes for a glimpse of perhaps what the lobos knew, if
rough his more recent ancestry he hasn't been clipped like a golf green.

RIVERS ONCE SCULPTED THE PRAIRIE'S ROLL, DUSK MEDIATED THE DAY'S CLOSE. NOW DUSK IS BECOMING IRRELEVANT, IN AN ELECTRIC TEMPO OF 24/7

I WATCH MAPLES BLOOM, GULLS DIVE FOR PORGIES AT THE BEACH, OR GAZE INTO MY DOG'S WOODSY EYES FOR A GLIMPSE OF PERHAPS WHAT THE LOBOS KNEW

The punch of *Silent Spring* has straddled out to cover a multitude of to and settings, and none of them a worse threat to some of our best bird than the hamburger industry's grinding up of subtropical forests. Fifty-five ago in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, I took care of Su tran, Siberian, and Bengal tigers, an orangutan, a rhinoceros, a hippop mus, and other now-endangered animals, with no idea that within my lifetime they would all represent relic gene pools, severely guarded in the or exhibited in imitation jungles, rather than simply geographical curios caged in iron wagons. At the New York World's Fair in 1939, for prob a quarter, my father had installed me in a wonderfully swaying howdal an Indian elephant at Frank Buck's Bring-'Em-Back-Alive pavilion; here I was, in 1952, in the constant presence of a herd of twenty-four. T and the red-assed, blue-cheeked mandrill were not rarities either, but s posedly commonplace in exotic corners of this inexhaustible planet that adulthood, you could visit—and not only if you were rich. Just ship ou a merchant seaman and jump off in Bombay or Mombasa. Dark-skinned p ples who hadn't been industrialized surely still lived as neighbors to parr boas, monkeys, and chimps.

As a script, this is eclipsed, except for the fanciest ecotours; and as our dem racy crumbles at the edges, the jitters have precipitated a kind of land ru quirky and behind the curve. If a bubble has popped and they've scored so severance pay or downsized wherewithal, agitated persons, after an itc spell, with as many thousands to spend as they have fingers and toes, sh up who want acreage. Here in Vermont, for such a price they can do that it's been logged over and grown to fireweed and goldenrod. They'll hire a bu dozer to consolidate the stones; then park a camper on a flat patch, dig a fire in front for grilling steaks and roasting potatoes, with a card table and fo ing chairs underneath a tent fly they've put up as an awning, for the mor of July. A padlocked cable across the entry tells you when they're not hom

"For the meltdown. My cyclone shelter," a bearded, fiftyish guy of ter porarily Libertarian views explains with a grin, although he may shave t fur off when he gets another job. Probably guns are part of the fun—I Magnum or a 9 mm—because you can't shoot those off much or car them concealed downcountry, as in Vermont. One reason we don't ha lots of burglaries is that a thief should expect every householder to ha firearms; and playacting at anarchy may be a pleasure for somebody fu loughed to the woods from a career in government or the military.

A mutual-fund manager's screen saver pictures his hut moose habitat. "It came on a truck, but doesn't it look lik Davy Crockett?"

After a divorce or bankruptcy, a sick leave that turned permanen another burly, seedy-looking, bitter guy arrives seeking solitary absolution a petri dish of rancid grievance and fantasy. One recent acquaintance, show ing me his newly bought old farmhouse, pointed at the cellar door as w walked past: "I bet you're afraid I'm going to lock you down there?" I tactfull demurred, but became so, having thought, like most of us of a certain age, tha I'd mastered the quick size-up. Does the person seem agreeable over coffee the drugstore counter and picking up his mail at the post office, drive a plau sible vehicle, and know the weather forecast? But the stuff that used to mat ter in a small town, like job history, paternal responsibility, loves lost or cow ardly declined, drinking predilections and cancer scares, remains unknown We had a bank holdup, and the rolling-gaited graybeard who fled was a look alike on the security film to many of the mystery retirees roundabout, who ma have been fired before their pension plans were slated to kick in. His escap route, too, was not toward Canada or the interstate but the spiderweb of dir byways where such individuals live, with mini-mountains in between.

Regular dairy families are interspersed with them, haying in June, while pet geese wander down the roadside and sixty black-and-white Holstein wait at the fence line to be let into the milking barn. And there are whole

e dropout couples making candles or ceramics for a livelihood, farm-
emus and alpacas, dyeing yarn or sewing leather, and schoolteaching
oing online accounting. Radiologists will soon be reading X-rays trans-
ted to them in sanctuaries such as this as well. I used to visit a neigh-
s farm every evening, but economic shifts have hammered him so mer-
ssly that the region's future may be more typified by a stranger and his
friend in a yellow halter top and shorts who have bought a nearby field
hauled a self-storage container to it on a flatbed trailer they're living
No windows or conveniences except for a globular black barbecue set
propane tank, and their belongings in fat black twist-top garbage bags
:ked about. New Orleans was too low, the World Trade Center was too
h, and our democracy has gone spavined. Knowing other people rusti-
ng in vans, with a trailer lot in Florida and a dozen acres here, I haven't
ed where they're from. We have hero firemen from 9/11 afflicted with
ough, and tinkering with a doodlebug, learning to split firewood and dis-
guish mountain ash from serviceberry shrubs. As in a Richard Scarry chil-
n's book, you might wonder what *are* all of the occupants of these hous-
units doing?

They could camp off-site in the state forest stretch-
behind my house and never be discovered, be-
ıse most trippers seldom leave their cars. Southwest
l uphill from me only half a mile is a ledgy outlook
ove where the local mother bobcat has her kittens
ery spring—a few hundred yards from the cleft in a
e of rocks in which, every other February, a mama
ır gives birth to cubs. It is also where, on account of
e spacious view over a pond and, further, undulat-
g mountains, our Congregational clergyman chose
subject himself to an eighty-hour annual fast and
sion quest." But his hunger pinched him too badly
meditate properly, he said, so the next year he cut
e fast to sixty hours, and in the third year to forty:
ıereupon he sought a transfer. Another man, a Ro-
ın Catholic unconnected to the minister, then
:ked the area of the scenic site to shoot himself, af-
being accused of sexually molesting a mute, para-
ic nursing-home patient dying of Hodgkin's disease
ıom he was supposed to be caring for. He left both a
ath certificate already filled out and an apology for
s girlfriend to find when she came back to their
artment from her own work, specifying his location;
ıd she tied his belt around a tree at the spot, to mark
:r forgiveness. It's worth noting too, perhaps, that
nd is at such a premium, not just the bear, the bob-
t, the clergyman, and the suicide have recently shared the vicinity of this
dge for important events. Catty-corner across a marshy brook and notch,
:t remarkably close, as the ravens fly, is the ridge slope where the pair of
coyotes raise their April pups—above but not far from a
cow moose's June nursery bed, and ten flaps from the cliff
face on which our ravens nest.

With wildlands shriveling and landscapes checkerboarded with ever
:ore constricting improvisations—cleated like a football field—people tend
) carom from Boise to Bangor. A beetle-browed CPA will look as headlong
; Doc Holliday, his driver's license from a different state than his car's reg-
tration. At our chili stand, a heavy blonde divorcée has ricocheted from Lake
ahoe with her daughter, looking for the elixir of New England land, "to plant
ur roots." The owner serving them has arms freshly adorned with pastel
ıttoos, pink and blue, and he tells me he's likewise a newcomer. The pain
f those procedures has been "therapy" for his grief at the brain damage his

WITH WILDLANDS SHRIVELING AND LANDSCAPES CHECKERBOARDED AND CLEATED LIKE A FOOTBALL FIELD, PEOPLE TEND TO CAROM FROM BOISE TO BANGOR



's Hill, a silkscreen by Neil Welliver. Courtesy Alexandre Gallery, New York City

PUBLIC CAUSES SUFFER, AS WELL AS PUBLIC LIFE. BUT WITHOUT BEING AN OPTIMIST ABOUT THE FUTURE, I STILL BELIEVE IN THE BLITHENESS OF PRIVATE LIFE

town son has just suffered in an auto accident back home in Connect
The boy is in a coma, so he's sorry he's sunk his life savings into this c
my joint and can't be alongside him all the time. The tattoos aren't babe-
anchor but psychedelic, as if inscribed by a technician kiting on drugs.

Which bushy whiskers are to fend off the frosts and the blackflies and w
mask a man who used to juggle a multimillion-dollar budget but left a r
of broken partnerships behind? So few farmers are still actually afloat
many people dressed like farmers and driving pickups can't be—you nee
glance in the back for a tool chest, tow chains, chain saw, or whate
That fellow of indeterminate age who dawdles through the wash-dry c
at the Laundromat for an opportunity to chat with the lady who m
change could be a widower, or a genuine recluse, or a millionaire unwi
ing at his hideout for a week away from "Cancer Gulch" in the big city. S
tary self-medication, with the millennial refrain that "land values can o
go up, right?" is very different from the back-to-the-landers of three or f
decades ago, lacking the communal notion of reconstituting society, as
hippies once hoped to do. Today's mantras are crabbed, apprehensive, s
involved, as we shop around for tidy climates in gated s
ishness, like a chameleon going from green to brown



Public lands, public causes, suffer, as well as pub
lic life. But without being an optimist about the future, I s
believe in the blitheness of private life. Fox fire and fi
flies, or a loon's nervous giggle as it arrows overhead b
tween two ponds, delight me. So do a woodcock's whic
ering, a grouse's drumming, for purposes of mating, a
a toad's ethereal, extended trill, which, more than a
single songbird's, seems like spring's angelic epitome
whereupon the male may clasp the female for mat
hours. And by late June the derisive coyotes will bri
their pups down close to observe me and my dog, ya
ping disapprovingly so they can remember who to avo
henceforth—as do the raven parents. The whole fam
ly flaps down in conjunction with a flying lesson for th
fledglings, to perch in a tree adjoining my house and i
dulge in a lot of censorious commentary.

My chimney swifts disappeared a quarter-century ag
and parula warblers more recently than that. But wi
ter wrens, in reduced numbers, still sing as intricately a
ever; and in the dappled sunlight or pewtery moonligh
of the forest I'll notice a ghostly, loaf-shaped, two-foo
dome of white stationed on a downed log, and wonde
what it could be. Nothing white except mushrooms ca
survive a summer. Yet it turns out a diligent squirre
has piled poplar fluff into an orderly mass to pick through
later for the tiny seeds, while watching out for a broad-winged hawk tha
would love to seize him. The dappled patterns of the sun's shafts bewitch
me, then the pewtery moon, the barred owl's chow-house call—*Who-cooks-
for-you, who-cooks-for-you-all*—and the toad's sustained, half-minute, thrilling
song. (And would you claim his mate finds his proverbially jewellike eyes
less fetching than Shakespeare did?)

The bounty of wildflower colors and perfumes that magnetize bumble-
bees and butterflies to pollinate their plants elate us, too, although no
utilitarian function is served in our case for either party, since we don't
eat or propagate them, except that indirectly—bypassing Darwin—we
employ bouquets for courtship and requesting coition, an odd connection,
since they, the flowers, don't smell like sex. Why is their scent enticing to
us as well as to insects who wish to implant eggs and grow larvae right at
the source? A gift of chocolate to a woman has the logic of concentrated
carbohydrates; diamonds a show of earning power; dancing demonstrates
coordination and virility; clothing and accoutrements perhaps imply élan.

Harpoon Alkaseltzer, woodcut by Neil Welliver. Courtesy Alexandre Gallery, New York City

owers? Besides promising a certain sensitivity to the gentler gender, may correspond to our exuberance when gazing up at the majesty of essible scenery. Then why such exhilaration at mountains too high hunted on? Why these features unrelated to meat, or progeny, or ng who is the fittest? Until recently, people didn't wish to "conquer" s. Nor does some mechanistic evolutionary theory account for how nced we are by sheets of falling water. Except perhaps in a salmon m, they provide little protein, and interrupted subsistence travel. rtheless, like the thunder of surf, we drink in the roar. It calms us.

nd why is camouflage so much lovelier than it needs to be? In terms of ty, a cottontail's, a salamander's, a tiger's, or a python's—nature's de—have it all over the most effective concealments military techni- have managed to devise. "Every natural fact is an emanation," as rson suggested: which may be the best explanation of any, because prehistory pioneered or prefigured our sense of beauty? I don't believe eveloped an aesthetic sensibility on a just-in-time basis for civilization elcome Titian, Turner, Bach, and Mozart. Bone flutes and cave art proven that. But autumn leaves aren't simply extraneous, like flowers, ir needs. They soon crisp into noisy litter that surely impeded hunting augured the most grueling months of the year. So why do we admire——the fall colors, like thunderous sheets of leaping water of no practi- benefit to us whatsoever, or a hermit thrush's solo fluting, or a modest narch butterfly leaving the milkweed to flutter away with our good ies toward Mexico? I doubt that we, the first Northerners to know re it goes, are the first to wish it well.

ut what *did* inspire our sense of beauty? My hunch is that, like our intel- nce, it's an outgrowth of a gradual refinement of existing rudiments in oth- reatures. Genome research and field studies are cumulatively document- the intelligence angle. Joy in beauty will be harder to demonstrate except n appeal to common sense. Do the species that wear the splendid plumage oats of fur or superb scaly camouflage we admire not feel an equivalent llience at the sight of one another, too? Not merely lust or rivalry, in oth- vords, but something of what Emerson expressed in his essay: that "ecsta- the law and cause of nature." "Nature is a work of *ecstasy*," he added, the ics his. The idea that birdsong, toadsong, are a pleasure only to us strikes as frankly absurd—or that turtles, for example, apart from appreciating one ther's spots, don't gaze with gratification into a cerulean sky. As we spin pace, our joy may be a facet of the universal spate of energy, which nched us all.

Not "designed" or anti-evolutionary, this theory, as Emerson put it, that e power or genius of nature is ecstatic," is simply supplemental; and both oreau and he, as freelancers in Concord, accepted *On the Origin of Species* ore Harvard's contemporary faculty did. Previous cultures of course had intained a rapport, a cross-current telepathy, with other creatures for ages rder to hunt. Also because they served as sentinels and, beyond that, might reverberant or versatile as spirits. During Christianity's defeat of panthe- n, and then industrialization, the cleverness of wildlife and even animals' pacity to suffer were questioned, especially by mainstream science, as long evidence to the contrary could be ignored. But in the meantime a kind of asant grounding or savvy endured among people who truly knew about the tdoors. Even in the city, you'd see this older fellow feeling in Lower Manttan among the immigrant folk who tended pigeon cotes on their rooftops and flew their flocks in mesmerizing circles—whirling glee—every evening after work, or sat with cats on the fire escapes like Continentals while the sun set.

The velvety rustle of fine fishing water, the dewy scent of a deer herd's vorite glen, are delights that connect to evolutionary logic. But not all that's lectable to us does: like frost flowers on a windowpane, more delicately aped than real ones but signifying how the cold outside will bite. And when

IN CAMOUFLAGE, NATURE'S DESIGNS HAVE IT ALL OVER THE MOST EFFECTIVE CONCEALMENTS MILITARY TECHNICIANS HAVE MANAGED TO DEVISE

BLINDLY ACCELERATING, WE BURN THROUGH GALAXIES OF OTHER LIFE, AMPUTATING OURSELVES FROM THE REST OF CREATION. THE RISKS ARE UNFATHOMABLE

we present long-stems on Valentine's Day, are we sharing something
seated in common with insects? Indigo buntings, yellowthroats, black
white warblers, give me a kick, as does the boar bear's hibernation si
der a knob on the ridge facing my house, about halfway between whe
ravens nest and the coyotes den. We're at close quarters here in this en
on a pocket of state-owned forestland. His cave may be a twenty-minute
away, above the twanging green frogs, the black-throated green warble
[illegible] the cedar waxwing's excited, lispy wheezing, the vi
querving squawl, the territorial owl, the white-throated sparrow's dau
whistling, the wild turkey's gobbling.

Garter snakes are strongly, matriarchally communal, when you w
them, as are mice, with that bustling optimism that can make my t
fork vibrate sympathetically, and deer, so often cheerful when toge
too. As that vixen carried her young about in her mouth, how diff
were her feelings from a mama crocodile doing the same; or a hu
mother's protective hug? And when a drought ends in the desert
toothsome rains begin to fall, is just the pick-and-shovel prospector,
perhaps his donkey, happy? Do other living things only process the
conditions mechanistically? Or if antelope, bighorn sheep, cactus w
peccaries, and coatimundis experience a surge of gladness, does
chuckawalla, the sidewinder, the desert tortoise also
certainly be sure about my toad, with his radiantly tre
lous sweet song, his vocal sac bulging.

And will we wither like a girdled tree, as so many of our ance
satisfactions are either dissolved or virtualized for indoor use? How inte
are our origins? Can we simply demolish, atomize, dissipate them? W
ground will we stand on? When medieval Christianity sidelined natur
wasn't destroyed but remained as ubiquitous as bedrock. Absent tha
chaos a likely result? Worldwide, with a TV click we can view what use
be called the Levant, the Orient—drop in on Mandalay without a Suez
sage—or the Amazon and Congo. Surf from a bell-voiced evangelis
pornography, or from a famine to Main Street obesity, from war footag
wastrel celebrity, in a quarter-minute. In this bubbling of images transi
ted—architectural masterpieces, famous scenery—will the substance simi
and gradually evaporate, as in our easy chairs we think we've seen everythi

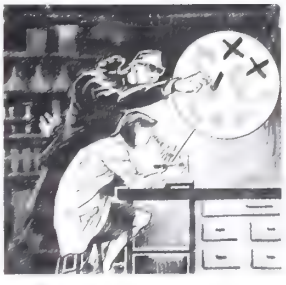
Vermont's endearingly recalcitrant tradition of aginners, with a three-leg
milking stool strapped to their asses morning and night, talking sidewise
helpfully to tourists, has been diluted into service industries like skiing, l
peeping, B&B'ing. Logging and milking do go on, but even the guy wit
bum left leg and busted cars in his dooryard may have a child who is deft w
a computer and college-bound. Television has stripped the summer peo
of their mystique because where they travel and live during the winte
shown. Local kids can reasonably aspire to white-collar mobility if they s
[illegible] school, and the father can hope for a slot in a Florida trailer park if he wa
a second home, too.

Worldwide, the question is room. Is there *room* for our multiplying lei
activities and longevity; the cruelty of our market economics; our implac
ble seining of both land and sea, lest anything escape the harvest, but ot
erwise fabricating a boxed reality of electronic graphics to live within? N
ture has been our aquifer, siphoned from, and thus sinking, century up
century, seldom replenished even a little by anyone, not in the tropics, n
in the arctic, the first world, the third world, or our mind's eye. The electric
that powered our changes in direction and attention span is derived from fo
sil fuels, but scalds the present. Robinson Jeffers's 1929 simile of humanki
as a vast spreading fungus of slime-threads and spores may be too laggard
Blight. Blindly accelerating, we burn through entire galaxies of other li
unimaginably interlinked and unmapped—amputating ourselves from the re
of Creation, whether destroyed or still undestroyed. The risks are unfat
omable. And if you don't find this tragic, open your heart.

UNDOING BUSH

How to repair eight years of sabotage, bungling, and neglect

George W. Bush has done more to transform the nation than any American president since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Indeed, he may well be the perfect anti-Roosevelt. He has taken a prosperous nation and mired it in war, replaced our national composure with terror, and left behind him a legacy of damage so profound that repairing it will likely be the work of generations. Before the next administration can return to solving the already considerable problems the nation faced in 2000, it must begin to correct the misdeeds and missteps of the current one. And as Roosevelt demonstrated, the road back from perdition cannot be found without a good map. To that end, *Harper's Magazine* has assembled a group of journalists and thinkers to survey the damage, to determine what may (or may not) be remedied, and to find our way forward.




1. THE CONSTITUTION

BY DAVID COLE



No one has captured George W. Bush's understanding of constitutional law more precisely [illegible] famously (and incorrectly) told David Frost in 1977, "When the president does it, that means that it is not illegal." Many hoped this theory had seen its definitive demise with Nixon's own fall, but Bush and his compatriots clearly have a different view—Dick Cheney in particular has long argued that his old boss's forced resignation set the stage for an unwarranted evisceration of executive power. We should not be surprised, then, that Cheney and his new boss, with the help of a color-coded state of fear induced by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, have done much to restore the Nixonian tradition.

[illegible] the Constitution at the end of Bush's two terms is much the worse for wear. For a short parlor game, challenge your friends to name a constitutional right that Bush has not sought to undermine. After the right to bear arms and the guarantee against the quartering of soldiers, the game will be over. Those who prefer a longer game can reverse the exercise, but be prepared for an extended and dispiriting evening.

The First Amendment right of association, for starters, has been rendered virtually meaningless by the Bush Administration, which shortly after [illegible] issued an executive order authorizing the freezing of all assets of any person or entity the Treasury Department deemed "otherwise associated" with anyone the administration deemed a "terrorist"—regardless of whether the individual had engaged in terrorist activity of any kind. The administration also has argued that foreign nationals coerced at gunpoint to provide food to guerrilla groups abroad should be denied entry to the United States for providing "material support [illegible]."

Similarly, our Fourth Amendment rights to privacy have been infringed by vastly expanded surveillance authorities under the USA Patriot Act, drafted by the administration and pushed through Congress [illegible]. Most recently, the Justice Department's own inspector general found widespread misuse of "national security letters," a form of administrative subpoena [illegible] that the Patriot Act dramatically expanded. The FBI used the letters to demand personal information on more than 143,000 occasions over a three-year period, used them in circumstances not authorized even by the Patriot Act, and systematically underreported that [illegible].

The Fifth Amendment right to due process, meanwhile, has fallen victim to assertions that "enemy combatants" can be held indefinitely without trial, that suspicious organizations can have their assets frozen without notice or hearing, and that military tribunals can sentence defendants to death on the basis of hearsay and coerced testimony. For the administration, secrecy trumps all legal process; it has claimed that lawsuits challenging unconstitutional renditions to torture and warrantless wiretapping cannot even be adjudicated because the government's allegedly unconstitutional conduct is itself a secret, even when the facts in question have already been emblazoned across the pages of the country's newspapers.

The single constitutional principle most under attack, however, is the separation of powers. Time and again, administration officials have sought to elevate the president above the law, arguing that, as commander in chief, he may choose to "engage the enemy" however he pleases, without regard to what the other branches of government have said. This notion first surfaced in an August 2002 Justice Department memo written by Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Yoo for then White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales. Yoo argued that the president could not be precluded from ordering the torture of enemy combatants merely because the United States had ratified an international treaty prohibiting torture under all circumstances, or because Congress had made torture a federal crime. "The president enjoys complete discretion in the exercise of his Commander-in-Chief authority and in conducting operations against hostile forces," Yoo wrote. "Congress can no more interfere with the president's conduct of the interrogation of enemy combatants than it can dictate strategic or tactical decisions on the battlefield." If the president decided to "engage the enemy" by ordering that the enemy be tortured, that was his prerogative, and literally nobody could stop him.

The administration made the same basic argument in 2004, this time in front of the Supreme Court. In *Rasul v. Bush*, the administration argued that the president's power as commander in chief barred Congress and the courts from exercising any oversight over his decision to detain hundreds of foreign nationals at Guantánamo. In similar cases involving U.S. citizens Yaser Hamdi and

Padilla, the administration maintained that the s could not question the president's factual de- ination that they were "enemy combatants." ne president advanced this "commander-in- f-knows-best" argument still a third time in nding his decision to secretly authorize the onal Security Agency to wiretap Americans out probable cause or judicial oversight, and irect contravention of a federal statute that es warrantless wiretapping a crime.

n a sign that Nixon's theory of constitutional still has limited appeal, the administration rebuffed on each of these assertions. The Jus- Department retracted the torture memo after isclosure sparked widespread condemnation, released a new memo—shortly before Gon- s's confirmation hearings for attorney gener- -that omitted the section on the president's er to ignore criminal and international law, al- ugh it did not formally repudiate it. In the ntánamo case, the entire court rejected Bush's m that Congress and the courts could play no in reviewing the legality of Guantánamo de- tions. In the Hamdi case, Sandra Day Connor wrote for the majority that "whatever ver the United States Constitution envisions the Executive in its exchanges with other na- ns or with enemy organizations in times of con- t, it most assuredly envisions a role for all three nches when individual liberties are at stake." d in August 2006, a federal court declared the A spying program unconstitutional, rejecting president's assertion of uncheckable authori- vith the stern warning that "there are no hered- ry Kings in America."

While the courts have to some extent stood to the president, Congress has generally caved, st notably in passing the USA Patriot Act and, 2006, the Military Commissions Act, which in- ated military tribunals from any challenge that ey violate the Geneva Conventions, watered wn the criminal prohibitions on cruel, inhuman, d degrading treatment, and revoked habeas cor- s rights for "enemy combatants."

Restoring the Constitution will be a monumental task, but doing so is critical to maintaining the character of our democracy. Terrorism does not pose an "existential threat" to the United States in the traditional meaning of that term—the nation's sovereignty is not seriously threatened by Al Qaeda. But in a more subtle sense, terrorism poses precisely that threat. We cannot destroy the Constitution in order to save the country, because the Constitution *is* the country. The first and most important step toward restoration of constitutional principle, then, will be the next election. If the public does not demand fidelity to our founding principles, our representatives will not do so on their own.

The remaining steps are straightforward. The next administration could start by proclaiming—loudly—that in wartime, as in peacetime, the American system of government includes three branches, and the president's first job is to take care that the law is faithfully executed. Second, Guantánamo must be shut down and the prisoners there brought within our borders. When Defense Secretary Robert Gates suggested just that, the administration's lawyers objected that they would lose their argument that because the detainees are held offshore, they are unprotected by the Constitution. But the argument that Guantánamo is a "law-free zone" is precisely why that island has become a world symbol for U.S. arrogance and lawlessness—a "reverse Statue of Liberty," as some have called it. Finally, if we are to avoid a repeat of the McCarthy era's guilt-by-association tactics, Congress should amend the "material support" laws, by requiring proof that an individual's support was intended to further terrorist activity and ensuring that blacklisted groups have a meaningful opportunity to defend themselves.

These measures would be important first steps in restoring not only the Constitution but the United States' standing in the world. If we do so, we might have some chance of stemming the tide of anti-Americanism that is the single greatest threat to our security in the decades ahead.



2. THE COURTS
BY DAHLIA LITHWICK

One way to know that George Bush is going to do something is for him to say he doesn't believe in it. The most famous instance of this might be his long-professed disdain for "nation building," but he also has strong disbeliefs about the courts. For instance, when Bush said in his first 2000 debate with Al Gore, "I don't believe in liberal, activist judges," we could fairly assume that Bush would like nothing more than to install liberal, activist judges until the end of time. And indeed, seven years later we can see that he has gone at least half the distance. Under the guise of rolling back decades of judicial activism, he has

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instead installed a small army of jurists who think of the law in strikingly active terms.

This bit of hypocrisy—let us call it cryptoactivism—is irritating, but it also obscures a larger concern. Bush has long seen judges as intolerable rivals or, at best, political tools to be leveraged to his own ends. And he has acted on that belief too, managing to both geld the courts and harness their remaining power to his own political ends. It is a double bait and switch, then: under the guise of cryptoactivism, Bush has secretly worked to construct a personal political machine, and that machine appears to be neither democratic nor especially conservative.

Whenever this president speaks to voters about things jurisprudential, he lapses into cryptoactivist code. A search of the White House website shows 138 references to "activist judges," and in just about every reference an argument against gay marriage is not more than a few words away. ("Marriage is the most fundamental institution of civilization," Bush said, "and it should not be redefined by activist judges.") "Activist judges" is a phrase for all seasons, though. A former aide to Karl Rove told *The Atlantic* that, depending on the audience, "activist judges" might mean anything from exorbitant jury awards to abortion rights to forced integration. With cryptoactive promises, then, Bush allowed his base to dream of an America without gay marriage, without abortion, and where black people would know their place.

But then comes the switch. Bush's actual appointees to the federal bench don't necessarily adhere to a socially conservative worldview. What they have in common is the president's vision of executive authority. They are willing to sacrifice the conservative ideal of states' rights if it means limiting environmental protection, and they are willing to abandon the conservative principle of limited government if it means shoring up the so-called unitary executive. They do have an agenda, but it is not the agenda of the Christian right. It is the agenda of George Bush.

The government has evolved methods to prevent this sort of personal machine building, but Bush has thus far managed to sidestep them. First he ditched the American Bar Association's decades-long role in vetting judicial nominees, reportedly transferring that function to the Federalist Society, which was cofounded by a former speechwriter for Dan Quayle. Then he sought to limit the traditional veto power of Democratic senators from the nominee's home state. And, perhaps most important to his cryptoactivist agenda, Bush has all along managed to load the national debate with empty language lifted directly from Karl Rove's judicial lexicon: Americans seem confident not only that liberal judges are activists and conservative judges are strict constructionists but also that the terms "strict constructionism" [illegible] "judicial activism" actually mean something [illegible]

The Senate has confirmed 95 percent of Bu[illegible] nominees, nearly three hundred new judge[illegible] all. It will be hard to gauge their impact, sinc[illegible] can take years to track jurisprudential chan[illegible] but there are already signs of a shifting perspect[illegible] For instance, a Georgetown University Law C[illegible] ter study found that Bush's two Supreme Court [illegible] tices, John Roberts and Samuel Alito, agr[illegible] more than any other two justices at the Court, [illegible] naling the degree to which they work off the s[illegible] playbook. A 2003 article in *Judicature* found t[illegible] 9.6 percent of Bush's district-court appointme[illegible] hailed from law firms with a hundred or m[illegible] lawyers—large firms, that is, which tend to r[illegible] resent large corporations. That proportion w[illegible] 2 percent under Jimmy Carter and 6.6 perce[illegible] under Bill Clinton. And a 2004 study by the C[illegible] ter for Investigative Reporting found that ove[illegible] third of Bush's nominees to appellate courts a[illegible] the U.S. Court of Federal Claims during his fi[illegible] term—twenty-one of fifty-nine nominations sin[illegible] 2001—had previously worked as lawyers or lo[illegible] byists for the oil, gas, and energy industries.

These judges are getting results too. A 20[illegible] study by People for the American Way fou[illegible] Bush-appointed judges spearheading efforts [illegible] limit the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Righ[illegible] Act, restrict the application of the Family an[illegible] Medical Leave Act, and limit access to the cou[illegible] for wronged plaintiffs. A 2004 study by the E[illegible] vironmental Law Institute found that in Nation[illegible] Environmental Policy Act lawsuits at th[illegible] district-court level, pro-environment plaintif[illegible] won 46 percent of the time before all judges, b[illegible] they prevailed only 28 percent of the time befo[illegible] Republican appointees and 17 percent of th[illegible] time before Bush appointees. And a 2006 stud[illegible] by Robert Carp at the University of Houston[illegible] found that Bush-appointed judges were even le[illegible] sympathetic to plaintiffs in civil-liberties case[illegible] than judges appointed by Ronald Reagan an[illegible] Bush the elder.

The firing of eight—at least—United States a[illegible] torneys in the middle of their terms (and in the[illegible] middle of ongoing investigations) bears all the[illegible] hallmarks of Bush's tendency to view the courts a[illegible] extensions of his political will. The next presi[illegible] dent can fire all of the remaining U.S. attorneys[illegible] of course, but there is little he can do about the cur[illegible] rent crop of judicial appointees. They will be maki[illegible] ing Bush-like decisions long after Bush himself is[illegible] gone. Congress could try to impeach them, but[illegible] the standard for impeachment is "treason, bribery[illegible] or other high crimes and misdemeanors," which is[illegible] a pretty high bar even for a Bush appointee.

The best the next president can do, then, will[illegible] be to dramatically reform the judicial-confirmation[illegible] process. Nominees should not be able to hide[illegible]

: views behind claims that an issue may come re them when they sit on the bench. They ıld have to answer questions about their ju- udential records, and there must be conse- ıces if they do not. Senators who use confir- ion hearings as days-long infomercials should instead use their time for rigorous constitutional inquiry. Finally, Americans need to reclaim the language of the rule of law. We need to recognize that we have all been speaking Karl Rove's language; that "activist judges" and "strict construction" are political, not legal, code words.



3. CIVIL SERVICE
BY KEN SILVERSTEIN

In January of 2005, top Justice Department officials began making plans to remove up to 20 cent of the nation's U.S. attorneys—those med not to be "loyal Bushies," in an apt phrase n a recently disclosed email by Kyle Sampson, n counselor to Attorney General John Ashcroft l subsequently chief of staff to his successor, ɔerto Gonzales. Sampson himself was a loyal shie of the highest order (at least until he re- ıed in March, after a scandal erupted over the ministration's firing of eight federal prosecu- s). Sampson had come to Washington to work Utah Senator Orrin Hatch; he signed up with e Bush transition team following the 2000 elec- n—reportedly recommended by Elizabeth ıeney, the vice president's daughter, who was a v school classmate—and served as associate unsel to President George Bush before moving to the Justice Department.

In short, Sampson was a political hack, a man ɔo owes his government career entirely to his ɣal soldiery in the army of the Republican Par-

Such is the common trajectory of countless litical appointees during the Bush years, the ɔst notorious example being Michael Brown, ıo oversaw the destruction of New Orleans ıile director of the Federal Emergency Man- ement Agency. Brown's chief of staff at FEMA ıs the equally hapless Patrick Rhode, thirty-six, ho had once been called upon to move large ımbers of men and matériel—as deputy director advance operations for Bush's 2000 presiden- ıl campaign. The credentials of Claire Buchan, ho in 2005 was named chief of staff at the Com- ıerce Department, had been her work as a press ıck at the Treasury Department under George .W. Bush and at the White House under his ɔn. The list goes on and on.

Bush's defenders will argue that all prior pres- lents have filled political positions with hacks, and they will be correct up to a point. Hackery indeed dates to the early days of the Republic, and by the post–Civil War period a spoils system had become entrenched across the federal government. Confronted by scandals and corruption related to the practice, Congress in 1883 was finally compelled to pass the Pendleton Act, which created the modern civil service. This act dramatically reduced the appointment of hacks but never ended it. Where the Bush Administration has undeniably broken new ground is in its insistence that ideological purity and devotion to the president himself serve as a litmus test for appointees, and the rigor with which it has chosen and vetted candidates on only these grounds. "It's fair enough for a Republican president to want a Republican to head the Treasury Department," says Paul Light, a professor of public service at New York University. "What's not fair is to put the question of loyalty ahead of whether the candidate knows anything about tax and budget policy." Light was referring to the administration's replacement of a competent but insufficiently loyal treasury secretary (Paul O'Neill) with an inept yes-man (John Snow).

Perhaps most insidious, the Bush team has packed uncredentialed loyalists on to government advisory panels, which ostensibly consist of impartial experts. William Miller, a professor at the University of New Mexico, was denied a spot on the National Institutes of Health advisory council on mental health after flunking an interview conducted by a White House official. The questions he faced had no relevance to Miller's qualifications to serve on the council, but his negative replies to several queries—did he favor capital punishment for drug kingpins and oppose abortion, and had he voted for Bush?—apparently sank his nomination. William E. Howard III has said that a staff member of the Army Science Board told him he had been rejected as a member because vetters had discovered he was a political contributor to Senator John McCain. (It turned out that the contribution in question had been made by a man named William S. Howard.)

Such stories would be comical were it not for the real-life consequences wreaked by the Bush

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backs. When it came time to staff the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which ruled Iraq for the first year after the U.S. invasion, the administration turned to a cadre of youthful, hard-line Republican ideologues (many recruited through the Heritage Foundation). These included Simone Ledeen—daughter of Michael Ledeen, the neoconservative guru and a leading advocate of the war—who, as a twenty-eight-year-old M.B.A., was named as an adviser for northern Iraq at the Ministry of Finance in Baghdad; Tom Foley, a leading Bush fund-raiser (and classmate of the president's at Harvard Business School), who headed a CPA agency that was supposed to develop Iraq's private sector; and his successor, Michael Fleischer, brother of former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, who also had virtually no relevant background for the job he was given. Williamson Evers, a fellow at the Hoover Institution and a zealous advocate for school vouchers, became the chief American adviser to Iraq's minister of education.

Francesca Grifo, who runs a program that has documented numerous abuses by Bush appointees for the Union of Concerned Scientists, has found that political pressure has caused scientists at key agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, to avoid addressing controversial subjects like climate change, reproductive rights, or clean air because they know it will create problems with administration appointees. Of her own past as a program manager at the National Institutes of Health, Grifo says, "You were a civil servant, and you understood the mission of your agency, and you did your job. Administrations came and went, and, yes, things got tilted, but not in ways that impacted your core activities. Now there's been a centralization of power within agencies, with political appointees involved in day-to-day operations in a way we've never seen in past administrations, Republi or Democratic. That has filtered down and come a part of the culture. It's going to take a l time to turn around."

How can we safeguard the civil service aga future assault? To begin with, Congress sh slash the number of presidential appointee figure that has grown from roughly 600 during Kennedy Administration to 3,000 today—e as the overall size of the civil service has remai roughly the same. Rules need to be establishe bar ideological litmus tests for government ac sory panels and otherwise prevent them from ing turned into weapons of political warfare. A in general, government decision-making need be made more transparent. Congressman Edw Markey of Massachusetts has introduced an FI reform bill that would force the agency to publ a "summary of the factual, scientific, and rela issues considered during the approval proce for new drugs, as well as "the scientific ration for the final decision." It would also bar FDA ficials from seeking "to censor, distort, or su press any scientific research, analysis, opinio or recommendation." The Union of Concern Scientists is currently seeking support for leg lation that would apply similar rules at other k regulatory agencies.

Above all, we need laws that hinder future a ministrations from censoring the speech of expe and regulators within the federal governmen In response to cases like that of James Hansen, t NASA climate scientist who was warned th he would suffer "dire consequences" if he co tinued to voice opinions contrary to the admi istration's views on global warming, the Hou passed a whistleblower-protection act in Mar that protects federal scientists from political me dling in their research and guarantees their rig to speak out when such meddling occurs. Even the Senate follows suit, it may take a new pre dent to sign this act into law.

4. THE ENVIRONMENT

BY BILL MCKIBBEN



One of the best things about the departure of the Bush Administration will be the end of headache-creating cognitive dissonance. It has taken over institutions ostensibly devoted to defending the natural world—the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality—and turned them into organizations devoted to environmental degradation. And it has passed set of anti-environmental laws that sound lik they were dreamed up by wild-eyed nature lovers—

Bill McKibben is the author of many books, including The End of Nature *and, most recently* Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future. *His last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"The Great Leap," appeared in the December 2005 issue.*

lear Skies Act turns out to gut the old Clean Act, for instance, and the Healthy Forests ative has initiated a great deal of unhealthy estation. ("No Tree Left Behind," someone kly dubbed it.) We'll not be in some new n nirvana when Bush finally leaves, but at we might start trying to solve real problems. 've already faced daunting environmental lenges in 2000, of course, challenges that ld have taken decades of good-faith effort to come. But rather than attempt the difficult slow reversal of our cheap-energy economy, n has eagerly raced forward into whole new ds of environmental turmoil. You can see reckless disregard most plainly, alas, when you at the worst problem the country faces: cli- e change.

ush came into office promising that he ld require U.S. power plants to reduce on-dioxide emissions, and if he'd stuck to plan, our country would already look quite erent. Solar panels would have begun to ut in real numbers, cars would be smaller, d be building more passenger trains. In- d, Bush repudiated the promise within a weeks of taking office. He said he didn't t to do anything that would raise the price nergy. His energy task force, chaired by k Cheney, barely even mentioned the pos- lity of global warming. It concentrated on v places to find fossil fuel, new pipelines to y it, new refineries to refine it—and indeed, as Cheney suggested, there are about 159 v coal-fired power plants in some stage of nning or construction around the country. anwhile, carbon-dioxide output has in- ased an average of 1.6 percent every year— the average price for a gallon of gas has rly doubled.

But Bush's folly at home isn't the worst of it. As n as he took office, he also repudiated Amer- 's participation in the Kyoto treaty process, one international attempt to begin reining carbon emissions. And he did it at the critical ment when China and India were just begin- ng their rapid energy takeoffs. It's possible that s is what history will judge Bush most sternly , even more than the Iraq war. With real effort d real resources, we might have nudged the erging economies onto a different energy tra- tory in 2000, but by now their path appears set. ans call for some 600 new coal-fired plants in ina and India alone; the Chinese open a new nt every week.

Still, there is much that can be done. As the ad of a vast regulatory body, the next president n exert significant influence on environmen- rules. The Bush years began with the news at rules for allowable arsenic concentration drinking water were being revised—and not in the direction of more protection. The trend continues. Earlier this winter a Senate hearing revealed that the Environmental Protection Agency was considering weakening lead standards and ceasing the testing for perchlorate—a potent endocrine disruptor—in the nation's water supply. The EPA has also narrowed its "new source review" policy, which requires power companies to install modern pollution controls when they expand their plants. The result, according to a 2006 study, will be 2.7 million additional tons of nitrogen oxide, 13 million additional tons of sulfur dioxide, and 660 million additional tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over the lifetime of the plants—unless the next president changes the rules once again.

Such changes, though, will require appointing people who care about the environment to positions of real responsibility. The Bush environmental team has come straight from the industries it now regulates. Mark Rey, the Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for natural resources and environment, spent eighteen years as a timber lobbyist; Jeffrey Holmstead, the assistant EPA administrator for air and radiation, was a lawyer who represented the Alliance for Constructive Air Policy, an electric-utility trade group; and the list goes on. Do these insider links have consequences? Well, the *New York Times* reported in March that Philip A. Cooney, the onetime chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality—and a former "climate team leader" at the American Petroleum Institute—had "repeatedly edited government climate reports in ways that play down links between such emissions and global warming." It shouldn't be too hard to find people to run regulatory agencies who don't come from the organizations being regulated.

Even if these agencies wanted to enforce the law, though, they'd have trouble doing so on their sharply reduced budgets. This year, for instance, EPA funding for research and development is at its lowest level since 1987, and the agency's own internal watchdog, the Office of Inspector General, faces deep cuts in personnel. And it's not just enforcement money that's disappearing. Take the National Park system, which Bush, running for president in 2000, declared needed $5 billion in additional funding. Instead, national parks over the course of his administration have been required to do more with less, and those budget shortfalls have all kinds of unintended consequences. A cash-poor Redwood National Park, for instance, was forced to reduce its park patrols, and now lumber peddlers are sneaking in at night and poaching fallen trees.

Most important, the next president will have to put the environment, and especially

carbon policy, at the center of every diplomatic effort. That will be a novel experience for a war-oriented foreign policy elite—but the notion that "terror" represents our greatest threat is impossible to maintain once you've read the scientific predictions for rising seas, looming droughts, falling harvests. The Kyoto Prot we didn't sign will expire in 2012, and ne ations are beginning for whatever will suc it. Unless there's a U.S.-led effort to pro something truly dramatic, the world migl well not bother.

5. SCIENCE
BY CHRIS MOONEY



Try, if you will, to summarize the Bush Administration's position on the science of global warming. In 2006, the president could be found stating that a "fundamental debate" persisted over whether the phenomenon is human caused or "natural." When an expert body of the United Nations announced in early 2007 that most of the warming had been human-induced, however, a White House press release endorsed that conclusion. But within weeks, Vice President Dick Cheney had undercut it again, claiming that no consensus existed over the extent to which global warming is "part of a normal cycle versus the extent to which it's caused by man."

If you survey such statements—and the Bush Administration's record on global warming generally—seeking consistency, you're signing up for madness. That is because again and again, the administration has sought to "manage" inconvenient scientific information on this subject from a public relations standpoint rather than take it seriously or use it to inform policy. And it's not just climate science. A similar P.R.-oriented approach has been apparent across a range of issues, subjects sharing few commonalities save that they motivate the Republican base: embryonic stem cell research, mercury pollution, sex education and condom effectiveness, endangered-species protections, and many more. In these and other areas, under the Bush Administration we have seen scientists suppressed, scientific reports forcefully edited or censored, scientific advisory committees politically tilted, and widespread distortion and misrepresentation of scientific knowledge. The resulting "war on science" has delivered a severe blow to morale at the taxpayer-funded government agencies whose job it is to use such knowledge to serve and protect us. And it has spurred justifiable skepticism of the notion, perhaps idealized but nonetheless admirable, that our government can live up to the Enlightenment idea of decision-making based on the best available information.

Misinformation, by contrast, can have serious consequences. On glo warming, for example, we have lost six year and likely eight—during which we could h been solving the ever-worsening crisis. On e bryonic stem cell research, we might have pr ed greatly from six years—and likely eight— less constrained federally funded research; stead, states have had to create their own sci nific programs because the federal governme has been so shackled in this area. On Iraq, that matter, we might not have stampeded war quite so easily if Bush and Cheney had n misled us into thinking that confiscated a minum tubes were intended for centrifuges i secret nuclear weapons program, rather th merely for more conventional rocketry. On su issues, we can never make up for the time lo the opportunities squandered.

In other respects, though, a new administ tion could work constructively to mend t science-politics relationship. The first step is choose a distinguished scientist to serve as t presidential science adviser—the governmen top scientist, who heads the Office of Scien and Technology Policy (OSTP)—and, mo important, to make sure this scientist is a lowed into the president's inner circle. Bu made major policy decisions on both glob warming and embryonic stem cell research b fore his presidential science adviser, physici John Marburger, had even been confirmed the Senate, and once Marburger was in plac the OSTP was essentially marginalized: Ma burger named only half as many Senate confirmed deputies as served his predecesso during the Clinton Administration. Sever years later it would come out that Bush m with the contrarian novelist Michael Crichto for a chat about climate science—such was th high regard in which the president apparentl

Chris Mooney is the Washington correspondent for Seed *magazine and the author of* The Republican War on Science. *His next book,* Storm World: Hurricanes, Politics, and the Battle over Global Warming, *will be published next month.*

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held science advice, a critical mechanism intended to ensure informed governance. If the new president restored OSTP and made it just as influential as, say, the National Security Council (a similar White House branch), this would further signal that scientific advice would be taken seriously in the new administration.

Steps also should be taken to rehabilitate the scientific reputation of the federal agencies from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration to the Fish and Wildlife Service—which has been so damaged over the past six years, and to restore the morale of the career-scientist staff they employ. Democrats in Congress, who have broadly accepted the notion that the Bush Administration has mistreated science and proposed various measures to address the problem, have outlined a logical means of achieving this rehabilitation. The office of the president's science adviser should take the lead in a government-wide initiative to investigate the state of scientific integrity within these agencies. To ensure cooperation, the president should publicly instruct his new cabinet secretaries—and particularly those in charge of agencies that have seen major science problems—to aid OSTP in the task and to make restoring scientific integrity a top priority in their respective departments. In particular, communication policies will have to be scrutinized, government-wide, to ensure that aides in public affairs offices can't prevent distinguished scientists on the government payroll from speaking to the press.

The new administration should also change the role of two White House offices that appear to have been chief culprits in the heavy h and overcentralized management (or mi agement) of scientific information durin Bush Administration: the Council on Env mental Quality (CEQ) and the Office of agement and Budget (OMB). The CEQ, as tioned above, was repeatedly caught tryi modify the language of scientific reports produced by expert agencies. The OMB, cially under first-term administrator John ham, used thin statutory language (the so-c Data Quality Act) to radically revamp the rol scientific information plays in the regulator cision-making process—in essence, raising burden of proof that must be satisfied before cies can take action, on the basis of science, to tect public health and the environment. type of meddling must cease; the agencies th selves must be trusted to present the science curately and without interference.

Finally, in order to repair the relationship tween America's government and its scientis new administration should make the reconc tion a public one. Our next president sh pledge, after taking office or perhaps even on campaign trail, to ensure that the same kind abuses will not recur on his or her watch. And must be accompanied by a strong statement ab the nature of government itself: expert scien ic agencies must be allowed to go about th business without political staff at the White Ho corrupting the language of their reports. A co fortable distance must be re-established betwe the experts and those who are trying, as a NASA aide so infamously put it, to "make president look good."



6. THE ECONOMY

BY DEAN BAKER

Two economic calamities have occurred on George W. Bush's watch. The first has been a radically overvalued dollar, which, it should be noted, is a legacy of the Clinton years. By the date of Bush's inauguration in January 2001, the real value of the dollar was already 27 percent higher than its low in July of 1995, the surge due in part to the stock bubble, in part to the financial crises in East Asia and elsewhere, and in part to high-dollar cheerleading by the Clinton Administration's treasury secretaries. And yet despite these unsustainable highs, Bush did almost nothing to reverse the run-up; the value of the dollar actually increas in 2002. It has fallen since then, but it is still percent above its 1995 low. The problem that high dollar poses for manufacturing is straightfo ward: if the dollar is expensive relative to other cu rencies, then it is very cheap for Americans buy imported goods and very expensive for fo eigners to buy U.S. exports. In effect, an overv ued dollar provides a subsidy to imports and impos a tariff on exports. Not surprisingly, this high do lar has led to a rapidly rising trade deficit, whic in 2006 grew to more than $760 billion, or nea ly 6 percent of GDP. This, in turn, has been th major factor contributing to the loss since 2001 3 million manufacturing jobs, or more than a sixt of the entire sector.

Dean Baker is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington, D.C.

e other major economic disaster under Bush
een the unchecked growth of the housing
e, and although this, too, was inherited from
edecessor, Bush in this case deserves an even
er share of the blame. By the start of the
Administration, housing prices (which over
rior forty years had just kept even with the
ll rate of inflation) had on average, and af-
ljusting for inflation, risen approximately 23
nt over their mid-nineties levels—a sub-
ial but still containable surge. In 2001, how-
when the stock bubble collapsed, Alan
nspan, the Federal Reserve Board chairman,
l on the expanding housing bubble as the
ool for boosting the economy out of the re-
on. He pushed the short-term interest rate
to 1.0 percent—the lowest level in almost
ears—and, more important, assured investors
e safety of the housing market, telling Con-
in the summer of 2002 that "recent sizable
ases in home prices . . . reflect the effects on
nd of low mortgage rates, immigration, and
tages of buildable land in some areas." By
, prices were 73 percent higher than their
ubble values, for a total of more than $8 tril-
in unsustainable wealth.

hat should Bush's successor do to reverse the
age? Unfortunately, once financial bubbles
llowed to develop, there are no easy solutions
lable. Even if a "soft landing" is possible, the
on that such a thing is somehow desirable
not really make sense. In the case of the hous-
narket, if the bubble is allowed to deflate slow-
hen the more than 140,000 people who buy
es every week are still purchasing them at
le-inflated prices. These are the people who
take the greatest hit when the prices eventu-
adjust to a sustainable level. A slow adjustment
well be more harmful for existing homeown-
s well. Americans have been borrowing at a
rd pace against their home equity, pulling out
e to $600 billion in the peak year of 2005.
y have been willing to draw against their
ity because they assumed that prices would
high and likely move higher. If house prices
adjust slowly, then more homeowners will
e drawn down equity based on incorrect ex-
tations about the path of the housing market.
he argument for a quick adjustment is simi-
n the case of the high dollar. If investors per-
e the dollar to be adjusting to a lower value
ugh time, then they will demand an interest-
premium in order to hold dollars rather than
os, yen, or other currencies. This means that
will have to keep interest rates in the Unit-
States higher than would otherwise be neces-
, as long as the dollar is in this adjustment
cess. High interest rates can slow the econo-
and strangle economic growth, especially if the
nomy is already suffering from the collapse
of a housing bubble. A slow adjustment for the dollar would also sustain the pressure on the manufacturing sector. More factories would move overseas and more jobs would be lost, because U.S. manufacturing simply cannot compete at the current value of the dollar.

There are several tools that a new administration could use to bring about a rapid deflation of these bubbles. The first is simple: talk. A new administration could try to take the air out of the housing bubble (which already may be starting to deflate) by publicly presenting the evidence that prices have departed substantially from historical values and pointing out that anyone buying a home in this environment would be taking a substantial risk. It can also use the regulatory powers of the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight to crack down on the issuance of risky mortgages. If the housing market is not already well on its way to correcting by the time a new administration takes office, such steps will certainly push the process along considerably.

In the case of the dollar, if the new administration, with the cooperation of the Fed, makes a public commitment toward attaining a lower dollar by a specific date (e.g., January 20, 2009), it can be fairly certain that the markets will take its cue. If the Fed is serious in its commitment, and prepared to act in financial markets to support it (by selling dollars), then only the most foolish investor would continue to hold dollars at an overvalued price.

Even with both the dollar and the housing market defused, the next administration cannot let the Federal Reserve Board write its own job description. Preventing future financial bubbles has to be placed at the top of its list of responsibilities. The economic and social disruptions from the growth and collapse of a major financial bubble swamp the negative effects of modest increases in the rate of inflation. While the Fed chairman and his colleagues may want to focus only on inflation, they must be forced to deal with bigger problems. The Fed, along with the Treasury Department, should take the kinds of proactive measures detailed above to prevent the sort of asset bubbles that have afflicted the stock market, the dollar, and the housing market during the past decade.

One last point: although budget deficits are not as big a problem as is often claimed, it will be necessary to take back Bush's tax cuts, which have reduced annual tax revenue by somewhere between $100 billion and $300 billion each year. Of course, the war, too, is a substantial drain, costing more than $100 billion a year at present, or nearly 1 percent of GDP. It should be noted that neither the tax cuts nor the war broke the bank: when President Bush leaves office, the country's ratio of debt to GDP is projected to be

66 percent, still below the peak debt to GDP ratio of 67.3 percent that we hit in the mid-nineties. But restoring the pre-Bush tax rates (at least for the wealthy) and ending the war will free up sufficient funds to support universal health care and a major round of infrastructure moderniz
These initiatives, along with correcting t
nancial imbalances left by both the Clinto
Bush administrations, will be the unenviabl
nomic challenges facing our next presiden

7. THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

BY JACK HITT



On Thursday, June 6, 2002, FBI agent Coleen Rowley testified before Congress that 9/11 might have been avoided had her agency been better organized to manage the clues it had in hand. The whistleblower's assertion reverberated all that weekend, threatening to flip the post-9/11 narrative from one of vigorous counteraction by manly officials to incompetent snafu by Republican bureaucrats.

By Monday, though, Americans would forget about Coleen Rowley. Her story was sidelined after then Attorney General John Ashcroft called an emergency press conference from Moscow to announce that federal agents had seized Al Qaeda operative Jose Padilla and foiled a plot to set off a radioactive "dirty bomb." The deliciously terrifying phrase immediately filled our airwaves and nightmares. And it redirected the news cycle's focus from Rowley's blonde hair to Padilla's dark face, from talk of constructive government criticism to plots of urban mass destruction. A few people did stop to wonder why Ashcroft was making such a fuss, all the way from Moscow, about a man the United States had been holding in custody for a good month already. But back then, in 2002, most Americans still reacted skeptically to the Cassandras who suggested that Padilla was dragged out of obscurity precisely to shove Rowley's story from the top of the broadcast. It is only today, after scores of similar examples, that Americans can look back at those moments and see the earliest beta tests of the Bush media-management model.

All presidents devise ways of distorting the public perception of reality for their own benefit. Nixon was famous for the Big Lie. Reagan perfected the Staged Reality, particularly the photo op. Clinton was a genius at the Tiny Truth, miniaturizing unpleasant facts into things hilariously puny. Such famous lines as "I didn't inhale" and "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky" were both technically true, but true in a way that made the truth so small you could flick it away, like a crumb off a tablecloth.

Under Bush, his advisers made a daring assumption: that in an era of seemingly unruly media proliferation (Internet, podcasts, MySpace, more and more cable), the arguments presented in the media *could* be controlled. The Bush strategy basically takes any argument does not comport with the forward momentu the Bush agenda and, by means of numerou tics, seeks to tamp down, crush, sideline, segr circumscribe, cordon off, isolate, maroon, shunt aside, eschew, or quarantine that idea. classical idea of debate in America holds opinions aired in a free and open environmen rise or fall depending on their strength Oliver Wendell Holmes called the "marketp of ideas." The Bush strategy, by contrast, has to cripple or kill off all arguments but his leaving the public debate to turn on only the nority positions that remain standing.

This has been accomplished through var specific tactics. For example, you might:

- issue a directive to government scientist dering them not to discuss polar bears.
- order soldiers hospitalized at Walter Re quit talking to the media.
- doctor White House transcripts so that press secretary's response of "that's accurat to an NBC correspondent's assertion that Rove did leak a spy's identity—read, "I d think that's accurate."
- release Guantánamo detainee David H (who said he was tortured) but force hi promise for the next year "not to com nicate in any way with the media."

The one tactic that has yielded the best res though, is to enfeeble entire arguments by stroying the reputation of the most promi person making them. The fallacy of th hominem argument has been around since be classical rhetoricians named it, but this admi tration has made it a mainstay of contemporary itics. Al Gore is now commonly known to h boasted that he "invented the Internet," e though those words were artfully put in his mo By the exact same tactic, John Kerry went f Vietnam hero to wartime opportunist, w Howard Dean was branded mentally unbalan on the basis of a single phoneme. After P

Jack Hitt is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine

ill published his tell-all book, allegations of
n began to float, claiming that documents he
with him were classified (they weren't). John
ha is now being described as "dotty." When
O'Reilly hears an argument he can't answer,
lls the person "kooky" and then announces
ll not engage the position precisely because
peaker is nuts. When former Bush campaign
gist Matthew Dowd publicly repudiated the
dent in April, White House counselor Dan
ett alluded to press accounts about Dowd's di-
, his son's deployment to Iraq, and the death
s premature daughter in dismissing Dowd's
rks as the result of "personal turmoil."

erary critics will recognize this form of char-
assassination as a variation of the unreliable
ıtor. This is fun in novels, but for politicians
evastating. The sheer hint that one might be
y, devious, ditzy, effeminate, unhinged, trea-
us, etc., is enough to stamp one's forehead
the word "loser," and thereafter anything one
is, by extension, tainted. Joe Wilson went to
r only because his wife had the pull to get him
"junket"—almost out of pity. Wilson was
a uxorious git, such a pitiful wimp, that he
to rely on his wife to get work. Get it? Wil-
s opinions are not to be trusted because he is
a hopeless loser.

ll of these strategies work toward one com-
end: to demolish the arguments around the
ı agenda. There is no "debate" because none
ıe other positions (or often people) are left
ding. How could one argue in 2003 that there
ıt not be weapons of mass destruction, or
containment of Saddam Hussein might work,
n such views came from the unreliable maws
ars or weirdos?

y the next election, Americans will have spent
t years under this regime of public debateless-
. The highest virtue of the Bush Administration has been to stay "on message." A generation of Americans has been raised to believe that listening to the other side, rolling an unfamiliar idea around in one's mind, and then actually changing one's considered opinion is not the pleasure of an open mind but the proof of a coward's heart. And politicians, who typically refight the last war in every campaign, will in all likelihood try to imitate Bush's strategy. When former Clinton supporter David Geffen defected and held an Obama fundraiser in Beverly Hills, Hillary's campaign immediately moved to force Obama into denouncing Geffen, even as the New York senator recited the hollow Bushian rhetoric about wanting to engage the nation in a "conversation."

How out of practice are we? In April the very fact that John Kerry and Newt Gingrich intended to square off on the issue of global climate change was considered outlandish enough—news, in other words—to earn a mention in the *Washington Post*. The Republicans immediately loaded the ad hominem cannon: the day before the debate, under the title "Newt v. Losers," a *National Review* contributor wrote on the magazine's website that "if Gingrich wants to seem presidential he needs to debate *presidential candidates* not has-beens and never-wases." But during the two-hour debate, a strange thing happened. Both Kerry and Gingrich felt compelled to avoid the brittle talking points of campaign pollsters. Gingrich freely admitted that an overwhelming majority of scientists acknowledged the existence of global climate change. Both men moved on to argue more nuanced points, about whether government or private enterprise should lead the way. They disagreed without degenerating into name-calling. They talked about solutions. Just as the cure for bad speech is more speech, it seems that the best antidote for our debatelessness may be, quite simply, debate.



8. INTELLIGENCE
BY JAMES BAMFORD

By far the most significant intelligence error of the Bush Administration has been the decision, contrary to established American policy and common sense, to
at terrorism not as a crime, to be solved by in-
igence and law enforcement agencies, but as an existential military threat, to be confronted with tanks and Marines. This was not an abstract choice. The administration has worked for years to embed Bush's worldview in the highest levels of the American intelligence system.

Bush made his philosophy explicit in 2004. "I know that some people question if America is really in a war at all," he said. "They view terrorism more as a crime, a problem to be solved mainly with law enforcement and indictments. After the World Trade Center was first attacked in 1993, some of the guilty were indicted and tried and convicted, and sent to prison. But the

es Bamford's books include The Puzzle Palace *and*
ly of Secrets, *both about the National Security*
ncy, and A Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the
use of America's Intelligence Agencies.

matter was not settled. The terrorists were still training and plotting in other nations, and drawing up more ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. The terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States, and war is what they got."

This presidential antipathy to intelligence is new. As Bush noted, after the 1993 World Trade Center attack, the FBI and the intelligence agencies did in fact work together to bring the perpetrators to justice. In November 1997, Ramzi Yousef was convicted of conspiracy in planning the attack. Meanwhile, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman—who many believe was behind the attack—had already been sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in plots to destroy the United Nations and the George Washington Bridge, among other Manhattan landmarks. Nine others were convicted as well, and all of them were locked away in small, windowless cells. Similarly, following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the FBI painstakingly pieced together the method of attack and escape and convicted the perpetrators, who were either imprisoned for life or executed. And when American embassies were blown up in East Africa, again the FBI and the intelligence agencies managed to arrest suspects, prosecute them in federal court, and put them in prison.

The most senior person involved in the attacks on 9/11, organizer and operational chief Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, wasn't captured by the Army or the Marines but as a result of good intelligence work by the CIA and the National Security Agency, which helped pinpoint his location through cell phone calls in Pakistan. Had the Bush Administration stayed on this path, it is likely that Osama bin Laden and the others involved in planning the 9/11 attacks would also be sitting in a supermax prison and attracting little attention instead of sending out regular propaganda video- and audiotapes to attract recruits.

Instead, the world is at far greater risk, from bin Laden and from many others. An April 2006 report from the administration's own director of national intelligence found that "the Iraq conflict has become the 'cause celebre' for jihadists" and was "shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives." Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, research fellows at New York University's Center on Law and Security, reported in *Mother Jones* that the war had "generated a stunning sevenfold increase in the yearly rate of fatal jihadist attacks, amounting to literally hundreds of additional terrorist attacks and thousands of civilian lives lost; even when terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan is excluded, fatal attacks in the rest of the world have increased by more than one-third." They called this increase the "Iraq effect." Meanwhile, the administration is no closer to capturing its most wanted men—bin Laden, his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Taliban leader Mullah Omar—than when the wars began.

Undoing the war in Iraq is impossible, of course, but the next president, with the help of Congress, can undo the bureaucratic choices that sprang from Bush's aversion to intelligence. He can start by abolishing the position of director of national intelligence, which was created by Congress in 2004 and has become little more than a redundant layer of bureaucracy. Originally sold to take some load off of the CIA director, it instead bogging down the entire system. The position was first held by John Negroponte, who immediately prior to that was U.S. ambassador to Iraq, and who this February made an unusual lateral shift to the State Department; he was replaced by Mike McConnell, a former Navy vice admiral and NSA director. The head of the CIA should once again be made the director of central intelligence and given overall responsibility for America's spy operations.

The next president, again with the help of Congress, should also abolish the position of undersecretary of defense for intelligence. Congress created that job in 2002, and it was held by Stephen Cambone, a protégé of former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, until this year. In essence, Cambone acted as Rumsfeld's intelligence czar. The Pentagon has always controlled the vast majority of the intelligence budget—the National Security Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and others—and giving the defense secretary his own czar has allowed him to essentially bypass the increasingly powerless CIA. "The CIA doesn't have the number of assets to be doing what the secretary of defense wants done," one Pentagon official explained to the *Los Angeles Times*. And what did the secretary want done? Several officials told the *Times* that the purpose of the new approach was to produce "actionable intelligence," which the paper described as "a Pentagon buzzword for information leading to military operations."

Rumsfeld has accomplished this particular mission, of course. The United States is undertaking military operations aplenty, and the first step to avoiding future such operations will be shifting the center of gravity away from the Pentagon and back to the CIA. This would by no means eliminate all of the problems that have plagued the intelligence community over the course of the Bush Administration. But the country would at least face fewer wars, its intelligence would be more independent and less biased toward the military, and the CIA chief would again reign over the community, eliminating a thick Defense Department layer of bureaucracy.



9. THE MILITARY
BY EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

It has always been the case that failed wars damage armies and sometimes break them. So ith Iraq, unless remedies intervene soon h. The *Washington Post* reported this March senior U.S. military and government offi- fear "it will take years for the Army and Ma- Corps to recover from what some officials alled a 'death spiral,' in which the ever more pace of war-zone rotations has consumed 40 nt of their total gear, wearied troops, and left ne to train to fight anything other than the encies now at hand." Retired four-star Gen- arry McCaffrey, otherwise an habitual opti- has said that "Army and Marine Corps readi- atings are starting to unravel," that "ground at equipment is shot in both the active and e components," and that recruiting has "en- ered serious quality and number problems," he result that "the U.S. Armed Forces are in tion of strategic peril." Another retired Army al, Colin Powell, put it more plainly last De- er, on *Face the Nation*, saying simply that active Army is about broken"—an over- nent of very real problems.

l of this was predictable. It happened after ast failed war as well, though today there are vivid memories of the state of the U.S. ed Forces after the Vietnam War. Even at ime, most people were focused on the trag- ama of the Saigon evacuations. Younger ricans recognize that era's makeshift sleeve- uniforms—a field improvisation that ex- l flesh to dangerous insects—as a retro fash- item rather than obvious evidence of a spread breakdown in discipline. Another kdown, in maintenance, grounded a signif- fraction of the aircraft of all services, while urement policy had drifted so far from rea- hat revolutionary innovations—laser-guid- omb kits, night vision—were starved of s even as millions of dollars were found to hase hand-built "General Officers Pistols" aved in brass with the officer's name and . Postwar planners were conspicuously un- to cope with declining funding, especially when accelerating inflation made nonsense of annual budgets.

The Navy and the Air Force were the first to recover. Their operation and maintenance budgets were much too small for the vast number of aircraft and ships in hand, which still included more than two hundred destroyers that dated back to the Second World War. Overhauls kept being delayed, and all too frequently major breakdowns stopped ships dead in the water, even as more and more aircraft were becoming "hangar queens" that could not fly for want of replacement parts. The solution was to decommission entire classes of older warships and send all but the most modern aircraft to take the desert air in the vast parking lot at Davis-Mountain Air Force Base, where the arid climate makes hangars unnecessary. That attacked the problem at both ends. There was more upkeep money per unit in the remaining force, and the oldest equipment that needed the most maintenance work was simply eliminated. The smaller post-Vietnam Navy regained its operational edge and could afford to develop new warships, while the smaller Air Force could likewise afford to develop the precision weapons and stealth technology of today's aircraft.

Once again, the Navy and Air Force are short of money to both maintain and develop their forces. Post-Iraq, defense budgets will decline just as they did post-Vietnam, and again the only possible remedy will be to reduce the size of the forces. The Navy has already started doing just that, not without provoking howls of protest. The Air Force has been less prompt in seeking economies, but it eventually will, if for no other reason than that it can—even those who fantasize a confrontation with China cannot deny that its modern forces are tiny.

After Vietnam, it was the Army and the Marine ground forces that faced the greatest problems, and it will be the same post-Iraq. This time, at least, the military will not have to expel tens of thousands of enlisted men who wanted to stay but who had accumulated too many disciplinary violations—and that at a time when even habitual drunks were tolerated. Today's all-volunteer Army, which endures drinkless, sexless, funless tours in the featureless landscapes and remarkably ugly towns of Iraq, has by contrast behaved with saintly restraint and shown a grim devotion to duty. Nor can today's Army and Marine Corps be reduced in numbers. They are barely large enough to manage their peacetime garrison duties, much less fight two simultaneous wars.

ard N. Luttwak is a senior adviser at the Center for egic & International Studies in Washington, D.C. ast article for Harper's Magazine, *"Dead End: nterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," ared in the February 2007 issue*

But there is one process that will have to be repeated, and in almost exactly the same manner. The Army and Marine Corps came out of the Vietnam War with thoughtful and well-defined counterinsurgency doctrines and tactics that were actually completely useless. Over the next several years, they were able to move beyond those doctrines and reconstitute themselves as effective fighting forces. They will have to do so again after the Iraq war.

After Vietnam, nearly all of the tactical manuals were scrapped, not just the counterinsurgency nonsense but the pre-Vietnam manuals that assumed the prompt and liberal use of nuclear weapons. The Army turned its attention from Vietnam to the Soviet army in Europe. It developed an entirely new maneuver doctrine to resist the mass of armored forces that was poised against the West German border, with an emphasis on agile operations and high-quality firepower. The best and brightest were wonderfully distracted from the Vietnam shambles as they refocused on the challenge of confronting a growing Soviet army.

There is no such straightforward challenge today, but the task ahead is clear nonetheless. If military occupations are certain losers, what can the military do to stop terrorism? In fact, there are times when detectable terrorist "infrastructures" begin to emerge, as happened in Afghanistan before 2001, when Al Qaeda acquired training bases and supply stores that were identified and that could have been, and should have been, raided and destroyed. Attacking such targets with cruise missiles, as Bill Clinton did in 1998, is very tempting for presidents and military chiefs alike because e inates the risk of casualties. But such achieve little. It takes boots on the groun circle a terrorist camp, kill or capture its d and thoroughly search buildings and cave move or destroy equipment and supplies. would be swift and agile operations, for in r advantage of surprise is invariably worth than massed strength laboriously assembled ployed. Some raids might be very small, re only a handful of troops and lasting only hours. Others might be major expeditio could last for a week—but still with no lin aftermath, no occupation that would start t al cycle of insurgency and repression. That proper new focus for the Army and Marine

This major transformation in strategic will require an equally major transformat force structure. Having shifted to maneuv fare in the 1980s, the combat formations Army and Marine Corps must now evolv step further to become commando force large. Such a transformation would bring savings in itself, because today's excessively ly "Special Operations Forces"—which, t once truly specialized, now amount to a sized fifth service, with air, naval, and grou ements—could be reabsorbed into the r service structures. To return to a structu which the Special Forces really are speci would release much funding for the nev more agile Army and Marine Corps we will once our troops are finally disengaged from futile role as Mesopotamian constables.

10. DIPLOMACY
BY ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER



On a rainy day in 1945, soon after U.S. troops had entered the German concentration camp at Dachau, the American commanding officer mounted a stage. He delivered a short speech of friendship, at the close of which an American color guard bore the Stars and Stripes toward the podium. For a moment it looked as if the troops would mount the platform and plant the American flag high above the assembled prisoners.

> But at the last moment, upon the colonel's signal, they wheeled toward the assembled thousands, carried our flag into their midst, and placed it there in line with the banners borne by men in convict stripes from a dozen victim peoples. And at this there arose a shout—a general shout of brotherhood and joy that echoed around the sodden walls.

Anne-Marie Slaughter is dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and author of the new book The Idea That Is America: Keeping Faith with Our Values in a Dangerous World

That scene comes from *The March of Freedo Layman's History of the American People* William Harlan Hale, a broadcaster for the V of America. Writing in 1947, Hale describ world in which the United States—the gre military and economic power and the unc lenged victor of World War II—was in dang being seen as arrogant and imperialist. Americ

er, saw themselves very differently, as stand-
for what was right and promoting univer-
ues.
:s this sound familiar? The paradox of Amer-
reign policy today is that the United States,
h more powerful than ever, has rarely been
in the world and never more reviled. Ma-
s of Turks, Moroccans, Jordanians, and Pak-
s believe the entire U.S. campaign against
c terrorism is in fact meant to secure oil or
:o achieve world domination. Further, ma-
s in all those countries, as well as in France,
any, and Russia, say that the Iraq war has
them *less* confident that the United States
to promote liberty or democracy abroad.
id not have to be this way. As I have watched
Giuliani's poll numbers rise, I've wondered
ıer Americans are not actually nostalgic for
me immediately after the attacks of Sep-
r 11, 2001, when not only Americans but the
rallied around our country in acute aware-
of a common humanity. Remember, citizens
over ninety nations lost their lives in the at-
The United Nations passed a unanimous
ıtion supporting the United States, and or-
citizens emailed and called American friends
ress their sorrow and solidarity.
short, everyone was with us—until we told
, both in word and in deed, that if they
ı't with us they were against us. The Bush Ad-
tration announced that we had no use either
eaties or for international institutions, instead
rring a "coalition of the willing"; insisted we
evidence of an Iraqi nuclear-weapons pro-
when such evidence did not, in fact, exist;
ıt a second U.N. resolution authorizing the
ion of Iraq but then claimed, when the votes
second resolution were not forthcoming,
we did not need this authorization after all;
red that the Geneva Conventions did not ap-
the prisoners at Guantánamo Bay; passed off
buses at Abu Ghraib, and also at Bagram, as
vork of a few "bad apples"; and ignored the
li-Palestinian peace process in favor of regime
ge in Iraq. Sadly, the list goes on and on,
ithstanding a doubling of U.S. foreign aid
2000, as well as some efforts by Secretary of
Condoleezza Rice and now Secretary of De-
Robert Gates to turn back to multilateral
macy. An entire generation of citizens around
world is being reared with no memory of the
the United States played in World War II and
Cold War but with plenty of evidence that the
d's lone superpower is arrogant, incompetent,
indifferent.

new U.S. president, of either party, must
ch a diplomatic offensive to restore Ameri-
moral and political leadership in the world.
rst, we must close Guantánamo. The Amer-
prison—and our treatment of "enemy com-
batants" in the War on Terror more generally—
is the single most tangible symbol of what the rest
of the world sees as our hypocrisy. We profess to
uphold human rights and the rule of law, but we
are holding, and abusing, hundreds of individu-
als who have virtually no legal rights or access to
judicial review. We cannot possibly lead a glob-
al fight against terrorism as long as other nations
see us as violating their laws and our own.

Second, we must get serious about nuclear dis-
armament. The Bush Administration has spent
much of its second term trying to prevent nu-
clear proliferation in Iran and North Korea, but
it has achieved frustratingly few results. It is time
to return to the grand bargain laid out in the
1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, where-
by non-nuclear powers—including the members
of the "axis of evil"—agreed not to pursue nuclear
weapons provided (1) they can receive technical
assistance for civilian nuclear projects and (2)
the nuclear powers agree to diminish their own
arsenals over time. The American counter-pro-
liferation agenda would find much more support
around the world today if it grew from a shared
commitment to a future free of nuclear violence.

Third, we should join the International Crim-
inal Court. In 1998 the nations of the world took
the unprecedented step of creating a permanent
international court to try the most heinous crimes:
war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other
grave offenses. Instead of embracing this advance
for the rule of law, the United States has refused
to join the court, and indeed has actively worked
to undermine it. We pride ourselves that in this
country no one is above the law. But this pride
should not end at the border. An America that
binds itself to common principles and practices
would be a far better advocate for justice in the
world than one that makes rules only for others.

Fourth, we must reform the U.N. Security
Council and other global institutions. Why should
India, with a billion people, not have a permanent
seat on the council? Why isn't a single African or
Middle Eastern or Latin American country per-
manently represented on the world's highest
decision-making body? Similarly, the Interna-
tional Monetary Fund and the World Bank have
weighted voting systems that are stacked in favor
of a handful of countries. As students of Ameri-
can history know, leaving large swaths of inter-
ested parties out of political institutions is a recipe
for instability.

Fifth, we must try to stop global warming.
Climate change threatens us all, but it will most
affect the poor countries close to the equator.
Consider Bangladesh, where 150 million people
are packed onto a low-lying, flood-prone river
delta: sea-level rise will decimate them, and
yet Bangladeshis have almost no say in global
climate policymaking, which is dominated by

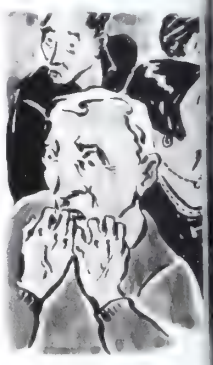
the United States, the European Union, China, and other large nations. We are the world's largest emitters, so without our intensive diplomatic engagement and leadership, the world will never take the steps necessary to reduce carbon emissions and develop new, clean sources of energy.

These five steps would go a long way toward restoring America's political influence and diplomatic leadership in the world. As we see all too vividly and painfully in Iraq, force has its limits. Most of the threats we face today demand global cooperation, and cooperation demands diplomacy. Diplomacy, in turn, is a game of suasion, not coercion. The more that America is resp and admired in the world, the greater w diplomatic powers be.

Equally important, taking these steps wo low us to reclaim the values—liberty, demo equality, justice, tolerance, humility, and fa that bind us together as a nation. Recall the at Dachau. The country I know and lov country that flies its flag alongside other na not above them. It is a country that nego rather than dictates. It is a country that through self-restraint rather than by procla itself free of all constraints. It is a country th have been, and can be again.

11. THE NATIONAL CHARACTER

BY EARL SHORRIS



The undoing of the American character has a long history. It took more than half a century from a summer's day in August, when the United States used the first weapon of mass destruction, to the lies the Bush Administration used to cover its invasion of Iraq. Had there not been that horrific day at Hiroshima, and had the fear generated by that day not remained in the American consciousness, passed on from generation to generation, the Senate might not have voted Bush the power to invade a sovereign nation. But the World Trade Center had been destroyed by the time the Senate voted, and all the fears hidden away in the soul of a society in love with its comforts had reemerged—nowhere more powerfully than in the man who sat in a classroom full of children on 9/11, paralyzed by the dreadful news. It is not power but fear that corrupts—if not absolutely then deeply, beyond the barrier of reason. The wound of fear has produced six of the worst years in American history, worse even than the Civil War, for there is no Abraham Lincoln to guide the moral character of the country, nor is there a forseeable end to this war: we can no longer be certain even of its geographical or political limits. We are a fearful nation now, led by fearful people. That is the problem we must try to resolve.

In the twentieth century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran minister and author of an important work of philosophy, raised again Aristotle's question of a disposition to evil. It was not so much a single evil act that concerned Bonhoeffer, a German, as it was the disposition to evil. His concern led him to leave a safe position in the United States and return to Germany to oppose Hitler. He was implicated in the plot to kill the Führer, and Bonhoeffer was sent to prison and then to Flo bürg concentration camp. Shortly before liberation of the camp he was stripped, mar through the corridors to the gallows, hanged. His legacy is that an ordinary man a hero, may raise the hero's question abo government. Do the actions of the Bush ministration and its supporters in the Con result from a disposition to evil? And if th not the disposition of all of them, it canno denied in the case of Cheney, Rumsfeld, R Wolfowitz, and even Bush himself.

If their actions had been limited to the pr cution of a war, the war itself might be called a gle evil act, but it is part of a congeries of acts point in at least some persons to a dispositio evil. No more serious charge can be levied ag a person or a government. If the charge is cor Bonhoeffer's life tells us that we should not for historians to make the judgment. And if judgment is correct, we should try to underst the etiology of evil.

The war did not come about because of a litical miscalculation or the misreading of an avoidable accident. It is not an error. It is an real failure that has spread through ev department of this administration, into the C gress, and down into the states. In the promo of the war, Paul Wolfowitz chief among them can see that fearsome times, fearful ideas, un lay their history and thinking. For Wolfowi

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mily members killed in the Holocaust. For
ey and Rumsfeld it was the Cold War, with
stant threat of a new kind of death, one that
sed to obliterate all memory of the dead.
new kind of death heralded the final tri-
of technology over the human desire to
n, to imagine someone in centuries to come
that the scattered stones had been worked
intelligent hand.

abhor cowardice and revere courage in part
e good courage does the rest of our charac-
Ancient Greece it was one of the four car-
virtues, along with temperance, prudence,
stice, none of which can be found in either
ush Administration or the majority of the
ress. It is difficult to suggest which is the
inent virtue or the parent of the others, but
an say with some certainty that a fearful
n is unlikely to be temperate, prudent, or
t is reasonable to think that as courage im-
s the moral character of a person or a gov-
ent, fear worsens it. Cutting taxes for the
nd adding billions to the national debt is not
nt. Leaving millions of people, many of them
en, in dire poverty in the richest nation in
istory of the world is not just. Silencing the
is not temperate, nor is secret surveillance of
tizenry. Failing to put an end to an unjust war
se one is afraid, like the Democrats, of reper-
ns at the polls is anything but courageous.

his were a sermon I might speak of the oth-
of virtues: faith, hope, and charity. The
nment has an overabundance of faith, if by
we mean the expectation of heaven, but by
me token the government seems to have lit-
pe for a better life on earth, paying no at-
n to the sickening of the planet, and char-
now utterly without representation in our
nment. Of the Christian virtues, none has
more demeaned by this government than

An ancient definition of the word "antin-
" is the belief that faith gives one permission
mmit immoral acts. One such act might be
rt a war by invading and occupying a distant
try, fomenting a civil war in which non-
patants die at the rate of a hundred a day. A
emporary definition of antinomy is adher-
to conflicting principles: imperialism and
cracy, as in the plan to impose democracy
gh military occupation.

he word "virtue," in either the Greek or
stian sense, does not apply to the Bush
inistration or to many of its cohort in
gress. Some of our representatives now lie,
rs accept bribes, at least one abused chil-
, many participate in fixing elections, and
there is the war. The result has been an
erican decline so precipitous it may not be
rsed for generations, if ever. If there was a
nod for the accomplishment of the fall, it
may have been the wish of the country to engage life at a distance, to think, as I am doing here, of grand issues, the works and minds of philosophers and fools, but not to engage a world where white bread is sold by the slice or a man must labor for an hour to earn a tomato. Distance is a means of managing fear. It was not Hiroshima that made nuclear weapons so fearsome but the ritual of American schoolchildren hiding under their desks as a preparation for war.

The fear that drives the government comes of the inescapable logic of history and self-regard: if we are good and we killed 140,000 people, mainly women and children, on a single morning in summer and soon thereafter repeated the act in Nagasaki as if to prove our willingness to engage in mass destruction, what can we expect of our enemies who are not good? If we responded to an attack on the World Trade Center by invading a country that had no part in the attack and we are good, what can we expect of our enemies who are not good? We are not gods. We have no sense of atonement.

We have become brave in answering pollsters and timid in pursuing action. At the speed of the world now, another eighteen months of a government with a disposition to evil is time enough for the compounding of its acts, for its failures to settle into permanence. The undoing of these last six years may not be possible; certainly it cannot happen soon. It is a comfort of sorts to think that the disposition to evil is limited to the Bush Administration and its followers in the legislature, but there is an itch in that idea. Bush and his minions in the Congress were reelected in 2004. Could there have been any cause for that but fear? And would the country have turned against him if the predictions of his court of fools had been correct and the invasion and occupation had been "a piece of cake"? The kinds of death that make us fearful now have no antecedents. No one had used a weapon of mass destruction before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and no one has used such a weapon since, but there are thousands of such weapons now, waiting. There had never been such a sudden and devastating attack on the U.S. mainland as the one on 9/11.

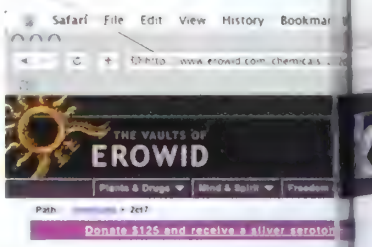
The first step in understanding how the country will think of this different death and what parts, if any, of the necessary reversal of the Bush years it will accomplish is the understanding that the actions of these last six years were not a proper response, that a disposition to evil is not a resolution of fear. To the three basic questions written by Immanuel Kant at the height of the Enlightenment—"What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?"—we must add another: Why am I so afraid?

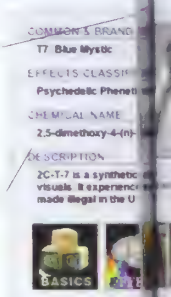
It is a beginning.

HIG

An online interactive

Four decades after the federal government outlawed LSD, forcing a vibrant subculture underground, the Internet is now allowing altered-state aficionados to commune in a spirit of innovation not seen since the sixties. Those assembling at the drug resource website Erowid include everyone from dropouts and casual users to toxicologists and researchers; traffic hovers at around one million unique visitors a month, with somewhat lower numbers when colleges are on break. The site's mostly user-created content is reviewed first by a network of trained volunteers and then by Erowid's small paid staff. By drawing on the collective knowledge of its many remote and devoted users, Erowid has compiled one of the world's most exhaustive and accurate collections of information on recreational drugs and their use, making the search for that elusive high as easy as booting up and logging on.





Erowid's more than 40,000 pages of content contain extensive information on just about all psychotropic substances, including this synthetic hallucinogen, 2C-T-7, also known as Blue Mystic. Visitors can learn that 2C-T-7 is most commonly taken orally in doses of 15-30 mg, that it takes effect in sixty to ninety minutes, and that a trip lasts three to seven hours, with an hour or two of aftereffects. Erowid's ultimate credibility comes from its willingness to address the downside of drugs. According to the site, some users of Blue Mystic report being "completely dissociated," "experiencing intense and frightening body pains," and "becoming belligerent." In one of the site's thousands of user testimonials, a friend of a seventeen-year-old who overdosed on 2C-T-7 writes: "He spent the last minutes of his life screaming at the top of his lungs, 'I DON'T WANT TO DIE! THIS IS STUPID.'" Erowid concludes its report on this death, "Recreational use of research chemicals can kill. :("

Erowid is also a place where drug buffs come together to explore the science behind mind-altering substances. Here the site gives Blue Mystic's chemical name, and other pages include complex images of the drug's molecular structure. Chemists and amateur drug makers go to Erowid for tips on how to produce different highs by slightly modifying a drug's chemical makeup. To try to keep pace with these limitless innovations, the government has made criminal any new chemical compound "substantially similar" to an existing illegal one. But the ambiguity of this language means prosecutions are problematic, so the DEA still must determine which of the new synthetic drugs showing up on its radar to specifically outlaw. Alexander Shulgin, the inventor of Blue Mystic and an early popularizer of ecstasy, posts his own detailed recipes and reflections on Erowid. Want to know why a certain compound turned brown while separating at 50 degrees Fahrenheit? An Erowid reader can simply click a link and ask Shulgin directly.

CE

opoeia, *by Ryan Grim*



Erowid does not sell drugs on its site or even point buyers in the right direction (you'll need Google for that). Yet drugs, along with the psychedelic experiences they elicit, are fetishized in its pages. (A membership donation lands such thank-you gifts as a DRUG GEEK T-shirt or a silver drug-molecule pendant.) Highs are described—e.g., this "colorful visuals"—with a detail and ardor more often found in wine criticism. "[M]uch like mescaline but less sparkly," Shulgin and his wife write of 2C-T-7 on their joint Erowid page. "Lots of movement and aliveness—velvety appearance and increased depth perception." A user called Flood notes of his experience: "Tracers from movement are extremely heavy, very colorful, I remember . . . color dripping off of everything." The site has even adopted a shorthand rating system—a 1 being an undistinguished trip with mild hallucinations, a 4 "a rare and precious transcendental state."

"Truth, accuracy, and integrity in publishing information about psychoactives will lead to healthier and more balanced choices, behavior, and policies," write the two founders of Erowid, who go by the names Earth and Fire. Yet such prominence on the Web can have undesirable effects as well. Here Erowid relates that 2C-T-7 was banned following a jump in its Internet sales in 1999, but the drug gained notoriety only after Shulgin posted news of his invention on the site. Indeed, the DEA may never have even heard of Blue Mystic if not for Erowid. The government also continues to deem Erowid a threat. In 2004, after Earth wrote the DEA to correct inaccuracies on the agency's website, he received this note in reply: "With all due respect, you will appreciate that it is highly inappropriate for us to establish any sort of dialogue. We are on opposite sides of a very high fence. Please do not contact me again. Thank you."

By following this link, readers can learn how to cook up Blue Mystic themselves, an elaborate process that begins with 3.4 g of potassium hydroxide in 50 ml of hot methanol and ends many steps later with "spectacular white crystals." Unlike Wikipedia, another top result turned up by search engines when the drug-curious go looking, Erowid not only informs minds but offers hundreds of ways to alter them chemically. Visitors to the site can find a psychoactive experience that suits them best by choosing from an astounding 175 chemical drugs (including some 70 pharmaceuticals) and 116 plants and herbs. A generation ago the average user would have been mostly limited to whatever handful of in-drugs was then being pushed and praised. Today, all that's needed is an Internet connection and a chemistry set to browse your way to a custom high. ■

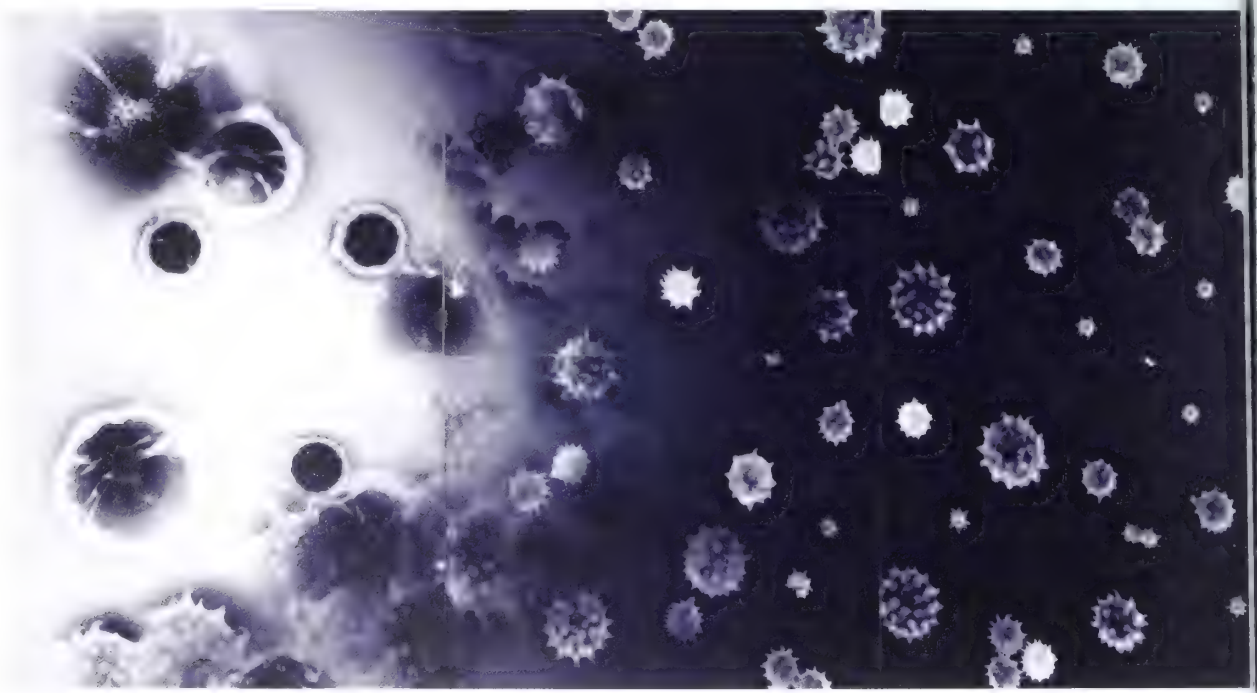
s a staff writer at Politico.com.
ly writing a book about American

CHEMO WORLD

Surviving the cancer unit

By Sallie Tisdale

Several years ago, I began working on a small oncology unit at Providence Portland Medical Center in Portland, Oregon. The unit, known as 5-K, is shaped like a T and can hold twenty patients at a time. Its small size, the closely knit team, the long relationships with returning patients, felt exactly right. Nurses who come to 5-K usually stay a long time. The work is complex, challenging, intimate. To do it well requires me to be at my best. There is, too, the vague pleasure of feeling competentin a place where most people can't imagine working. The world of cancer is a world unto itself. Double doors at each end shut out the rest of the hospital in a kind of quarantine—keeping germs out but also keeping the cancer in.



So many people in my circle of family and friends have had cancer that not to be one of them feels strange at times. On 5-K, this circle has expanded to include many strangers. Sometimes it seems as if everyone has cancer, that having cancer is norma we're all just used to it. I know a healthy survivors, but often the nitude of the disease asserts itse mother's early death from breast cer raises my risk of the disease si icantly, so I have a mammogram e year. Last year, the technician my films and left me in my drafty g She came back a few minutes late said I needed to go down the hal an ultrasound as well. She couldn plain why; I'm sure she didn't r know. The ultrasound techni would only tell me there was a "s

Sallie Tisdale's book Women of the Way: Discovering 2,500 Years of Buddhist Wisdom, *is just out in paperback from HarperSanFrancisco.*

ıd then she left with her own set
tures. I waited in the dim,
:d room; I waited in a quivering
at had a life of its own. When
ıng physician arrived, I almost
l him.
ɔk," I said. "Look, I work on
ou tell me what the hell is go-
, right now."
, we're not thinking a malig-
" he said, surprised. I wanted
to hit him. I wanted to
yell: You tell me that *first*.

lancer" is a catchword for a group
ases defined by the cell in which
riginate. Different cancers have
nt courses, prognoses, and treat-
they are different diseases. Some
t and some are slow, some are
ely easy to treat and others al-
mpossible. They all involve ab-
l cells without a useful function,
hat are not orderly and are not
ɔlled by the normal mechanisms
ıanage cell growth. Tumors can
e in size in two to three months.
e time of diagnosis, many have
tasized to new sites. The cancer is
it has broken free, and the second-
ation tumors are often genetical-
lved, with new properties. With
nove, the cells become more prim-
evolving into a kind of ur-cell.
are cancers called "unknown pri-
—the cells are so plain their ori-
ın't be identified. These are cells
chopaths: twisted, clever, self-
ıctive, taking victims down along
ay.
e number of cells involved is dif-
to grasp. By the time cancer is
ted, many millions of abnormal
ıre present, and they are usually di-
ɡ rapidly. Treatment is a matter of
g as many of these abnormal cells
ssible, as fast as possible, without
g the patient in the bargain. Most
logists are reluctant to use the
"cure," and tend to speak of can-
s a chronic disease. The goal of
nent is remission, a state in which
ıncer can't be detected. Remission
ı't mean there is no cancer in the
. Animal studies suggest that mil-
of cancer cells remain hidden in
erson considered "cancer free."
ıe immune surveillance theory of
er holds that in a way we all *do*
cancer, that a healthy immune system fights off rogue cells as they appear. (New research indicates that cancer in turn can shut off crucial parts of the immune system, actively dismantling what might attack it.) A person's immune system may be able to eliminate those remaining cells one by one, the way one fights a cold, and the remission will be durable. As with other chronic diseases, in theory cancer patients could simply continue to take anticancer drugs their entire lives—if the drugs were not so toxic.

5-K is on the same floor as the Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center, and at any given time almost every cancer treatment is represented there.[1] Patients are receiving various kinds of immunotherapy and chemotherapy, having radiation treatments, and recovering from surgery. There is often at least one person having a stem-cell transplant. Others are there because of the kinds of problems that tend to accompany cancer and its treatments, like infections. 5-K is a regional center for peripheral stem-cell transplants and one of only a few dozen centers for high-dose Interleukin-2 (IL-2) therapy in the United States.[2]

When I first started in the unit, I was told by more than one nurse, "If you can work on 5-K, you can work anywhere." As a population, 5-K patients are sicker than most in the hospital, skirting the edge of instability and crisis repeatedly. They may stay for weeks at a time and return again and again over a period of years. Quite a few die there. Assignments on the three daily nursing shifts are doled out partly according to the level of care each patient requires and partly on the level of training of the nurses. My training as a 5-K floor nurse took more than a year and will never stop; it includes special instruction in chemotherapy, transplants, immunotherapy, and cardiac monitoring, and studying for my national certification as an oncology nurse.

In the time I've worked there, we've had a wedding, a number of birthday parties, some anniversaries, many deaths, many emergencies, several resuscitations, the occasional family fight. There is no cancer demographic, no particular population: this is everyone, from everywhere. This is the musician who hauls her IV pole down five flights so she can play the grand piano. This is the young man covered in tattoos who was turned away from two emergency rooms for lack of money before he came to Providence and was diagnosed with leukemia. This is the young Mexican father who has no papers and has been treated without cost for years. This is the ice-skating instructor who had been a Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, the avid hiker who can no longer walk, the lawyer who likes to have whole pizzas delivered to his room from the joint down the street. They range in age from eighteen into the nineties, are all races, many nationalities, all degrees of wealth and lack of it.

Christa, a forty-four-year-old woman now in remission, told me that when she was first diagnosed with lymphoma, everything happened terribly fast. "I was carried along in this urgent wave," she said. "People kept talking about getting second opinions, but it was so urgent I was just swept along." People with cancer are overwhelmed first by fear, then by information, then by noise and change, and finally by continual tiny losses that etch away at their sense of self like water on a stone. Modesty is one of the first things to go, and privacy hardly exists. People sometimes are admitted to the unit directly from the doctor's office, having just heard the news. There's no time to pack a bag; they are literally stripped before the day is done. I remember a man who buried his wife on December 22, and on Christmas Eve was admitted to 5-K, having been diagnosed with leukemia that morning. He sat up in bed with an unfocused, sagging shock in his face, barely answering my questions. He was facing a brand-new life, which had arrived without warning.

I think this is why most of my 5-K patients prefer watching *Animal Planet* to anything else on television. They

[1] *Many people with cancer never stay in a hospital, receiving all their treatments as outpatients. People are on 5-K because of their general health or the seriousness of their treatment.*

[2] *IL-2, a cellular protein, is currently the only curative treatment for patients with metastatic malignant melanoma and kidney cancer.*

desultorily with relatives, many of [illegible] the [illegible] ... Who pounds beds for them, after a few days the small hospital rooms are draped with drying laundry, suit[illegible] family photos, and knitting. The patients walk the halls in varying degrees of boredom, anxiety, or persistence. Because of their low resistance to infection, many are strongly encouraged not to wander outside the unit's small range. Most wear hospital gowns, women sometimes in nice pajamas or clutching a robe, men sometimes without shirts, all with the same gray slipper socks. They push their IV poles and look at one another: the thinning hair, the fuzzy heads, the bald heads, the occasional surgical mask, the gaunt faces, the reflections of themselves. You can tell which visitors are new: they are the ones who stop to read the inspirational posters with the careful concentration of schoolchildren. The veterans are in the kitchen, making a new pot of coffee.

I read the charts. I know what some of the code words mean, the scan results, the markers that indicate a good prognosis, a bad prognosis. One nurse sometimes wears a pin that says CANCER SUCKS. This is one way to put it. The very idea of what we do here, so peculiarly intimate, so daringly rude—the things we ask are so unfair, the disease itself such effrontery—and it is usually at this moment of reflection that my pager goes off and interrupts me. I don't have the right to know what I know about others, to see what I see of their secrets—how can anyone?—so I try to hold my knowledge as lightly as a fine glass vase, bound to break.

For many weeks, we cared for a young woman, a born-again Christian with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She came to 5-K for a stem-cell transplant. She was admitted to the large room usually reserved for transplants, the one equipped with special air filters to reduce contaminants. The night she finished the high-dose chemotherapy that starts the process, she was a bit nauseated but still feeling all right. Her room was madly decorated with drawings and dolls and quilts and flashing Christmas tree lights and signs and pillows. I slid quietly in and out of her room all evening, hanging and adjusting a blood transfusion, listening to her heart and lungs, checking the pump that delivered anti-nausea medication, testing her urine to make sure the drugs hadn't damaged her bladder. A group of friends arrived with a keyboard and a few guitars, and she sat cross-legged on the end of her bed, holding her face in her hands, while they sang to her. Hardly a word was said for hours, except in prayer.

That's one kind of day. Here's another: a forty-one-year-old woman diagnosed with lung cancer. She was athletic and had never smoked. She and the husband who clearly adored her had a toddler. After a month of arduous chemotherapy, her oncologist, Dr. Jeffrey Menashe, came to her hospital room for a talk. He is a tall, lean man and dresses in a pressed white shirt and dark tie when he visits his patients on 5-K. I listened while he told her ever so gently that the treatment hadn't worked. There is a new drug under investigation, he said. I can't make any promises, he said.

"I'll do it," she said, and the tears were sliding down her face, dripping off her cheeks. "I'll do anything to live."

I asked Christa, who had lymphoma, what she remembered about being told she would need chemotherapy. "Oh, just the word 'chemo' - just the *idea* of chemo," she said. "You've heard the most frightening things."

Just that word, "chemo": an insider's word, diminutive, familiar. "Chemotherapy" actually means "any treatment with medicine," but in modern parlance it means only one thing—the cytotoxic drugs. And what a word—the root, *chem*, has the same Greek source as the word "alchemy": the search for a means of prolonging life, a universal cure for disease. The search for transmutation. My friend Sylvia, who survived Hodgkin's disease, said of her chemotherapy, "It's like going to a foreign country you've heard a lot of bad things about and never wanted to visit. And then you have to go there." After Sylvia said that, I began to call it Chemo World.

"Cytotoxic" means "cell-killing"; these drugs destroy fast-growing cells of all types. They are still the cornerstone of cancer treatment, used [illegible] during, and after surgery, radiation [illegible] other treatments. There are [illegible] dozens of cytotoxic drugs of [illegible] classes on the market, and more [illegible] ing released all the time. To kill [illegible] growing cells in a living body [illegible] to return it to health is a little [illegible] ing buckshot to kill a cockroach [illegible] picture window. Cytotoxic drugs [illegible] be teratogenic (causing fetal [illegible] mations), mutagenic (causing [illegible] mutations), and, yes, carcinogenic. They also sometimes kill cancer. Most of us view them with trepidation and hungry hope. Jeffrey Menashe determines a day in his lifetime when he will be done with cytotoxic drugs. He says, "The whole discipline of oncology is built up around the fact that you have a class of drugs that is so toxic you need a discipline to manage it, which is true of any other kind of drug."

Most cells of the body multiply by division; they are magnificent duplicating machines. When more cells of a certain kind are needed, some cells of that type create enough material, genetic and otherwise, for two cells, and then they divide—that simple, that miraculous. One of the hallmarks of cancer is that the cells continue dividing without cease, without regard to physical space, available nutrition, or any of the normal controls that limit normal cell growth. They just keep multiplying—growing and dividing and growing again.

Cytotoxic drugs are classed by how they affect cells. Certain drugs are "cell-cycle specific," meaning they only kill cells at a specific phase in their growth cycle; others are non-specific. One type of drug inhibits DNA repair and synthesis; another interrupts cell metabolism in a specific phase; yet another breaks the DNA helix strand in any phase. Some drugs are thought to kill in proportion to the dose—the more drug administered, the more cells are killed—and have a "kill rate" for just what proportion of cells they destroy.

Cell biologists and cancer researchers may spend an entire career focusing on a particular gene expressed at a particular phase in the cycle of a particular kind of cell. They study things like the tumor-suppressor gene Smad4/DPC4 and how gelatinase B affects the growth of tumors' circulat[illegible]

s, and they study them for years, very angle. But for all the time, , and words spent on cancer, of the basic questions are large- nswered. Walter Urba, director Robert W. Franz Cancer Re- Center, says, "We don't really how all these drugs work. We ve know."

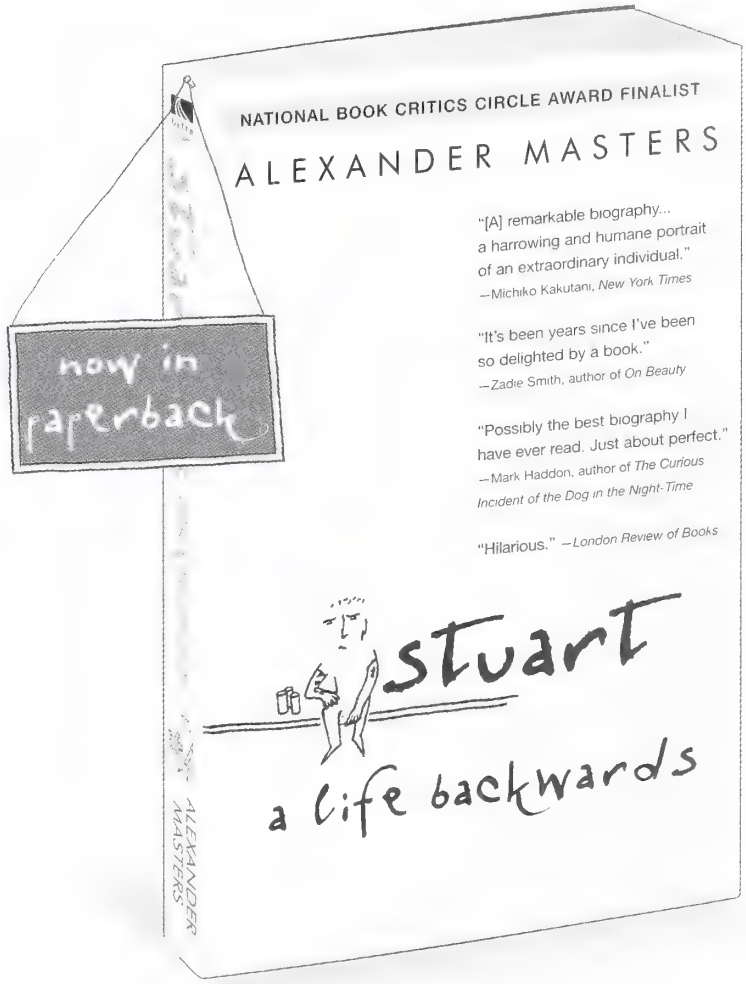
nors are heterogeneous, made up cer cells dividing and behaving erent ways. For unknown rea- cancer also tends to become re- to the killing action of a given To combat tolerance and attack differently behaving cells, most otherapy is given in combina- Combinations also allow a high- rate without overwhelming side s. Few drugs are used alone, and are used for several diseases.

ny combinations exist in stan- practice. My handy laminated et from *Pharmacy Practice News* four different regimens for kin's disease, fifteen for non- kin's lymphoma, and thirty-two east cancer. Well and good—ex- hat with thirty-two regimens in hich one would be right for me? is where it gets tricky. The order ich the drugs are given, the rate nich they are given, and the nt of time between drugs are part- natter of opinion. Any known ge- markers of the cancer and current rch matter. But so do factors that nly be called political in nature: e and when a physician trained, roximity of a teaching hospital, insurance compensation can all t the choice of a regimen.

ne of the reasons for choosing a fic regimen over another is the nt, not the cancer. The thera- c index of a drug is the difference een the dose required to have a apeutic effect and the dose that s harm. Cytotoxic drugs have one e lowest therapeutic indices found; e is often a very fine distinction een getting results and causing n. In fact, taking patients as close ssible to the edge of tolerance of- seems to increase survival rates, gh some drugs have lifetime cu- ative dose limits. A person with t disease will not be able to toler- he same doses and drugs as a per- with a healthy heart. Moreover,

"A harrowing and humane portrait of an extraordinary individual."

—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*



"Hilarious is not a word one usually associates with homelessness. But Masters' account of meeting and befriending Stuart Shorter, a homeless man ... is aided and authenticated by his subject's hilarious voice. He's a witty and dramatic raconteur with a profane Cockney voice, a charismatic gleam and a gift for relating the most horrifying events ... without excuse or self-pity."

—Los Angeles Times Book Review

"A perfect balance of empathy and comedy."

—The New Yorker

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drugs are given to patients with stressed kidneys and livers, who may be recovering from surgery, who are taking many other strong drugs, who are malnourished, who are still suffering the lingering effects of prior chemotherapy and radiation. (They are given, after all, to people with cancer.) No one can predict how a patient will respond to any given drug; it may be genetically determined.

There have been many disappointments in the research. Interferon, a cell protein, is one; monoclonal antibodies are another. IL-2, which is curative for a small percentage of patients, isn't much help to the rest.

"We're disappointed that we don't have a vaccine yet," says Walter Urba. "But there will be vaccines." Many will be tailored to an individual, at a cost of many thousands of dollars. "If we figure out how to cure cancer," he adds, "we'll figure out how to pay for it."

The hope in oncology is for more targeted therapies using drugs that interfere with cell growth in much more precise ways than cytotoxic drugs. For example, a whole new class of drugs that affect estrogen synthesis has changed the treatment of breast cancer dramatically. A close friend of mine was diagnosed with widely metastasized breast cancer more than two years ago. This disease is generally considered terminal, usually within a year or two. She has not had traditional chemotherapy at all. Her tumors have been controlled by a single oral drug, anastrozole, and one course of radiation. It won't work forever, but right now, with metastatic cancer, she feels healthy and well.

The nature of discovery is surprise, points out Menashe. "We're in the fog still, and we don't know when we're going to break through. It could be tomorrow." Until then, cytotoxic chemotherapy is the cornerstone. The foundation, the bedrock, the core. The whole damned house, for a lot of people.

Liana Martin is the nurse manager of the oncology unit, where everyone knows her as Lee. She hired me to work on 5-K. She is fifty-five years old and has been a nurse for a long time, an oncology nurse for twelve years.

Three years ago, Lee had her first routine colonoscopy. "When I woke up, the G.I. specialist said, 'Okay, we need to find you a surgeon.' I looked at her and said, 'Are you saying I have *cancer*?'" As soon as possible, she went to see Walter Urba, whom she counts as a good friend. "I said the worst possible thing I could say to him. I grabbed his hand and said, 'Walter, don't let me die!'"

Lee had colorectal cancer, which was already present in the lymph nodes. Urba prescribed a regimen of chemotherapy and radiation. Even with her experience, she was surprised at the uncertainty involved in the doses and in what to expect. "I wasn't supposed to lose my hair," she says. "It came out in handfuls. I expected to have some nausea, but we couldn't control it—I lost thirty-five pounds. The radiation oncologist said, 'Oh, it's the chemo,' and the medical oncologist said, 'Oh, it's the radiation.'"

She had severe diarrhea. She developed peripheral neuropathy, damage to the fine nerves of the extremities, which causes numbness, tingling, and pain. Then she also developed an unusual side effect called hand-foot syndrome, in which the hands and feet become red, swollen, and burning. The side effects were so severe that Urba had to interrupt her treatment several times to let her recover. On the one hand, she knew the drugs were dangerous. "The nurses hung up a bottle, and I knew it was poison; I was letting them put poison in me." On the other hand, she wanted those drugs.

"It was really hard to stop. It felt like a failure. My failure," she says now. "I really was hindering my care in some ways. I had eighteen bouts of diarrhea in one day and I didn't call the radiation oncologist, I didn't tell him until after the treatment. And he was livid. I knew he would have held the treatment. That's how panicky I was." More than once, 5-K nurses called Urba themselves, because Lee was obviously sick and refusing to admit it.

Finally, Urba dropped her doses by 20 percent. "That was really hard," she recalls now. "I wanted it, *all* of it, *every* bit, as much as possible." She wanted that poison, but she was out there, skirting the edge.

Predicted side effects are based on averages and on research, just like [illegible]es, and of extremes are averages [illegible]. The side effects are caused by t[illegible] lateral damage of a treatment de[illegible] to kill fast-growing cells. Side [illegible] can be immediate or delayed, b[illegible] enduring, but they are almo[illegible] evitable. The picture window wil[illegible] ter as the cockroach dies. I find many people fear chemotherapy almost supernatural way; they heard so many things about it tell one another tales about it some of the tales are true.

Unlike most drugs, chemoth[illegible] is hard to keep secret; it makes known in painfully visible ways. I one's hair is the biggest fear most p[illegible] have. They know it is an irrat[illegible] fear—it won't kill them, it's te[illegible] rary. But hair is iconic and relat[illegible] a symbol of youth and sex and s[illegible] almost as important to the self-im[illegible] the face. To suddenly be without horrifying to many people, and without it because of a deadly d[illegible] is worse. Losing the hair means sic[illegible] it means weakness, it means you danger of losing your life, and yo[illegible] it in the mirror every day.

No one really knows why ch[illegible] therapy makes hair fall out, a pr[illegible] called alopecia. The drugs dam[illegible] the dividing cells of the follicle[illegible] ways not well understood, so tha[illegible] hair shaft weakens and breaks. A[illegible] cia is not confined, as many pe[illegible] believe, to the scalp. People may lose their beards, eyebrows, eyela[illegible] the hair under the arms, the p[illegible] hair, even the fine hairs of the arms and legs. (I've heard this l[illegible] scale baldness called "the total Brynner.") We may not be cover[illegible] fur, but hair is protective. Peopl[illegible] sunburns on their scalps or find are cold all the time without hair[illegible] sulation. Without eyebrows and lashes, it's easy to get specks in eyes, and when you cry, the tears out like water over a dam. After t[illegible] ment, when the hair grows b[illegible] (rarely, it doesn't) it may be a d[illegible] ent texture, even a different color

I've seen women weeping in over this dreaded loss, refusin[illegible] leave their rooms, but most pe[illegible] get used to it quickly. Perhaps easier when one goes to the cl[illegible] week after week, or spends tim[illegible]

pital and sees so many oth-
en and women, young and
no all look the same.
ea and vomiting is the other
ır before treatment and, unlike
, may be more distressing than
l. Some drugs stimulate various,
x neurochemical pathways as
rk, leading to activation of what
ly known as the vomiting cen-
ıted in the brain stem. The
g that follows can be violent,
and long-lasting. The surprise
y people is that only some of the
this. Cisplatin, one of the most
n drugs in use, causes nausea in
ıan 90 percent of patients; vin-
, another common drug, rarely
ıausea.
e are good, quite expensive,
ugs for nausea and some old
ys that work well for many
but nothing is foolproof. Mar-
ıelps some people a lot. Many
swear that a joint is much more
e than the pharmaceutical form,
ılled Marinol.[3]
gon has a medical-marijuana
ıt the law is problematic in
didn't foresee when I voted
One lymphoma patient, an
casually lit up a bong in his
ɔn his first day on 5-K. This
mistake in several ways—not
ıat he was sharing it with his
s—but it is how I found
at the entire building's no-
ng rule applies to this legal
ne as well. Since the medical-
ana law prohibits a licensed
om using it in public spaces,
s the hospital's outdoor smok-
ea, this patient found himself
ifficult position. One day his
nd began crying, begging for
find a way for him to get some
–"just one joint," she said tear-
called security and explained
uation, and they told me the
ıle of their rounds out in the
ıg lots. I told the patient and
lfriend what I'd learned; they
walk, and we didn't talk about
nore.
rse than the nausea for many

*ɔ difficult for researchers to get per-
and material to do tests on marijua-
ɔeople with cancer and AIDS that
f the information available is anecdo-
there is a lot of that.*

people is a condition called mucositis. Many drugs damage the DNA of cells in the mucus membranes of the entire digestive tract, from mouth to anus, as well as mucous membranes in the vagina. This damage and the release of inflammatory chemicals destroys tiny blood vessels and connective tissue, creating ulcers. Some patients are in such severe pain from mouth sores that they can't swallow or even speak. They require narcotics and may need days or weeks of what is called TPN, total parenteral nutrition, a metabolically balanced liquid given through the veins. (Now and then, if a patient has a certain sense of humor about his or her dark condition, the nurses will label the big, milky bag: "Steak, baked potatoes, apple pie," changing the menu day by day.)

Diarrhea is common as well and usually has several causes, including changes in fluid and electrolytes and direct damage to the cells and normal enzymes. Christa described the result of her severe diarrhea as "scorched earth," a term accurate in both metaphorical and clinical ways. She was a little indignant even two years later. "Everyone wanted to see it! You don't really want to show it to them."

These are the side effects patients dread, but there are many more they don't even anticipate. Although vincristine rarely causes nausea, it is renowned for neurological complications, one of which is constipation. Another is peripheral neuropathy, even at relatively low doses, and other problems like foot drop.

One class of cytotoxic drugs is the antibiotics. We don't tend to think of them that way, but antibiotics are cell killers par excellence, and some potent ones kill cancer cells by preventing DNA synthesis. They have a tendency to color the urine—usually red, but in the case of mitoxantrone blue-green. Some drugs cause rashes, or little pustules similar to acne, or itching, or changes in pigmentation, or sensitivity to sunshine. Some drugs cause blurred vision and changes in color perception, or increased tears. There are drugs that reduce libido or cause coughing. Paclitaxel, used for certain lung cancers, is known for causing severe joint and muscle pain. The drugs can cause sterility. They can

THE LONG EXILE

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By MELANIE McGRATH



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[illegible] I know I've told my patients these things, the physicians have told them, we've printed out the information and through the list of possible side effects with them, and repeated ourselves, and they don't remember—they can't remember, it's all too much and too scary and too new. So their pee turns red and they think it's blood, or they forget about the sun and get a burn, and they cry, reminded. Reminded of so many things they want to forget.

People want to survive; they are willing to do much more than they would have thought they could. Years later, people who are so happy to be alive, to be well, will tell you this most difficult time was a gift, that it changed them for the better, clarified their lives. But in the midst of it? "I'd rather die than not be able to knit," one old woman said to me, having refused any more treatment because of the risk of neuropathy in her hands. And she did die. I've seen people start puking as soon as I enter the room, hours before I bring the drug, because I am associated with it—my blue scrubs, the faint scent of soap on my hands, is enough. I've seen people so used to pain and so broken by it that they simply lie there, leaking tears, as I hurt them again. I've seen an engineer who runs a busy office, a man of authority, ashamed to silence by his diarrhea, like a bad child who cannot get to the toilet in time.

Woven through all this is what we call fatigue. Cancer causes fatigue, and so do radiation and hospitalization and surgery, and so does chemotherapy. It is not a matter of being tired or depressed but something much more mysterious. Fatigue means a loss of vital energy, what some might call life energy, animation, reserve, or power. If you are tired, you can still run up a flight of stairs in an emergency. If you are fatigued, you may not be able to do that. Wanting has nothing to do with it. Just when you need a little extra, there is that much less.

I wonder sometimes whether this is one way the spiritual distress of cancer manifests in the body. We talk about contributing factors like anemia and malnutrition; we counsel light exercise and careful planning. But what about the loss of one's identity? What makes the self a self? With cancer and its treatments, the aspects of identity erode like sand in a tide, inexorably, constantly. You are a person who does things (work, family, hobby, art, sports), a person who fills roles (plumber, father, singer, tennis player), a person with an interior life unlike any other, and it all disappears. Who are you without these things? Who is the person who can't read a book or tie her shoes, can't make love, cook supper, or follow a conversation—who may never do such things the same way again?

Of all the effects of chemotherapy, that pesky therapeutic index is what keeps the nurses vigilant. When people die "of cancer," it is often not the tumor that kills them. Cytotoxic drugs can cause severe allergic reactions. They can damage every organ, including the eyes and ears and brain. They can decrease the contractility of heart muscle, make the lung tissue fibrous, erode the bladder wall so that it hemorrhages. They can, they have to, take people out along an edge no one really wants to walk.

Most cytotoxic drugs damage the immune system to some degree by damaging the bone marrow. This is called myelosuppression; it follows the active weakening of the immune system done by many cancers and can be lethal. A myelosuppressed person has too few specialized cells to fight infections, too few red blood cells to carry oxygen, and not enough platelets for clotting. Many people need blood and platelet transfusions. Sometimes, at a certain point in the collapse of the marrow, the chemotherapy simply has to stop until the person recovers.

Infection is the most worrisome problem. The nadir for blood cells can begin a few days after treatment or weeks after treatment, and last a long time. People in severe myelosuppression can die from the normal bacteria on their own skin and in their gut, from a fungal spore on their pillow, a bit of mold from a vase of flowers, from a kiss. Suddenly outside the pale of ordinary life, they die of themselves, and the world. To protect themselves, people bathe every day, wash their hands constantly, wear surgical masks, avoid fresh produce and flowers and pets and children and crowds. To avoid bleeding, they don't use razors, floss, or tampons, or walk barefoot, have sex.

In a neat reversal, this dang state is induced deliberately for cell transplants. Stem cells are parent and child, able to become kinds of cells, depending on the needs. Healthy marrow is always ing stem cells. Autologous tran is used mostly to treat cancers blood, like lymphoma, some kemias, and multiple myelom means harvesting the patient's stem cells, deeply suppressing the row and cancer together, and th infusing the cells to kick-start th mune system.

When I first began working on I made the common mistake suming that the transplant wa treatment, but in fact it's the ant The real treatment is the very dose chemotherapy given firs most intense chemotherapy a p can tolerate, a dose that is inten destroy the bone marrow. Witho infusion of stem cells, the perso most likely die from overwhelmi fection or hemorrhage. We ca infusion a "rescue."

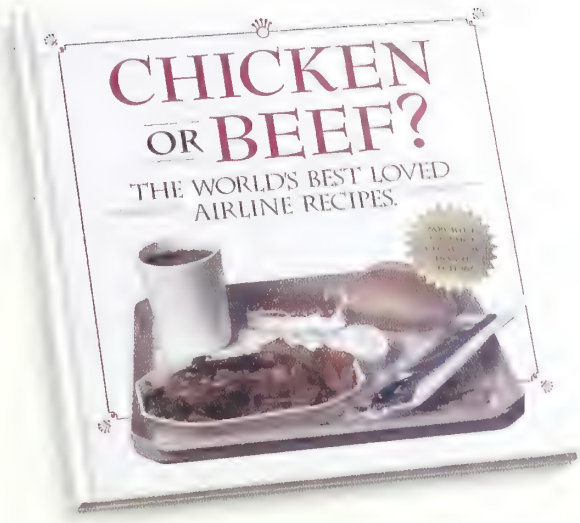
A person's cells are harveste special machine that filters stem out while circulating the blood the cells are then frozen. A few or perhaps weeks later, the p moves into one of the big, spe filtered rooms and starts the ch therapy, which is tenderly calle lation. "Ablate" means "to remo melt, to vaporize," and with tha countdown begins: Day -3, Da and so on. Day Zero is when the are infused.

On Day Zero, the stem cell thawed in a saline bath and inj into the patient's bloodstream big syringes. There is a little tensi the air during the infusion—a ki excitement, almost of celebration Zero is a long-anticipated, hope feared day. One woman—the who could no longer walk witho elaborate brace, her bones turn cottage cheese from multiple m ma—had her husband videotap procedure. I tried to imagine wat it at home, over popcorn.

Transplant is a struggle; pat are usually in the hospital for se

It is only after the infusion that
e effects of the chemotherapy
ick in. Day +4, Day +7, and on
ı. The patient feels wretched
n do nothing but wait for the
o settle in the marrow. The
lant rooms are large because
need to stay in there; they have
nune system, so they need to
as much of the world as they
hey have big erase boards with
'ars on them, and many keep
f their daily blood counts there.
ead a little and watch television
ep, and wait. And wait, watch-
numbers.
motherapy can be horrible and
be a breeze, and it is usually
ning in between. The side ef-
ve listed here are horrible; I find
ard to read. Is the life that fol-
ıe reward for all this suffering? Or
difficulty itself a gift? I know that
suffer here. They also survive.
hair falls out and then it grows
They throw up, they lose weight,
el weak, they feel embarrassed,
ıen they get better. People get
better. People get well.
People go home.

fter her diagnosis of colorec-
ancer, Lee started weekly
otherapy and fell into a rhythm
ticipation and recovery. On
ıesdays and Thursdays she'd
treatments and then rest for a
ays. "On Sundays, I felt okay,"
old me. "Mondays, I felt okay.
uesdays, I'd start crying."
of Lee's boundaries blurred to-
r. She was a patient on 5-K after
y; the nurses she supervised were
ng her. Her friends were giving
rders. "This is a journey, a path,
ou do it with courage and digni-
ıe says now. "But let me tell you,
ourage was dwindling—and my
ty! Now the peers that sit across
able from me are looking at my
I found it very humbling."
e were sitting in her cluttered of-
ı the center of 5-K when she told
is. Now and then the telephone
or a nurse poked her head in to
question. Lee had changed with
ment. Her blonde-highlighted
was sparse and gray under a wig.
lost both eyelashes and eyebrows.
attooed eyeliner had sloughed off



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with a lot of other skin, and her face [illegible] and spotted with brown pigment and tiny pimples.

"I said to Walter, 'Look, I have to have cancer. Do I have to be ugly, too?'" She smiled grimly. "I woke up one day and thought, 'Oh, my God—I look like a cancer patient.' And that's [illegible] thing I didn't want to look like. I'd look in the mirror and think, 'This person could die.'"

"Was there ever a point when you thought, 'It's not worth it?'" I asked.

"No," she said, without hesitation. Then she looked into the distance for a moment. "Maybe."

There is a side effect little discussed by physicians and nurses, though it is a topic of much conversation among patients. "For me it started with words," Lee says. "I couldn't find the word, and I'd have to describe something. I couldn't work out if I was confused. I had to write notes a lot more. I'd forget things."

Patients call it "chemo brain." It was dismissed for a long time by doctors as a symptom of stress, but oncologists now accept that cognitive dysfunction after chemotherapy is rather common and surprisingly durable. So little is clear in Chemo World. In unusual, complicated, and not well understood ways, chemotherapy affects the brain. It causes not only changes in function—electrical activity, chemistry—but sometimes in structure, reducing the amount of white and gray matter. The effects are usually subtle; people complain of difficulty finding words, remembering what they've read. Many find it hard to do more than one thing at a time and frequently complain that they have a harder time doing arithmetic. Studies only now being done make it clear that the effects can last at least ten years after treatment and perhaps for good.

At what point are you no longer yourself? What is worth dying for? "Chemo brain is scary," says Lee now. "You think to yourself, 'What if it doesn't go away? What if I'm going to stay this way?' We've had patients that we've taken so far out, and it seems like they didn't come all the way back. It scared the hell out of me. I'm still a little scared."

Chemotherapy is usually, but not always, given intravenously. It may be given over a few minutes, in an infusion lasting a few hours, or continuously for days. It may be given once, or on a schedule over months, but it is a ritual act. Because the drugs are teratogenic and carcinogenic, they are considered hazardous waste. Nurses and pharmacists who handle the drugs regularly are at risk of absorbing toxic amounts through the skin or by tiny, aerosolized droplets. On 5-K the actual drugs are only opened under a ventilation hood, and once the bags are mixed, they are specially packaged and carried with chemo-protective gloves. The nurses hanging the bags wear chemo-protective gowns and goggles as well.

I learned to give chemotherapy over time, first by study, then by observing, then by being observed. 5-K follows the standard method set by the Oncology Nursing Society. Patients are weighed and measured twice before beginning a cycle, and each day it continues. Their most recent laboratory results are double-checked before each dose, which is usually based on body-surface area. Many cancer drugs can irritate veins, and a few can destroy muscle and skin, so the patient has to have a new or central intravenous line, if possible. (If the drug infiltrates the tissue, we treat it as an emergency.) The original medical orders, doses, and calculations are checked by two RNs and a specially trained pharmacist. The drug vials are double-checked. Everything is cosigned in several places. Finally, the patient is usually given premedications, to prevent nausea and other side effects.

When I prepare patients for their dose, I always warn them that I will be all dressed up when I bring the drug. I am sometimes rather formal and serious. I try not to use buzzwords, technical terms, or codes. I try not to say "chemo." "When I bring in your medicine," I say, "you'll see me in special clothing. This is because the drugs are very strong. This is a good thing." This is a good thing, I tell myself.

I come in, gowned from neck to knee, carrying the drug—the hope, the fear—in a special bag, carefully check the IV and the patient's name and birth date, and lay out my equipment. Then I hook it up to the pump. Chemotherapy is given in precisely calibrated amounts, literally drop by drop; we use pumps that control the flow. I label and tape the connections carefully, while the patient watches, waiting. Sometimes we chat, but usually one of us is fooled. Later, when the drug is done, I take it down with the same care and dispose of all the equipment in a special container in a locked closet.

The ritual changed with Joan. She was with mental illness. She believed that she was allergic to many substances, including normal saline. Over the course of several difficult shifts I tried to find a way to give her a drug that could only be diluted in saline when she insisted on dextrose. I didn't want to lie to her. I set up an elaborate (mostly dead-end) system of tubes and bags and asked a pharmacist to help me to incomprehensibly complex explanations to come in his white coat and explain it to her. She was impressed and bedeviled and let me give her the drug, and I was pleased and a little ashamed.

Before I was allowed to give chemotherapy, I had to prove myself. I also had to come to terms with what I was doing, knowing what would follow, knowing people would die, knowing many people would die anyway, knowing I was hanging up pictures. One of the open questions in chemotherapy is when to stop. Brandan Curti, one of the oncologists who sends his patients to 5-K, says, "Some patients view the chemo as a palliative, a mitigation of pain. Some patients view the chemo as part of their quality of life. And there are people here"—he turned his eyes toward the rest of the floor complex—"who think that anything everything we can means chemotherapy the last day of life. I don't."

I had seen my mother die of breast cancer after a double mastectomy, radiation, and chemotherapy. The last year of her life was misery, and we kept hoping for a miracle, doing whatever the doctors said. Part of my work here is honesty, but a lot of it is knowing the strength not to impose my will. My integrity includes giving other people theirs—the right to make choices unlike the choices I would make in their place. Some patients are in denial, others are not entirely

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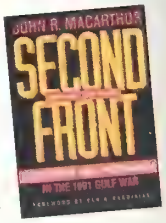
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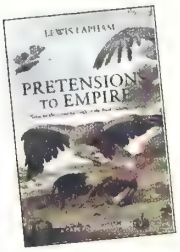
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[illegible] in an important way, whether [illegible] chemotherapy when it's probably [illegible] my business.

Jeffrey Menashe spent a summer vacation in Kenya, training oncology staff in a teaching hospital, where he saw people die for want of blood transfusions that we do routinely. Menashe specializes in treating hematological cancers and abnormalities of the blood, and many of his patients have leukemia. With leukemia, he says, the first issue is whether to treat at all; by the time of diagnosis, the blood may be more cancer than not, so sludgy with white cells that it can't move through the capillaries. Without chemotherapy, leukemic people can die within a month of diagnosis, but the treatment is hard to take and hard to survive. With most leukemic patients, the line between the devastation of the disease and the ruin of the drugs can be quite fine.

"For a person who might have a 30 to 50 percent chance of being cured, people who are young and fit, you treat," he says. "But for older people with a 10 or 20 percent chance, many say, 'The hell with it, I know I'm going to die.' And some people say, 'If I'm going to die anyway, I'm going to go down fighting.' Unfortunately, the regimen hasn't really changed much in many years. The current treatment is to poison the whole bone marrow and hope the normal cells will recover faster than the leukemia cells."

The first cycle is called induction and will hopefully put the patient in remission. Induction hits like a truck—strong drugs, high doses, long cycles, repeated cycles. Leukemia won't stay in remission long for many people, so they return for what is called consolidation chemotherapy. If they don't go into remission, they return for what is neatly termed "salvage."

A few years ago we tried to salvage a young soldier with leukemia. One night I started yet another cycle of three drugs. By then he was emaciated, too weak to stand. He couldn't bear to have his burning feet touched; his throat hurt all the time, and his hair was nothing but pale patches. He had just turned twenty-one. Almost all of his problems were caused by the drugs, but without the drugs he would have been dead already. When I came in one evening, carrying my gown, gloves, goggles, and the bags of medicine, I saw that he was watching *Iron Armour: Word Police* on the unit's DVD player. He barely glanced at me as I went about the familiar task, his gray eyes large in his wasted face, watching the movie with a small, spacey smile. He had been in Iraq a few months earlier. "America! Fuck, yeah!"

Sometimes I think the doctors don't cry in front of the patients because the nurses do it for them. I hold a weeping woman in the utility room, because she has just confessed to me that her husband won't make love to her anymore. A longtime patient is told he doesn't have enough stem cells for a transplant, there is nothing more to do, and is sent home, and the head nurse cries as he goes. A handsome young man bleeds to death in the arms of a young nurse, and we all cry. We cry quietly, in private, not always in front of one another. There are times when tears seem the correct response.

The mother with lung cancer took the experimental drug and her thick blonde hair fell out. She was too tired to read, too scared to talk, and her pain was hard to control. I still think about her face, other faces, the gradually dawning realization. I remember her pretty, ravaged face as she slowly realized she was probably going to die, and soon, and hard. In lonely silence in a strange room—a face bared, flinching in tiny tics of resistance, ducking this last punch, until it is irresistibly clear: I am not going to get better. I half-expect the earth to move in response, and perhaps it does.

"There are bad and difficult days, trying days," says Brendan Curti. "But you have to be optimistic to do this work. There is something spiritual and uplifting in it." There is in fact joy of a kind—this common struggle of people, undefended and bare. This is one of the flavors I taste in my tears.

So many of them have died. The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi died. The pizza-loving lawyer died, the marijuana-smoking artist died, the mentally ill woman died, the poor man with all the tattoos died. Of course the young soldier died. We knew he would. But not the [illegible] I ran into her sister in a public [illegible] room, where we stood outside [illegible] toilet stalls as she told me my [illegible] patient was doing fine. And [illegible] Bible student, who went home [illegible] more than six weeks of hard [illegible] struggle. Not the hiker, whose [illegible] healed after the transplant, who [illegible] hike for miles now.

And Lee is well, though she [illegible] struggles with fatigue sometimes. [illegible] looks the way she did a few [illegible] ago—her hair is thick, her face [illegible] and soft. She no longer looks like [illegible] cancer patient.

"I like the word 'remission,'" she [illegible] "It means live every day as best [illegible] can. I have a 70 percent chance of [illegible] term survival, which means a lot of [illegible] 30 percent chance of relapse sooner [illegible] a lot, too. I'm just now beginning [illegible] think about what's next. And how [illegible] you live *without* treatment? During treatment, at least you're doing something [illegible] about your cancer. But I felt so [illegible] that Wednesday when I woke up [illegible] didn't have to go to chemo.

"You walk in with cancer," she [illegible] me. "He says, 'You're in remission.' [illegible] And you walk out free."

I don't like to hear cancer patients [illegible] described as brave. Their virtue [illegible] going on, without much choice. [illegible] How can we speak of degrees of [illegible] courage here? To be sick this way [illegible] to have a kind of existential weight. [illegible] One's life is taken apart like a machine, [illegible] screws and facings laid along the [illegible] table until it is just parts and nothing [illegible] ing is left whole. I know I'm not [illegible] brave, not the way that word is [illegible] meant—stiff upper lip and all. [illegible] When it is my turn, if it is my turn, [illegible] I shake to think of it. I am surprised [illegible] sometimes to hear the small mutter [illegible] in the back of my mind, coming [illegible] without warning. I am helping [illegible] trembling man my own age onto the [illegible] commode, smelling his stale breath, [illegible] and I think, *I'm glad it's not me.* The [illegible] thought shames me, but there it is. [illegible] Being brave is simply a matter of go[illegible] ing on, because what else is there to [illegible] do but this difficult thing—wait for [illegible] me to come down the hall in my [illegible] blue gown and gloves, and hang the [illegible] bottle of poison?

FROM THE DESK OF DANIEL VARSKY

By Nicole Krauss

the winter of 1972 R and I broke
or I should say he broke up with
His reasons were vague, but the
as I remember it
was that he had a
t self, a cowardly self
ound despicable that
ould never show me,
that he needed to be
e like a sick animal
l he could improve
self and bring it up to
ndard he judged de-
ing of my or anyone
's company. Obvi-
ly I argued with
—we had been to-
er almost two years,
secrets were my se-
s, if there was a little
nal in him, a cruel or
ardly ferret, I of all
ple would know—but
vas useless. About
e weeks after he'd
ved out I got a post-
l from him without a
urn address saying
edlessly, I thought)
t he felt our decision,
ie called it, hard as it
, had been the right one, and I had
dmit to myself that our relationship
over for good.

Things got worse then for a while,
hey say, before they got better. I
n't go into it except to say that I

ole Krauss's most recent novel is The
tory of Love.



didn't go out, not even to see my grandmother, and I didn't let anyone come to see me either. The only thing that helped, oddly, was the fact that the weather was stormy, and so I had to keep running around the apartment with a strange little brass wrench made especially for tightening the bolts on either side of the antique window frames, because they always got loose in windy weather and then the windows would shriek. There were six windows altogether, and just as I finished tightening the bolts on one, another would start to howl, so I would run with the wrench to that one, and then maybe I would have a half hour of silence, silence but for the rain hitting the glass, during which I would sit on the only chair left in the apartment, clutching the little special wrench, waiting to spring into action. For a while, at least, it seemed that all there was of the world was that long rain and the need to keep the bolts fastened. When the weather finally cleared (it had been the end of a hurricane up from the south), I went out for a walk. Everything was flooded, and there was a feeling of calm from all that still, reflecting water. I walked for a long time, six or seven hours at least, through neighborhoods that I had never been to before and have never been back to since. By the time I got home I was exhausted, but I felt that I had purged myself of something, and though I was still sad I was also, in a way, sick of R.

Not long after that his grand piano was lowered through the window, the same way it had come in. It was the last of his possessions to go, and as long

tration by Andrea Ventura

[illegible] there, it was as if R hadn't really left. Both shared the [illegible] silent and imposing. In the weeks that I lived alone with the piano, before they came to take it away, I would sometimes pat [illegible] passed, in just the same way that I had patted R. The only difference is that R always did, eventually, speak. Softly, it's true, in contradiction with the words themselves, which often contained a trapdoor through which you might fall, if you weren't careful, and break a leg.

A few days later an old friend of mine named Paul Alpers called to tell me about a dream he'd had. In it he and the great poet César Vallejo were at a house in the country that had belonged to Vallejo's family since he was a child. It was empty, and all the walls were painted a bluish white. The whole effect was very peaceful, Paul said, and in the dream he thought Vallejo lucky to be able to go to such a place to work. This looks like the holding place before the afterlife, Paul told him. Vallejo didn't hear him, and he had to repeat himself twice. Finally the poet (who in real life died at forty-six, penniless, in a rainstorm, just as he had predicted, in Paris) understood and nodded. Before they entered the house he'd told Paul a story about his uncle and how the uncle used to dip his fingers in the mud to make a mark on Vallejo's forehead—something to do with Ash Wednesday. And then, Vallejo said (said Paul), he would do something I never understood. To illustrate, Vallejo dipped his two fingers in the mud and drew a mustache across Paul's upper lip. They both laughed. Throughout the dream, Paul said, most striking was the complicity between them, as if they had known each other many years.

Naturally Paul had thought of me when he'd woken up, because when we were sophomores in college, or I was a sophomore and Paul was a junior, we'd met in a seminar on avant-garde poets taught by the son of a tobacco farmer who had grown up, unpredictably, to be a brilliant, if somewhat elusive, professor of Spanish and Italian literature. We'd become friends because we always agreed with each other in class, while everyone else disagreed with us, more and more vehemently as the semester progressed, and with time a bunkered alliance had formed between Paul and me that after all these years (seven) could still be unfolded and inflated instantly. He asked how I was, alluding to the breakup, which someone must have told him about. I said I was okay except that I thought maybe my hair was falling out. I also told him that along with the piano, the sofa, chairs, bed, and even the silverware had gone with R, since when I met him I'd been living more or less out of a suitcase, whereas he had been like a sitting Buddha surrounded by all of the furniture he'd inherited from his mother. Paul said he thought he might know someone, a poet who was a friend of a friend's, who was going back to Chile and might be getting rid of his furniture. A phone call was made, and it was confirmed that the poet, Daniel Varsky, did indeed have some items he didn't know what to do with, not wanting to sell them in case he changed his mind and decided to return to New York. Paul gave me his number and said Daniel Varsky was expecting me to get in touch. I put off making the call for a few days, mostly because there was something awkward about asking a stranger for his furniture, even if the way had already been paved, and also because in the month since R and all of his many belongings had gone I'd become accustomed to a spare existence. Problems only arose when someone else came over and I would see, reflected in the look on my guest's face, that from the outside the conditions, my conditions, appeared sad and pathetic.

When I finally called Daniel Varsky he picked up after one ring. There was a cautiousness in that initial greeting, before he knew who it was on the other end, that I later came to associate with Daniel Varsky, and with Chileans, few as I've met, in general. It took a minute for him to sort out who I was, a minute for the light to go on revealing me as a friend of a friend's and not some loopy woman calling — about his furniture? she'd he[illegible] wanted to get rid of it? or just[illegible] out on loan? — a minute in w[illegible] considered apologizing, hang[illegible] and carrying on as I had been[illegible] just a mattress, plastic utensi[illegible] the one chair. But once the lig[illegible] gone on (Ah-hah! Of course! [illegible] It's all waiting right here for y[illegible] voice softened and became lo[illegible] the same time, giving way to [illegible] pansiveness that I also came t[illegible] ciate with Daniel Varsky and, [illegible] tension, everyone who hails [illegible] that dagger pointing at Anta[illegible] as Henry Kissinger once called [illegible]

He lived all the way uptow[illegible] the corner of 101st Street and [illegible] tral Park West. On the w[illegible] stopped to visit my grandm[illegible] who lived in a nursing hon[illegible] West End Avenue. She no l[illegible] recognized me, but once I'd g[illegible] over the sadness of this I found[illegible] self able to enjoy being with he[illegible] normally sat and discussed[illegible] weather from eight or nine diff[illegible] angles, before moving on t[illegible] grandfather, who a decade aft[illegible] death continued to be a subje[illegible] fascination to her, as if with [illegible] year of his absence his life, or [illegible] life together, became more [illegible] enigma to her. She liked to sit o[illegible] sofa marveling at the lobby (A[illegible] this belongs to me? she'd periodi[illegible] ask, waving in a gesture that to[illegible] the whole place) and wearing a[illegible] her jewelry at once. Whenev[illegible] came, I brought her a chocolate [illegible] ka from Zabar's. She always ate a[illegible] tle out of politeness, and the [illegible] would flake onto her lap and stic[illegible] her lips, and after I left I think[illegible] gave the rest awa[illegible] the nurses.

When I got to 101st Str[illegible] Daniel Varsky buzzed me in. A[illegible] waited for the elevator in the di[illegible] lobby it occurred to me that I m[illegible] not like his furniture, that it mi[illegible] be dark or otherwise oppressive, [illegible] that it would be too late to back [illegible] gracefully. But on the contra[illegible] when he opened the door my f[illegible] impression was of light, so much[illegible] that I had to squint, and for a m[illegible] ment I couldn't see his face beca[illegible] it was in silhouette. There was a[illegible]

ıell of something cooking, later turned out to be an egg- lish he'd learned to make in Once my eyes adjusted I was ed to find that Daniel Varsky ung. I'd expected someone since Paul had said his friend poet, and though we both poetry, or tried to write it, we a point of never referring to es as poets, whom we consid- nly those whose work had dged by those in a position of ity to be worthy of publica- ıot just in an obscure journal but in an actual book that be purchased in a bookstore. ospect this turns out to have a very narrow, not to mention ntional, definition of a poet, ough Paul and I and others we prided ourselves on our literary tication, in those days we were alking around with our ambi- ntact, and in certain ways it d us.

niel was twenty-four, a year er than I, and though he hadn't ıblished a book of poems he d to have spent his time better, re imaginatively, or maybe what be said is that he felt a pressure places, meet people, and experi- hings that whenever I have en- ered it in someone has always me envious. He had traveled for ıst four years, living in different , on the floors of people he met the way, and sometimes apart- s of his own when he could con- his mother or maybe it was his mother to wire him money, but ıt last he was going home to take ace alongside the friends he had n up with who were fighting to a beautiful world, or at least so- m in Chile.

ıe eggplant was ready, and while el set the table he told me to around at the furniture. The ment was small, but there was a south-facing window through h all the light came. The most ng thing about the place was the —papers all over the floor, some ıem torn, coffee-stained Styro- ı cups, notebooks, plastic bags, ıp rubber shoes, dirty socks, rds missing their sleeves. Any- else would have felt compelled to say, Excuse the mess, or joked about a herd of wild pigs passing through, but Daniel didn't mention the state of the apartment at all. The only more or less empty surface was the walls, bare aside from a few maps he'd tacked up of the cities he had lived in—Jerusalem, Berlin, Mexico City, Barcelona—and on certain avenues, corners, and squares he had scribbled notes that I didn't immediately understand because they were in Spanish, and it would have seemed rude to have gone up and tried, while my host and benefactor set down the silverware, to decipher them. So I turned my attention to the furniture, or what I could see of it under the mess—a sofa, a wooden desk with lots of drawers, some big and some small, so small you would have to be ingenious to think of what to put in them, a pair of bookshelves crammed with volumes in Spanish, French, and English, and, possibly the nicest piece, a kind of chest or trunk with iron braces that looked like it had been rescued from a sunken ship, which had been put to use as a coffee table. He must have acquired everything secondhand, none of it looked new, but all the pieces shared a kind of sympathy, and the fact that they were suffocating under papers and books made them more attractive rather than less. Suddenly I felt awash in gratitude to their owner, as if he were handing down to me not just some wood and upholstery but the chance at a new life, leaving it up to me to rise to the occasion. I'm embarrassed to say that my eyes actually filled with tears, though as is so often the case the tears sprang from older, more obscure regrets I had delayed thinking about, which the gift, or loan, of a stranger's furniture had somehow unsettled.

We must have talked for seven or eight hours at least. Maybe more. It turned out that we both loved Rilke, even if there was evidence that as a person he was selfish, hysterical, and even a jerk, because (we agreed) the personality and life of the poet shouldn't be considered when judging his or her work. We also liked Auden, though I liked him more—both more than Daniel and more than I do now that I'm older, or one might even say old—and neither of us cared much for

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Yeats, but both felt secretly guilty about this, in case it suggested some sort of personal failure at the level where poetry lives and matters. The only moment of disharmony came when I raised the subject of Neruda, the one Chilean poet I knew, to which Daniel responded with a flash of anger. Why is it, he asked, that wherever a Chilean goes in the world, Neruda and his fucking seashells have already been there and set up a monopoly? He held my gaze, waiting for me to counter him, and as he did I got the feeling that where he came from it was commonplace to talk as we were talking, and even to argue about poetry to the point of inevitable violence, and for a moment I felt brushed by loneliness. Just a moment, though, and then I jumped to apologize, and swore up and down to read the abbreviated list of great Chilean poets he scribbled on the back of a paper bag (at the top of which, in capital letters overshadowing the rest, was Nicanor Parra), and also to never again raise the ugly head of Neruda, either in his presence or anyone else's.

We talked then of Polish poetry, of Russian poetry, of Turkish and Greek and Argentine poetry, of Sappho and the lost notebooks of Pasternak, of the death of Ungaretti, the suicide of Weldon Kees, and the disappearance of Arthur Cravan, who Daniel Varsky claimed was still alive, cared for by the whores of Mexico City. Sometimes, in the dip or hollow between one rambling sentence and the next, a dark cloud would cross his face, hesitate for a moment as if it might stay, and then slide past, dissolving toward the edges of the room, and at those moments I almost felt I should turn away, since though we talked a lot about poetry we had not yet talked much about ourselves.

At a certain point Daniel jumped up and went rifling through the desk with all the drawers, opening some and closing others, in search of a cycle of poems he'd written. It was called Forget Everything I Ever Said, or something like that, and he had translated it himself. He cleared his voice and began to read aloud in a voice that coming from anyone else might have seemed affected or over-the-top, touched as it was with a faint tremo-

lo, but in Daniel seemed com
natural. He didn't apologize
behind the pages. Just the o
He straightened up like a pole,
were borrowing energy from t
em, and looked up frequently,
quently that I began to suspect
had memorized what he'd wri
was at one of these moments,
met eye-to-eye across a word,
realized he was actually quite
looking. He had a big nose,
Chilean-Jewish nose, and big
with skinny fingers, and big
don't know about the toes), but
was also something delicate
him, something to do with hi
eyelashes or his bones. The poe
good, not great but good, or ma
was even great, it was hard t
without being able to read it n
It seemed to be about a girl wh
broken his heart, though it coul
as easily have been about a d
even a weasel; halfway through
lost and started to think first
Athens, where I had once been
then about how R always used to
his narrow feet before he got int
because the floor of our apart
was dirty, and though he never
me to wash mine it was implicit,
if I hadn't the sheets would have
ten dirty, making his own was
pointless. I didn't like sitting o
edge of the tub or standing at the
with one knee to my ear, watc
the black dirt swirl in the white p
lain, but it was one of those coun
things one does in life to avoid a
gument, and now the thought
made me want to laugh or cry or
sibly choke, one of the three, a
the entire subject of R.

By then Daniel Varsky's apartm
had gotten dim and aquatic, the
having gone down behind a build
and the shadows that had been hi
behind everything began to creep
I remember there were some very l
books on his shelf, fine books w
tall cloth spines. I don't remem
any of their titles, perhaps they w
a set, but they seemed somehow
be in collusion with the darken
hour. It was as if the walls of his ap
ment were suddenly carpeted like
walls of a movie theater to keep
sound from getting out, or ot
sounds from getting in, and ins

k, in what light there was, we
th the audience and the pic-
it was like we alone had been
se from the island and were
ifting in uncharted waters,
aters of unknowable depth. I
nsidered attractive in those
me people even called me
il, though my skin was never
nd it was this that I noticed
looked in the mirror, this and
perturbed look, a slight wrin-
f the forehead that I hadn't
I was doing. But before I was
and while I was with him too,
ere plenty of men who made
they would've liked to go
with me, either for a night or
and as Daniel and I got up
ved, swam would be a better
o the living room, I wondered
r he was one of them.
nk it was then that he told me
sk had been used, briefly, by
I didn't know if he was joking
as it seemed highly improbable
is young traveler from Chile
ave gotten hold of such a valu-
m, but I decided to assume that
serious so as not to risk of-
g someone who had shown me
ndness. When I asked how he
tten it, he shrugged and said
bought it, but did not elabo-
thought he was going to say,
ow I am giving it to you, but he
he just gave one of the legs a lit-
k, not a violent one but a gen-
tle one, full of respect, and
kept walking.

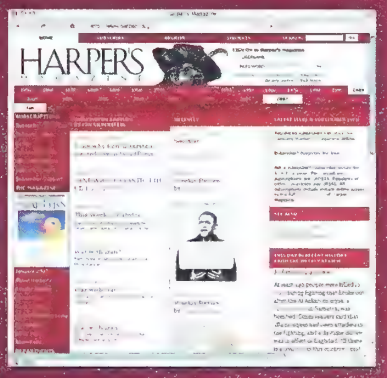
ither then or later we kissed, but
t happened it was anticlimactic.
n't that the kiss was bad. In many
was a good kiss, even a passion-
e. But if we were kissing then we
n't talk, and the more we talked
re there was to say. The kiss was
note of punctuation in our long
rsation, a parenthetical remark
in order to assure each other of a
felt agreement, a mutual offer
npanionship, which is so much
rare than sexual passion or even
His lips were bigger than I ex-
l, not big on his face but big when
d my eyes and they touched mine,
r a split second I felt as if they
smothering me. More than likely
just that I was so used to R's lips,
thin non-Semitic lips that often turned blue in the cold. With one hand Daniel Varsky squeezed my thigh, and I touched his hair, which smelled like a dirty river. I think by then we'd arrived, or were about to arrive, at the cesspool of politics, and at first angrily, then almost on the edge of tears, Daniel Varsky railed against Nixon and Kissinger and their sanctions and ruthless machinations that were, he said, trying to strangle all that was new and young and beautiful in Chile, all the hope that had swept the doctor Allende into Moneda Palace. Workers' wages up by 50 percent, he said, and all these pigs care about is their copper and their multinationals! Just the thought of a democratically elected Marxist president makes them shit in their pants! Why don't they just leave us alone and let us get on with our lives, he said, and for a minute his look was almost pleading or imploring, as if I somehow held sway with the shady characters at the helm of that dark ship, the dark ship of my country. I didn't know much about what was happening in Chile, at least not then, not yet. Much later, years later, after I got a phone call from Paul Alpers saying that Daniel Varsky had been taken in the middle of the night by Manuel Contreras's secret police, I knew. But in the spring of 1972, sitting in his apartment on 101st Street in the last of the evening light, while General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte was still the demure, groveling army chief of staff who tried to get his friends' children to call him Tata, I didn't know much.

What's strange is that I don't remember how the night (by then it was already night, an enormous New York City night) ended. Obviously we must have said goodbye, after which I left his apartment, or maybe we left together and he walked me to the subway or hailed me a cab, since in those days the neighborhood, or the city in general, wasn't exactly safe. I just don't have any recollection of it. A few weeks later a moving truck arrived at my apartment and unloaded the furniture, though someone else must have arranged it, because by that time Daniel Varsky had already gone home to Chile.

Three or maybe even four years passed. In the beginning I used to get

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postcards—first from Santiago, then Concepción, and then more obscure places, towns on the edge of the Atacama, though in the end the postmarks all said Iquique. At first they were warm and even jovial: Everything is fine. I'm thinking of joining the Chilean Speleological Society, but don't worry, it won't interfere with my poetry, if anything the two pursuits are complementary. I may have a chance to attend a mathematics lecture by Parra. The political situation is going to hell, if I don't join the Speleological Society I'm going to join the MIR. Take good care of Lorca's desk, one day I'll be back for it. Besos, D.V. After the coup they became somber, and then they became cryptic, and then, about six months before I heard he'd disappeared, the postcards stopped coming altogether. I kept them all in one of the drawers of his desk. I didn't write back, because there was no address to write back to. In those years I was still writing poetry, and I wrote a few poems addressed, or dedicated, to Daniel Varsky. My grandmother died and was buried too far out in the suburbs for anyone to visit. I went out with a number of men, moved apartments twice, and wrote my first novel at Daniel Varsky's desk. Sometimes I forgot about him for months at a time. I don't know if I knew about Villa Grimaldi yet, almost certainly I hadn't heard of 38 Calle Londres, or Cuatro Alamos, or the Discoteca also known as Venda Sexy because of the sexual atrocities performed there and the loud music the torturers favored, but whatever the case I knew enough that at other times, having fallen asleep on Daniel's sofa as I often did, I had nightmares about what they did to him. Sometimes I would look around at his furniture, the sofa, desk, coffee table, bookshelves, and chairs, and be filled with a crushing despair, and sometimes just an oblique sadness, and sometimes I would look at it all and become convinced that it amounted to a riddle, a riddle he had left me that I was supposed to crack.

Many years have passed since then. I was married for a while, but now I live alone again, though not unhappily. There are moments when a kind of clarity comes over you, and suddenly you can see through walls to another dimension that you'd forgotten or chosen to ignore in order to continue living with the various illusions that make life, particularly life with other people, possible. And that's where I am now, or where I have arrived. Generally I don't think about Daniel Varsky, or very rarely, though I am still in possession of his bookshelves, his desk, and the trunk of a Spanish galleon or the ship that met an accident on the high seas, now quaintly used as a coffee table. The sofa began to rot, I don't remember exactly when, but it began to rot, and I had to throw it away. In certain ways I would be glad to be rid of the rest too. It reminds me, when I am in a certain mood, of things I would rather forget. For example, sometimes I am asked by the occasional journalist who wishes to interview me why I stopped writing poetry. Either I say that the poetry I wrote wasn't any good, perhaps it was even terrible, or I say that a poem has the potential for perfection and this possibility finally silenced me, or sometimes I say that I felt trapped in the poems I tried to write, which is like saying one feels trapped in the universe, or trapped by the inevitability of death, but the truth of why I stopped writing poetry is not any of these, not nearly, not exactly. The truth is that if I could explain why I stopped writing poetry then I might write it again. What I am saying is that Daniel Varsky's desk, which became my desk, my desk of now more than thirty years, reminds me of these things. I've always considered myself only a temporary guardian and had assumed a day would come, after which, albeit with mixed feelings, I would be relieved of my responsibility, the responsibility of living with and watching over the furniture of my friend, the dead poet Daniel Varsky, and that from then on I would be free to move as I wished, possibly even to another country. It isn't exactly that the furniture has kept me in New York, but if pressed I have to admit that this is the excuse I've used to myself for not leaving all these years, long after it became clear that the city had nothing left for me.

From time to time, I have met people, mostly Chileans, who knew or had heard of Daniel Varsky. For a short time after his death [illegible] tation grew, and he was [illegible] among the martyred poets [illegible] by Pinochet. Pinochet w[illegible] said that not a leaf fell in C[illegible] he didn't know about. But [illegible] the ones that tortured a[illegible] Daniel Varsky had never [illegible] poetry; it's possible they did[illegible] know that he wrote poetry [illegible] few years after he disappear[illegible] the help of Paul Alpers, I wo[illegible] ters to a few of Daniel's frie[illegible] ing if they had any poem[illegible] that they could send to m[illegible] the idea that I could get th[illegible] lished somewhere as a [illegible] memorial to him. But I r[illegible] only one letter back, a sh[illegible] from an old school friend sa[illegible] didn't have anything. I put i[illegible] drawer with Daniel's post[illegible] must still be there, though I [illegible] looked. For a while I even t[illegible] of writing to his mother, but [illegible] end I never did.

There's one thing I forgot to [illegible] about the desk. Among the[illegible] drawers, some being very sm[illegible] said, and some of average siz[illegible] is also one with a small cyli[illegible] lock. If you were sitting at t[illegible] the lock would be located just [illegible] your right knee. The drawer h[illegible] locked for as long as I can rem[illegible] and though I've looked many [illegible] I've never found the key. Oft[illegible] wished it were a different draw[illegible] was locked, since the one on t[illegible] right is the most practical, and [illegible] ever I go to look for someth[illegible] one of the many drawers, I alw[illegible] stinctively reach for it first, a[illegible] ing a fleeting unhappiness, a k[illegible] orphaned feeling that I kno[illegible] nothing to do with the draw[illegible] that has somehow come to live [illegible] For some reason I always ass[illegible] that the drawer contained l[illegible] from the girl in the poem D[illegible] Varsky once read to me, or if n[illegible] then someone like her. But as I [illegible] this it occurs to me that I don't [illegible] where I ever got that idea. In f[illegible] have no memory of whether the [illegible] arrived to me with the drawer lo[illegible] It's possible that I unknowi[illegible] pushed in the cylindrical lock [illegible] ago, and that whatever is in ther[illegible] longs to me.



EW BOOKS

ohn Leonard

ke the phantom of the opera r a bat out of hell, the history f the Middle East comes vault- reling, hurling, and howling e earth's bowels, bloody and sive, written in water, rock, nd fire. Before Jacob, Esau, Jesus, Herod, Saladin, the Cru- the Ottomans, the British, or rn Gang, before Arafat and , there was a supercontinent of rs and volcanoes, Nubian sand- nd early mammals. Then a clash onic plates collapsed the land long a "strike-slip fault" run- om the mountains of Anatolia Indian Ocean and the Gulf of creating the Great Rift Valley Dead Sea Transform that be- he corridor through which pre- ic humankind passed out of to Asia and Europe, making nd war.

A CRACK IN THE EARTH: A NEY UP ISRAEL'S VALLEY (Farrar, and Giroux, $23), usalem-based jour- nd translator Haim nan explores as of this road as he ven a couple of lim- ns. Even if he want- he couldn't go to on or Syria because re still at war with Besides, he has to me for Shabbas. But otherwise d him in the enigmatic desert, g at standing stones, sunken al- late groves, burial mounds, sul- sts, magnesium ponds, mountains of salt, and Masada, while reminding himself and his readers that "the landscape we see before us is never as vivid, or as in need of words, as the landscape in our minds."



Even so, in the company (and often the jeeps) of archaeologists, geologists, sociologists, cartographers, geographers, geomorphologists, and border scholars, Watzman finds the words to dress this desert in a gauze of theory and pantaloons of fact. Jews and Arabs have been killing each other for only a century or so; the Great Rift Valley goes back millions of years. For every trace of cave art, elephant hunt, porphyry, and quartz, of white chalk, snail shells, pigeon eggs, and oryxes, of jujubes, artichokes, marl, and gorge—for every hallucinatory vision of the Mount of Olives and Rachel's Tomb; of Roman forts, Crusader castles, and Muslim mosques; of Pliny the Elder, Philo of Alexandria, and Flavius Josephus; of "ritual immersion," "messianic theology," and the "formless . . . aniconic god"—why must there also be these interrupting tanks, planes, demolished villages, suicide bombers, toxic mud, roadblocks, and land mines?

Much as Watzman would like to dream the impossibly distant deep-time past, much as he would rather think about socialists, kibbutzim, and utopia, he is brought up abruptly short, again and again, by his homeland's hateful modern indulgence of Bronze Age identity politics. He has a hard time even talking to a Palestinian, as if Palestinians were remnants of some antediluvian proto-species prior to language. Yet all this hate seems so much scribble, a kind of graffiti, on the desert rock. Come the heavy rains, as Watzman scruples to point out, "the mosaic of the landscape has been flushed. There are no longer any facts on the ground."

Sylvain Cypel, a senior editor of *Le Monde* who lived in Israel for twelve years and has reported from it for twenty-five, whose own father was a committed Zionist, who speaks Hebrew but not Arabic, devotes a dozen chapters of [illegible] SOCIETY AT AN IMPASSE (Other Press, $16.95) to the Jewish state and only two to stateless Palestine. Yes, we are told, both Jews and Palestinians have written narratives of victimization and denial that are mutually contradictory, equally racist, and foist upon

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[illegible] Oz's "a false identity." But his heart and his despair [illegible] might have been. *Walled* ends up disenthralling us of Israeli fabulations about 1948, during which it seems they did [illegible] their best to expel those Arabs they didn't massacre, and about 1967, after which preemptive strike they could hardly wait to launch a colonial project of land grab, resettlement, and what the Israeli novelist David Grossman has characterized as "the cult of force."

This business requires Cypel to reread Israel's historians and its textbooks, to rethink Oslo, Camp David, and both intifadas, and to reopen the old files on "Orientalism," anti-Semitism, "ethnicism," the clueless Yasir Arafat, the cunning Ariel Sharon, the "mystical coarseness" of Gush Emunim, the Gaza withdrawal, the Hamas victory, and those hundreds of thousands of *yordim*—Israelis who, for whatever reason, have left Israel to live permanently somewhere else. No one escapes this scourge, though Cypel is more sad than savage. However much he hopes for something like South Africa's noble experiment in Truth and Reconciliation, "As long as Israel does not own up to the constitutive facts of its own existence and those of its Palestinian partner, beginning with the foundational fact that Israel in effect created a nation of refugees, no real reconciliation will occur, either with that nation or with the Arab world."

To these bleak indictments, add Eyal Weizman's HOLLOW LAND: ISRAEL'S ARCHITECTURE OF OCCUPATION (Verso, $34.95). Weizman co-edited an earlier volume from Verso, *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*, an anthology of essays, photographs, and maps that was originally intended as a catalogue for an exhibition on the abuse of architecture for military and political purposes. (The exhibition for the 2002 Berlin Congress of the Union Internationale des Architectes was canceled by the Israel Association of United Architects, and the catalogue was then censored.) *Hollow Land* is a passionate jeremiad on many of the same subjects, concentrating on what Israel has built and destroyed in the post-1967 occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza and exactly how the government and courts have let the military and settlers get away with it. Thus, to those transit camps, development towns, agrarian outposts, garden suburbs, and "violent dispossessions" designed to stabilize the 1949 armistice lines, a garrison state has added a mix of roadblocks, checkpoints, bridgeheads, partitions, military bases, "sterile areas," "security zones," mobile homes, strategic-summit settlements, and *Ta'ozim* ("strongpoints"). Just don't call them "colonies."

Weizman quotes the former Israeli minister of defense, Moshe Dayan, immediately after the 1967 war, proposing to build on the central mountain range of the West Bank "fists of Jewish settlements" that would "dismember [Palestinian] continuity." This should have been illegal. We are talking about an occupied territory that Israel must relinquish if there is ever to be peace; every bit of diplomatic bargaining during the last forty years has acknowledged that necessity. And yet, as Weizman spells it out:

> In May 1984, at the end of the Likud government's second term in office, 35,000 settlers were living in 102 settlements in the West Bank. By 1992, when Likud lost power to Labor and the Oslo process began, about 100,000 people occupied 123 settlements. In the following decade, under the Oslo process, although the number of settlements did not increase, each settlement became much more densely populated, with the population doubling to about 200,000. Despite the violence of the second Intifada, the growth in the number of settlers continued, especially in the ultra-Orthodox settlements, increasing the number of settlers by 15.3 per cent in the first four years of the conflict, so that the total number of West Bank settlers (excluding Jerusalem) had reached 268,000 inhabitants in 2006.



Meanwhile, Israel has [illegible] best to turn the Palestini[illegible] ghosts. Weizman uses t[illegible] dread word, "apartheid," fo[illegible] Jimmy Carter has been tho[illegible] points as well to what he[illegible] "politics of verticality," acc[illegible] which, even if Israel ever de[illegible] draw from the West Bank [illegible] still control the airspace al[illegible] heads of the Palestinians [illegible] vast water aquifer" below th[illegible] Bridges, tunnels, and eleva[illegible] pass roads allow the soldiers, [illegible] tlers, and anybody doing b[illegible] with them to whiz from or [illegible] ened enclave to another [illegible] ever being inconvenien[illegible] speakers of Arabic. There is [illegible] dition, a politics of water, [illegible] of money, of sewage, and o[illegible] tion, plus annexation and ex[illegible] ation and eviction; and a ps[illegible] gy of ramparts, bunkers, an[illegible] and what might be called a p[illegible] tive archaeology that conve[illegible] discovers a "footprint" of hi[illegible] or biblical "authenticity" wh[illegible] it casts its eager eyes, thus [illegible] up to a needy nation evide[illegible] ancient Jewish ownership, a [illegible] perpetuity to the Promised [illegible] not to mention "an alibi fo[illegible] colonization that could be ar[illegible] a return to sacred patrimony."

So the Hollow Land is Wall[illegible] Cracked. I am aware that a n[illegible] of good nove[illegible] be publishe[illegible] month, a[illegible] should hav[illegible] viewed a co[illegible] But they will[illegible] to wait. I used[illegible] a blue-eyed [illegible] boy Zionist m[illegible] reading Herz[illegible] Bakunin, lon[illegible] for an heroic tan and the co[illegible] tivization of children and agricu[illegible] The revanchist "cult of force" i[illegible] what any of us ever wanted. A[illegible] raeli novelist, Amos Oz, should[illegible] haps be permitted the last word, [illegible] *The Slopes of Lebanon*: "Hebron [illegible] Nablus will not be ours wheth[illegible] not the prophets once walked t[illegible] whether or not the stones our a[illegible] tors liked to throw at the prop[illegible] still lie scattered there."

"Across from the Wailing Wall and the Dome of the El Aqsa Mosque" © Marc Riboud/Magnum [illegible]

TTLE BIG WARS

metamorphosis of conflict

ohn Gray

d in this essay:

anging Face of War: Lessons of Combat from the Marne to Iraq, by Martin Creveld. Ballantine Books. 320 pages. $25.95.
r of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West, by Ferguson. The Penguin Press. 808 pages. $35.
lity of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World, by General Rupert h. Alfred A. Knopf. 430 pages. $30.



aph from Baghdad © AP Images/Karim Kadim

he disaster that has ensued in the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq is commonly ed to be the result of mistakes itted by the Bush Administra- only sufficient thought had been o post-invasion planning, regime e would have been successful; an can-style democracy would have installed, and the anarchy that revails in the country would have been avoided. Such is the conventional wisdom, which appeals not only to the neoconservative architects of the war but also to those liberals who supported military intervention on humanitarian grounds, and indeed, it cannot be denied that some of the administration's decisions were grotesquely ill judged. Disbanding the Iraqi army and purging institutions of supporters of the old regime left Iraq without a functioning state; deprived of their positions and incomes, many of those former soldiers were primed to take up armed resistance. In this and other instances, the Bush Administration's policies served only to aggravate the difficulties faced by their forces in the four years since the president declared an end to major combat operations.

Yet if these follies had been avoided, would the final outcome have been any different? Every attempted occupation of a non-Western country by a Western state since the Second World War has ended in failure. The French were driven out of Algeria, despite the fact that the *métropole* had an army of half a million men stationed in the country and prosecuted the war with the utmost ruthlessness. Soviet occupying forces in Afghanistan waged a war of even greater ferocity for nearly a decade and were also expelled. These examples suggest that no surge in troops can forestall a similar outcome in Iraq. Even if American forces had been deployed in larger numbers from the start, they would have faced a type of warfare in which conventional military superiority has never produced victory.

Over the past half-century, a new kind of armed conflict has replaced industrial-style warfare between state-controlled armies. In unconventional warfare, forces that are weaker in terms of technology and resources have the upper hand. The guerrilla warriors of the last fifty years may have been lightly armed and often small in numbers, but they were able to prevail against the vastly greater military force of the occupying powers. There has been a metamorphosis in the nature of war, and it is only to be expected that it should have generated a sizable literature that is keenly studied in military colleges throughout the world.

Nevertheless, according to the Israeli military strategist Martin van Creveld, this huge body of work is practically useless. "Starting at least as early as the 1950s, the literature on counter-insurgency is so enormous that, had it been put aboard the Titanic, it would have sunk the ship without any help from the iceberg," he writes in *The Changing Face*

Gray is Professor of European at the London School of Economics. his next book, Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia, *published in October by Farrar, and Giroux.*

written by the losers." Creveld has a well-earned reputation for iconoclasm, and his new book fits the pioneering approach presented in earlier volumes such as *The Transformation of War* (1991) and *The Rise and Decline of the State* (1999). In these and other books, Creveld posits that the traditional model of war no longer applies in a time when the modern state is losing its monopoly on force. Nuclear-armed states may be insulated against conventional attack by the armies of other states, but—as Israel has long known and as America learned on 9/11—nuclear powers remain vulnerable to the techniques of irregular warfare, including the spectacular violence of suicide terrorism.

In *The Changing Face of War*, Creveld argues that despite the record of nearly universal failure, there are in fact workable strategies in counterinsurgency warfare. Citing Henry Kissinger's observation that the forces of order lose so long as they do not win, whereas insurgents win so long as they do not lose, he presents two of the very few campaigns that have succeeded: President Hafez Assad's suppression of an Islamist revolt in Syria in 1982 and the British campaign mounted from 1972 onward in Northern Ireland. Assad crushed the Islamist revolt, which at the time threatened not only his regime but also his life, by razing the city of Hama—an operation that included the destruction of the city's mosque and the killing of between ten and twenty-five thousand of its inhabitants. By contrast, after an initial hard-line response that began in 1969 and ended with thirteen people being killed by British troops in Londonderry in 1972, the British focused their efforts on avoiding any large-scale use of force.

Unlike President Bush in 2001, the British did not declare war; terrorism was treated as a criminal act, one that would be addressed mainly by the police. Not once did British forces inflict collective punishment by blowing up houses or destroying neighborhoods, and, after the events on Bloody Sunday in Londonderry, they never fired indiscriminately into crowds. As Creveld acknowledges, this does not mean that British operations "always smelled of rosewater," but despite the terrorist assassination of a member of the royal family and an attempt to decapitate the entire Thatcher government in Brighton in 1981, "on the whole, the British played by the rules." Of the three thousand people who were killed in the conflict in Northern Ireland up to the mid-nineties, a thousand were British soldiers. Seventeen hundred were civilians, and no more than three hundred were terrorists.

The strategy worked, in the sense that Irish terrorism has ceased to be a major threat in Northern Ireland and on the British mainland. But what can be learned from this success? It seems more than doubtful that similar methods could be applied in conditions of the sort that exist in Iraq—if only because Creveld's account leaves out half of the strategy that the British deployed. Alongside the decision to treat terrorist violence as a criminal matter, there was a political strategy, pursued by successive British governments over a period of thirty years, that managed to bring terrorist organizations into the democratic process. Catholic nationalists and Protestant groups were encouraged to reach an agreement that allowed a form of power-sharing in the province. A two-pronged strategy of this kind can succeed only if the conditions of a political settlement are present. In Iraq, however, regime change has demolished the state, so that the most important precondition for a political settlement—an effective government—no longer exists. The only region that has a properly functioning government is the Kurdish zone, which has, in effect, seceded from the country. Nothing resembling the British strategy in Northern Ireland is possible under these circumstances.

At the same time, a Syrian-style strategy is no more practicable. Merciless repression of the sort Assad employed is morally unacceptable for liberal democracies; neither is it realistic in post-invasion Iraq. The machinery is lacking. The c trapped in a war of all ag without the deus ex mach ruthless dictator. Saddam—l tyrant who brutally repre lamist forces—is gone. It a style political solution is im so, too, is a Syrian-style str force; both strategies require and the Iraqi state has b stroyed by regime change.

From its founding by the to its destruction as a the American-led invas state of Iraq was a construct of It was cobbled together after World War, when three prov the Ottoman Empire were gra the British by the League of N The British wanted to avoid th gence of a Shia-dominated the regime, which they perceive be the result of democratic they created Iraq as a monarch 1920s; it became a republic i when the king was overthrow Baathist Party took over ten ye er, and Saddam emerged as dic 1979. Like other forms of imperi er, the administration of Iraq ploitative, and during Sadda the regime was highly repressi the state of Iraq stood in the wa all-out conflict between the co diverse communities that is un today. The mayhem that has fo the state's demise illustrates a th Niall Ferguson's *War of the Wo*

Ferguson's starting point sheer scale of twentieth-centu lence: "Significantly larger pe ages of the world's populatio killed in the two world war dominated the century tha been killed in any conflict of parable geopolitical magnit The extreme violence of th century did not occur only i fare between states; it also oc within states, as demonstrat the Nazi campaign of extermi against Jews, the unique hor which Ferguson illuminates. H gument is summarized at the e the book:

> It was not by chance that the killing fields of the mid-twe century were in places like P

kraine, the Balkans and Man-
; while extreme violence in the
twentieth century shifted to
widely dispersed locations, from
mala to Cambodia, from Ango-
Bangladesh, from Bosnia to
da and, most recently, the Dar-
ion of Sudan. Time and again it
en in the wake of the decline of
es, in contested borderlands or
wer vacuums, that the opportu-
s have arisen for genocidal
es and policies. Ethnic conflu-
economic volatility and empires
e wane; such was and remains
tal formula.

nic confluence, economic
ity and empires on the
—it is an arresting formula,
ose originality comes partly
hat it leaves out. In Fergu-
iew, none of the factors that
ally cited adequately explain
reme violence of the twenti-
ıtury. He dismisses the idea
onomic collapse (as distinct
rge-scale fluctuations in eco-
activity) triggered much of
odletting of the last century,
was a time of economic
ss during which living stan-
ose rapidly in many parts of
orld. Nor did violence erupt
n absence of democracy: the
of democratization that took
n the 1920s, 1960s, and 1980s
ollowed by increases in the
ers of civil wars and wars of
ion. Rising prosperity and
pread of democracy need
ring peace and harmony in
vake.

guson's claim that ethnic con-
economic volatility, and de-
g empires produced the ex-
violence of the twentieth
ry may be powerfully present-
ıt his formula cannot explain
of the worst episodes of mass
r. Much of the most extreme
ıce was not, in fact, ethnic in
, nor did it target specific eth-
oups. Focusing on ethnicity as
ey factor, Ferguson cannot ac-
for most of the killing that oc-
l in totalitarian regimes, which
t in the Nazi case were not in-
ıtly genocidal. Ferguson notes
genocide predated totalitarian-
which is true enough, and
ı deported entire peoples, with
results that in some cases could be described as akin to genocide; but most of the millions who perished in the Stalinist Soviet Union did so in the Gulag or as a result of forcible agricultural collectivization. Although most were ethnic Russians, their deaths were not caused by ethnic conflicts. They were products of a system, founded by Lenin, that used terror as an instrument of social engineering. Ferguson knows this: "The empire established by Lenin and his confederates was the first to be based on terror itself since the short-lived tyranny of the Jacobins in revolutionary France." Nevertheless, invoking a venerable cliché of Western historical scholarship, he goes on to describe Stalin's regime as "Asiatic"—a term that explains very little. He also notes that more people perished as a result of Mao's tyranny in China than under the Nazis, though the tens of millions who perished in Maoist China were not (except in Tibet, where something approaching genocide has occurred) members of distinct ethnic or religious groups. The scale of killing in Mao's China—which Jung Chang and Jon Halliday in their book *Mao: The Unknown Story* estimate at around 70 million—exceeded anything known in China's past. As in the former Soviet Union, these were not victims of oriental despotism; these were casualties of a Western political ideology.

It is not only totalitarian terror that cannot be fitted into Ferguson's three-point scheme. Ferguson downplays the idea that the rise of the nation-state was a major cause of twentieth-century violence. He points out that, with the growth of the modern welfare state after the Second World War, the power of the nation-state expanded with no accompanying increase in conflict—ignoring the fact that large-scale violence has very often accompanied the formation of nation-states. France became a modern nation-state only after the Napoleonic Wars; the United States, after the Civil War; and Germany, after two world wars. In Central and Eastern Europe, the collapse of empire—set in motion by the First World War and accelerated by

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Of DISTINCTION



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Zamazu

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Above & Beyond

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Woodrow Wilson—released the forces of ethnic nationalism. Most of the nation-states that emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia did so only after civil war and ethnic cleansing. A similar process is under way in the Middle East, with radical Islam as the chief beneficiary.

If, from one point of view, state power increased during the last century, from another it began a decline that continues today. In *The Utility of Force*, General Sir Rupert Smith—commander of the U.K. Armoured Division in the 1991 Gulf War, commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia in 1995, and deputy supreme allied commander of NATO in the Kosovo campaign—argues that the control of force has slipped from governments into the hands of the people. Armed conflicts proliferate, some of them intense and protracted. Over the past decade or so there has been a much-hyped "revolution in military affairs," with technophiles such as Donald Rumsfeld advocating light, highly mobile forces rather than the large-scale use of ground forces from the past. At the same time, there has been much talk of "asymmetric warfare"—the type of guerrilla conflict in which militarily weak forces confront and defeat the armies of great powers.

In Smith's view, these ideas conceal the depth of the change that has occurred. "War," he writes, "no longer exists." What is needed is a shift in our thinking, one that recognizes how we have moved from "interstate industrial war" to "war amongst the people." Here Smith goes beyond previous theorists of guerrilla warfare. Famously, Mao described guerrilla fighters as fish swimming among the people, whereas in Smith's account the people are active protagonists, whom the guerrillas and their opponents are seeking to influence. In this new type of conflict, military force is rarely the deciding factor. There are no longer discrete periods of peace and war, only an open-ended process of confrontation that continues until a settlement is reached. The utility of force is that it can help shape the conditions for such a resolution:

> Since the end of the Cold War force has been used in many engagements, yet failed to achieve the result expected: it has been misapplied, whilst in other cases leaders have shrunk from applying it because they could not see its utility. All the while they have intended to achieve a decisive victory which could resolve the problem they faced, usually political.

The limiting case of the old way of thinking is the War on Terror—a term Smith describes tersely and accurately as "without useful meaning": "Our true political aim for which we are using military force, is to influence the intentions of the people. This is an inversion of industrial war, where the objective was to win the trial of strength and thereby break the enemy's will." In other words, the battle for hearts and minds is not a peripheral activity that complements the use of force; it is the chief purpose for which force should be used.

Smith does not explain how this approach should have been applied in Iraq, but it is clear that he views the use of the military there as largely pointless, insofar as it has never served achievable political goals. He develops a new view of the purposes and the limits of force, which in its revelatory power can be compared with such military classics as Clausewitz's *On War*. Along with Creveld, Smith may be too sanguine in thinking that old-fashioned warfare between states has become extinct; the tension over Taiwan that exists between China, Japan, and the United States is only one of several potential flash points in which conflict could escalate into something resembling the full-on interstate warfare of the past. Yet a metamorphosis of war has clearly occurred: most of our current conflicts are fought *within* societies and cannot be resolved unless the use of force serves well-defined political objectives. In order to see what can happen when this truth is not grasped, we need only look to Iraq. What was the purpose of the invasion? Was it part of the so-called War on Terror? Was it meant to replace [illegible] ship with democracy? Or was [illegible] some believe—a geopolitic[illegible] gy that aimed to acquire [illegible] Iraq's oil reserves?

The truth is that those who [illegible] for the war had no feasible [illegible] goals for post-Saddam Iraq. [illegible] Saddam has enabled a ve[illegible] democracy to be installed, but [illegible] tainly not of the liberal va[illegible] regime change was meant to [illegible] is a type of popular theocracy [illegible] that in Iran, though less st[illegible] more chaotic. This shouldn't [illegible] a surprising outcome. It occu[illegible] ever democratic elections are[illegible] countries in which Islamist p[illegible] the most powerful political fo[illegible] lamist parties triumphed in A[illegible] the early 1990s, and the pat[illegible] been repeated recently in Pale[illegible] much of the Middle East the [illegible] not between dictatorship and[illegible] democracy; it is between secul[illegible] tism and varieties of elective [illegible] cy. By destroying Saddam's [illegible] regime, the Bush Administrat[illegible] have imagined it was enablin[illegible] kind of liberal republic to come [illegible] ing. A smattering of history wo[illegible] shown that regime change wo[illegible] empower radical Islam.

If the war served any geop[illegible] strategy, that strategy was no [illegible] realistic. Supporters of the w[illegible] dicted that oil production wo[illegible] after Saddam had been re[illegible] whereas the anarchy that re[illegible] most of the country has inhib[illegible] production. Similarly, Iraq [illegible] come one of the main recru[illegible] and training sites for ter[illegible] throughout the world, and, w[illegible] sectarian violence that has [illegible] much of the country, the g[illegible] ment can do little to control t[illegible] uation. President Bush has in[illegible] ed Iraq's government to repre[illegible] Shia militias, but the governm[illegible] part because it is in some [illegible] democratic, is largely an instr[illegible] of those militias; to that exte[illegible] Iraqi regime is an active prota[illegible] in the conflict.

After the initial succ[illegible] smashing Saddam's m[illegible] machine, the conflict th[illegible] triggered by the intervention i[illegible]

United States lacks the pow-
. Although it may be denied
ngton, the fact of America's
defeat in Iraq is taken for
throughout the Middle East
rest of the world. American
ve proved unable to control
nce that was unleashed when
's tyranny was overthrown.
ith a ragtag insurgency of
twenty thousand men, the
greatest power has found it-
erless.

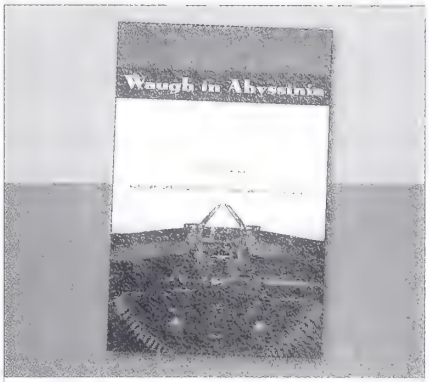
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th. Iraq, by contrast, is pivotal
lobal economy because of its
rves and has nothing resem-
n effective government out-
Kurdish zone. Post-invasion
greater danger to the securi-
neighbors than it was in Sad-
me, and the withdrawal of the
an presence could suck the re-
to a full-scale war, as Iraq's
ors deploy their proxy forces
control of the country. And
American forces remain in
umbers, a larger conflict may
avoided. The most likely out-
f the recent surge in troops is
erline the fact of American de-
d at that point further escala-
the logic of events. An en-
nent of Iranian power in Iraq
e unavoidable result of de-
g the Iraqi state; but Iranian
rement in the insurgency—
ary or real—can now be cited
Bush Administration as an ex-
r the failure to pacify the coun-
used as a casus belli for an ex-
n of the conflict. The next
of this dangerous spiral cannot
wn. What is clear is that the
orphosis of war has not ceased,
ave political leaders begun to
stand it. ■

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Waugh in Abyssinia
EVELYN WAUGH
With an Introduction by
JOHN MAXWELL HAMILTON

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SOLUTION TO THE MAY PUZZLE

NOTES FOR "GREMLINS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

The ten "Gremlin" answers (1A, 5A, 19A, 21A, 34A, 35A, 5D, 11D, 17D, and 22D) are to be entered in the diagram in reverse. All ten reversals are real words.

P	U	P	I	L	S	R	E	P	A	I	D
A	W	L	S	E	O	E	D	O	N	N	A
N	R	E	T	A	L	I	A	T	I	N	G
D	R	A	I	N	I	N	G	S	M	A	G
A	P	D	N	E	N	E	O	N	A	T	E
S	E	E	K	R	E	D	R	A	W	E	R
S	T	R	E	S	S	E	D	M	I	L	D
H	E	A	R	I	N	G	U	E	F	Y	I
A	R	L	P	C	O	A	S	T	E	R	S
R	O	D	O	M	O	N	T	A	D	E	P
D	U	E	L	S	P	N	I	G	O	N	E
S	T	R	O	P	S	A	N	I	M	A	L

ACROSS: 1. sli(rev.)-pup; 5. di(a-PE)r[e]; 10. homophone; 12. hidden; 13. *; 14. d-raining; 16. neon-ate; 18. homophone; 19. re(war)d-ER; 21. desserts*; 24. m[l](o)ld; 26. two mngs.; 29. *; 31. *; 32. due(l)s; 33. g-one; 34. S.(port)S.; 35. lam-in-a.

DOWN: 1. pan-das(rev.); 2. p(aramount)-leader; 3. (c)leaner; 4. soli(d); 5. denier (two mngs.); 6. rev.; 7. a-min-a(rev.); 8. inn-(a-tel)-Y; 9. da(gge[rev.])r[k]; 11. rekn*-its; 15. Peter-Out, pun; 17. gateman*; 20. *; 21. S(hard)S; 22. s(p)oon-s(ilence); 23. *; 25. I'd(rev.)-(go)spel; 27. (b)alder; 28. po(l)o; 30. rev.

The solution diagram for "Quo Vadis?" in the May issue read "expanse," whereas it should have read "expense." We apologize for the error.

A DELICIOUS TORMENT

The friendship of Wordsworth and Coleridge

By Evelyn Toynton

Discussed in this essay:

The Friendship: Wordsworth and Coleridge, by Adam Sisman. Viking. 512 pages. $27.95.



In December 1793, shortly after his twenty-first birthday, a lovesick, guilt-ridden scholarship student ran away from Jesus College, Cambridge, and fled to London. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was deeply in debt to his tutor, his violin teacher, his bookseller, and his wine merchant; the college authorities looked with disfavor on his radical politics; he had been neglecting his studies for months past; and he had convinced himself—somewhat prematurely, since he hadn't asked her—that the object of his love would never marry him. In London he bought a lottery ticket, hoping to gamble himself out of debt, but his number failed to come up. So he gave away his last few pence to some beggars and enlisted in the Light Dragoons under a ludicrous name that nonetheless retained his own initials: Silas Tomkyn Comberbache.

His Majesty's Army can rarely have welcomed so unpromising a recruit. He frequently fell off his horse as he tried to mount it; if he managed to land in the saddle, the animal would bu off again, or bolt from the ground with him on its back. It d sisted his efforts at grooming it ridge decided that horses shou ly be able to clean themselve could he keep his musket in Once, when the regiment's c were laid out for inspection, the demanded, "Whose rusty gun i Coleridge stepped forward. "Is rusty, sir?" he asked. "Because i think it must be mine."

His fellow soldiers, impressed spectacular inco tence, got into th of taking over his c In return, he wrot love letters for amazing their s hearts with his quence, and enter them with storie Herodotus (they as that the Battle of mopylae must hav fought in the no England a few back). He also nu "poor Comrade" smallpox through days and nights of ium and fever. S was unanimousl that the sooner h the army parted c ny, the happier eve would be. Four m after his enlistmer family scraped tog the money to bu out, in time for h sit his next schol exam at Cambridge regiment's muster roll recor emancipation with the words, charged S. T. Comberbache, In

Joining the Light Dragoon not the first of Coleridge's ventures, nor would it b last. ("If life is a lesson," said Forster, "he never learnt it.") A later, he conceived a plan for cialist farming community o banks of the Susquehanna; h never been to America and nothing about farming, but have loved the sibilant rise an of the name. He titled his sche

Evelyn Toynton has written for The Atlantic Monthly, The American Scholar, *and the* TLS, *among other publications. Her novel,* Modern Art, *was a* New York Times *Notable Book of the Year.*

Two Men Observing the Moon, by Caspar David Fr
© Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New Yo

ıal living a "Pantisocracy," a
e coined from the Greek,
power for all. It was this vi-
utopia, concocted with his
poet and radical Robert
, that led to his dropping out
bridge for good and stum-
to an engagement, urged on
Southey, with the sister of
's fiancée; the Pantisocrats
posed to emigrate in pairs.
isocracy collapsed when
, having come into a little
decided he would rather not
and further proposed bringing
to their American commune.
hat time Coleridge had been
by Southey into honoring his
romise to Sara Fricker; man-
o persuade himself, at least
ttently, that he loved her,
ge entered into a marriage that
rove disastrous. No one could
ı out of that one.
l the plans he hatched—and
ould be many over the years,
for books on metaphysics he
rote—the one for which he is
nembered now was a project
ved shortly after the emigra-
ıeme had been abandoned. In
798, Coleridge and a little-
poet named William Words-
lecided to publish a joint vol-
their poems. As Coleridge
ed the undertaking almost two
s later,

> s agreed . . . that my endeavors
> ld be directed to persons and
> ıcters supernatural, or at least ro-
> ic, yet so as to transfer from our
> rd nature a human interest and a
> lance of truth sufficient to pro-
> for these shadows of imagination
> willing suspension of disbelief for
> noment, which constitutes poetic
> . Mr. Wordsworth, on the other
> l, was to propose to himself as his
> ct, to give the charm of novelty to
> gs of every day, and to excite a
> ng analogous to the supernatural,
> wakening the mind's attention
> the lethargy of custom, and di-
> ing it to the loveliness and the
> ders of the world before us.

ir collaboration was born of an
ioned friendship that had be-
1797, when Wordsworth and
oved sister, Dorothy, moved to
set, not far from where Coleridge
was living with his wife and baby son. The relationship between them, legendary in the history of English poetry, is now, for the first time, the subject of a "dual biography": Adam Sisman's new book, *The Friendship*. Referring to themselves jokingly as "The Concern," the young poets spent hours discussing the limitations of reason, the power of nature, the evils of war, the hollow and brittle refinement of contemporary poetry, the tyranny of the English social system, and the true nature of religion. Like Coleridge, Wordsworth was an ardent democrat who had recently become disillusioned with radical politics. Having been a fiery Jacobin, he had spent time in France during the Revolution and been horrified by the murderous violence of the Reign of Terror. Also like Coleridge, he had come to believe that it was poetry, not politics, that could redeem society. His own work was changing from an explicit call for social reform to an equally radical, but less overtly political, treatment of the impoverished "rustics" in his native Lake District; he was resolved to show them in their full humanity, something never attempted in English poetry before.

But unlike Coleridge, Wordsworth was not given to wild enthusiasms and bursts of fanciful humor; he was grave and deliberate, free of those vacillations and doubts that made his friend's life so complicated. He did not go in for torrents of metaphysical speculation, but observed and reflected in silence. Whereas Coleridge's habitual expression was one of "great Sloth, and great, indeed almost ideotic [*sic*], good nature" (his own description), Wordsworth's "cheeks [were] furrowed by strong purpose and feeling." Whereas Coleridge could not walk in a straight line—he kept veering from one side of the path to the other—and "liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood . . . Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel walk." And also unlike Coleridge, Wordsworth had no tendency whatsoever toward excessive self-abasement.

Younger by two years, Coleridge was much better known—as both poet and radical thinker—yet professed himself "a little man" beside Wordsworth, inferior to him "in all modes of excellence." He told anyone who would listen that Wordsworth was among the greatest of poets. (The most extraordinary thing about that statement—made when Wordsworth had written just a few poems that seem negligible now—is that it proved to be true.) Wordsworth "strides on so far before you," he told the unbelievers, "that he dwindles in the distance!"

He even decided that it was Wordsworth who should write the great epic he had intended to undertake himself—a long philosophical poem of "impassioned reflections on men, nature, and society" that would go very far toward changing the world. Wordsworth agreed to begin as soon as Coleridge had laid out the plan for it. In the meantime, when they were not roaming the Quantock Hills in the company of Dorothy Wordsworth (never Sara Coleridge), they worked—often seated at the same table, and sometimes providing each other with lines or even whole verses—on the poems for their joint volume, trying to create poetry that would reawaken the "great and simple affections of our nature." In Wordsworth's view, these affections were being blunted by "the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies."

The book was published anonymously in 1798 under the title *Lyrical Ballads*. Now acknowledged as the seminal event in the birth of English Romanticism, and the great precursor of all the English poetry that would follow, it was largely ignored at the time or else greeted with scorn. Southey, who knew the identity of the authors, gave it a particularly nasty review, singling out for dispraise the long poem that opened the collection, a supernatural tale of guilt and suffering and redemption; "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," he said, was "a poem of little merit"—"a Dutch [i.e.,

drunken] attempt at German sublim- . . . [one] of its students as "absurd or unintelligible."

Although the *Lyrical Ballads* has been celebrated through two centuries for its groundbreaking use of the language of ordinary speech and for Wordsworth's moving depictions of simple country people, its chief glories are not in fact its tales of idiot boys and poor cottage dwellers. Along with the "Ancient Mariner," one of Coleridge's finest—and most untypical—creations, the greatest poem in the collection is surely "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey," in which Words worth both adopts the intimate, meditative tone of Coleridge's earlier "conversation" poems and, for the first time, expresses his ecstatic feelings for nature within a metaphysical framework:

> . . . And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought
> And rolls through all things.

Only Wordsworth could have written that—the great master of English cadence, he can make blank verse sound like the voice of God—but it is doubtful that he could have done so had he not met Coleridge. Although it is probably an exaggeration to suggest, as the critic I. A. Richards does, that "Coleridge was Wordsworth's creator," Coleridge certainly gave him a metaphysical perspective, a largeness of understanding, that Wordsworth might never have found for himself. His previous work had drawn almost exclusively on instinctive sympathies; now it took on the language of transcendence.

And here we come to the great source of contention among writers on the subject: If Wordsworth owed his whole poetic flowering to Coleridge, how could he have treated him so shabbily later on? Defenders of Wordsworth counter that question with one of their own: How could anybody have put up with the impossible person Coleridge became? Everyone agrees, more or less, about the joyful beginnings of their friendship; when it comes to explaining what went wrong—and things went very wrong indeed—opinion is bitterly divided.

Adam Sisman—winner of a 2001 National Book Critics Circle Award for *Boswell's Presumptuous Task*, the tale of another famous literary friendship—vows to avoid the "partisanship" that has "bedevilled" so much writing about the two men and presents his book as an "attempt to escape from this biographical impasse." In this he succeeds admirably. Ironically, however, his very judicious account can only convince us that both men behaved extremely badly. It's simply a question of which type of bad behavior the reader will find more objectionable.

When people say they love Coleridge, they tend to mean just that. Even such distinguished scholars as the late Walter Jackson Bate of Harvard write of what a "lovable human being" he is, referring to "our love of Coleridge" as a fact to be taken for granted. And Anne Fadiman, former editor of *The American Scholar*, describes the Comberbache side of Coleridge as "the fellow who makes scads of promises he cannot keep, ducks his responsibilities, owes money, moves through life in a frenzy of disorganization, and yet—because he is generous, because he has so much charm, because he is his own worst critic, because we can't help ourselves—commands and deserves our love." To many readers, Coleridge's combination of intellectual brilliance and warmhearted, even foolish, naiveté has always proved irresistible.

Wordsworth inspires a different sort of devotion; people love him not for who he was but for what he wrote. Practically everyone who met him, including those, like Keats, who revered his work, was shocked by his egotism. Southey decried his "entire & intense selfishness"; at a typical dinner party at [illegible] Lamb's house, Coleridge sa[illegible] end of the table, quoting [illegible] worth, and Wordsworth sa[illegible] other end, also quoting Wor[illegible] When Coleridge managed [illegible] suade a publisher to issue a [illegible] edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, [illegible] the proceeds going to Words[illegible] as they had the first time ar[illegible] he spent weeks transcribing [illegible] worth's poems, marking [illegible] sheets for the printer, and [illegible] letters to everyone he kne[illegible] might praise the work in[illegible] Wordsworth, meanwhile, ref[illegible] include "Christabel," a new p[illegible] which Coleridge was very [illegible] and insisted on adding to th[illegible] ace an apology for the "gr[illegible] fects" of "The Rime of the A[illegible] Mariner," which he had alw[illegible] garded with scorn.

Yet apart from bein[illegible] greater poet, Words[illegible] was in many ways th[illegible] admirable character: a lovin[illegible] band and brother (a skeptic [illegible] point out that his wife and [illegible] were so selflessly devoted to [illegible] terests, so worshipful of his g[illegible] that they cannot have been h[illegible] love); a fond father; a conscie[illegible] member of his community. A[illegible] same time he was heroically, [illegible] mindedly dedicated to his p[illegible] task. Coleridge, on the other [illegible] though he certainly had a [illegible] science, was rarely capable of [illegible] on it. His laudanum addictio[illegible] periodic torments of withdraw[illegible] titanic guilt, his titanic self-dou[illegible] combination with many physic[illegible] ments both real and imaginar[illegible] was he who coined the term [illegible] chosomatic"—all these things[illegible] dered him incapable of providi[illegible] his wife and children. (Sou[illegible] wound up supporting them all. [illegible] surprisingly, he was also a night[illegible] as a houseguest.

By the early nineteenth cen[illegible] both men had moved to W[illegible] worth's beloved Lake District [illegible] their families. More and mor[illegible] Coleridge's marriage disintegr[illegible] he stayed with the Wordsw[illegible] rather than at home. The w[illegible] family, particularly the wome[illegible]

isehold, provided copious
ıy and succor. They had al-
ımed his difficulties on Sara
lge; given the encourage-
e needed and a tranquil at-
ere in which to work, he
hey were sure, produce mas-
s. Seeing him at such close
, shook their faith severely.
gh there was one manic peri-
activity, lasting several
, during which he wrote al-
e entire contents of a week-
ıal he had founded, the rest
ime he barely worked at all.
nt more time reading than
, more time talking than
, more time drinking than
. He often stayed in bed un-
ı, and his screaming, opium-
l nightmares must have had
ıily leaping out of their beds.
l it help matters that he had
bsessively, unrequitedly in
ith Wordsworth's unmarried
n-law for nearly a decade—
ly great poem of his later
"Dejection: an Ode," began
tter to her—and "harassed
ersecuted" her, as Dorothy
worth put it, with declara-
f that love.

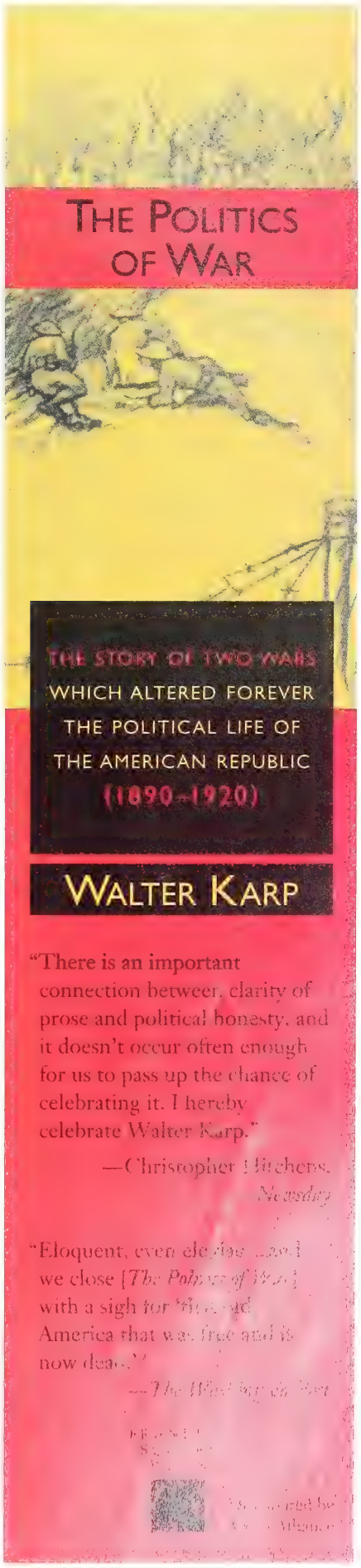
break came when a mutual
preparing to take Coleridge
o London with him, was
l by Wordsworth against hav-
n as a houseguest and told in
ence about Coleridge's irregu-
its and lack of discipline. The
, as friends will, repeated
worth's remarks to Coleridge,
embellishing them a little:
worth, he said, had given up
leridge completely, and re-
l him as an "absolute nui-
" A devastated Coleridge wan-
the streets and then poured
s heartbreak in often disjoint-
ıtences in his journal: "No
of me! absol. Nuisance! God's
is it a dream!" Months later,
owed up at Lamb's house,
ng, and told Lamb's sister in a
ı voice, "Wordsworth, Words-
has given me up."

.en the news of Coleridge's dis-
vas conveyed back to the Lake
ict, Wordsworth, regarding
lf as blameless, felt it was up to
idge to demand an explana-

tion, which Coleridge could not bring himself to do. He had always effaced himself in his relations with Wordsworth, forgiving both Wordsworth's unquestioning acceptance of his devotion and his dismissive attitude toward Coleridge's poetry. He could not forgive being called a "rotten drunkard." Although the two men were superficially reconciled some years later, their friendship was effectively over.

Coleridge lived out his last eighteen years in Highgate, then a leafy village north of London, where a sympathetic doctor and his wife had taken him in. His hosts strictly regulated his laudanum intake, although he did manage to sneak extra doses now and then, and under their care he embarked on the most productive period of his life. He no longer considered himself a poet—whatever confidence he'd had had been destroyed by Wordsworth's lack of enthusiasm for his work—but his writings on politics and religion, his lectures on Shakespeare and philosophy, and his *Aids to Reflection*, an influential volume of Christian apologetics, brought him many new admirers. So did his "literary autobiography," the *Biographia Literaria*—a sprawling hodgepodge of a book that is nevertheless one of the great texts of literary criticism. Some of the most brilliant chapters in the book are devoted to a defense and explication of Wordsworth's poetry, while its defects are defined in a word of Coleridge's own coinage: "matter-of-factness." Bate calls the Coleridge of the *Biographia* "one of the half-dozen greatest critical interpreters in the history of literature . . . in philosophic profundity he excels every other English critic."

It was also during this period that, at the urging of Byron, Coleridge finally published both "Christabel" and the last of the great poems he had written at the time of his early friendship with Wordsworth. In his prefatory note, he calls this poem a mere "fragment," its laudanum-induced composition having been, he says, interrupted by the arrival of "a person on business from Porlock."



The Person from Porlock has become the best-known excuse in literature (and the title of a number of books.) But "Kubla Khan" remains one of the most vivid poems in the language, its exultant final lines the ultimate expression of the Romantic conception of the poet:

> And all who heard should see them there,
> And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice
> And close your eyes with holy dread,
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise

It was to be the final appearance of Coleridge's fiery youthful self. By the time of its publication, he had become stout and mild and sorrowful, with a prematurely old face. "The sage of Highgate" was celebrated above all, in those years, for his conversation, or rather his monologues, since he did not so much converse as expound upon an astonishing range of topics—science, metaphysics, literature, religion, ethics, politics—for hours at a time. The eminences of the age—Emerson, Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill, and many religious thinkers inspired by Coleridge's philosophical rebuttals of Enlightenment skepticism—trooped up Highgate Hill to visit him. Mill credited Coleridge with liberating him from "mechanistic" and materialistic philosophy, just as he credited Wordsworth's poetry with saving him from a nervous breakdown. He would later say, "The class of thinkers has scarcely yet arisen by whom [Coleridge] is to be judged."

Yet Coleridge's life was still widely adduced as a cautionary tale about blighted promise. Hazlitt, describing their first meeting thirty years after the fact, wrote, "His nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done." If Coleridge "had not been the most impressive talker of his age, he would probably have been the finest writer." Carlyle described the talk in the garden at Highgate as "not flowing any-whither like a river, but spreading every-whither in inextricable currents and regurgitations like a lake or sea; terribly deficient in definite goal or aim," noting that Coleridge's "express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent."

Indeed, it sometimes seems that Coleridge is more famous as a failure than for anything he wrote. His loyal daughter, trying to explain his relatively small output, declared, "He could not bear to complete incompletely, which everybody else does." But it is E. M. Forster, writing a century after the poet's death, who offers what may be the best rejoinder to Coleridge's critics:

> He seldom did what he or what others hoped, and posterity has marked him as her prey in consequence. She has never ceased to hold up her plump finger to him, and shake it and say that he has disappointed her. And he has acquiesced because he is a darling. But if one turns on posterity and says, "Well! what else do you want him to do? Would you rather have Comberbacke [*sic*] as he is or not at all?" she is apt to be silent or to change the conversation.

While Coleridge was being treated as a "useless genius," Wordsworth was becoming the most revered literary figure of the age. He was given a government sinecure that at last provided him with a reasonable income—provoking much criticism from those who felt he'd betrayed his early radicalism for "a handful of silver"—and then, in 1843, was made Queen Victoria's Poet Laureate. He lived surrounded by devotees, from the adoring females of his family circle to the countless admirers who began making the pilgrimage to the Lake District to worship at his shrine. But he, too, had more than his share of sorrow: three of his five children died before he did, and his sister lapsed into dementia.

Wordsworth's poetry suffered also. Even as his reputation was growing, his work was becoming more and more pedestrian, full of humorless and turgid moralizing about man and nature. ("Do not think/That good and wise ever will be a
Though strength decay, to
in such estate/As shall divi
wholly from the stir/Of hop
ture.") Such "uplifting" so
may have appealed to the
ans, but the later work n
largely unread, for good rea
most all the great poems fo
he is remembered were wr
the ten years after 1797; the
one critic recently put it, "h
come bywords for tedium."

And sometimes Wordswor
Coleridge, was haunted by a
failure. Sisman argues, convi
that Coleridge must bear n
the responsibility: it was
Wordsworth could not compl
long philosophical poem Cc
had urged on him—the work
ture, man, and society that
redeem the world—that he
he had not fulfilled his missi
poet. He struggled with this
and on for forty years, but m
to complete only a long au
graphical poem, in fourteen b
often rhapsodic blank verse,
thought of as the "prelude"
great work. Although Word
had virtually finished it by 18
refused to publish it in his li
After his death, it finally ap
as *The Prelude: Growth of a*
Mind, and in the years that fo
it was increasingly recognized
masterpiece. He had never b
systematic thinker, of the so
"Coleridge's poem" would ha
quired; what he was, in all hi
tism, was a genius at introspe
and *The Prelude*'s explorations
own states of mind and being,
continuities and discontinuiti
tween his childhood and olde
had particular resonance for v
of the early twentieth century
all English men of letters," de
James Joyce, Wordsworth "be
serves [the] word 'genius.'"

Wordsworth outlive
former friend by six
years. When Cole
died, in 1834, he was not a
the mourners at the funeral.

Continued on p

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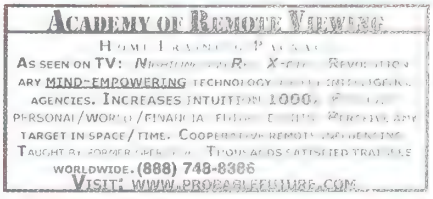
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REVIEWS

Continued from page 92

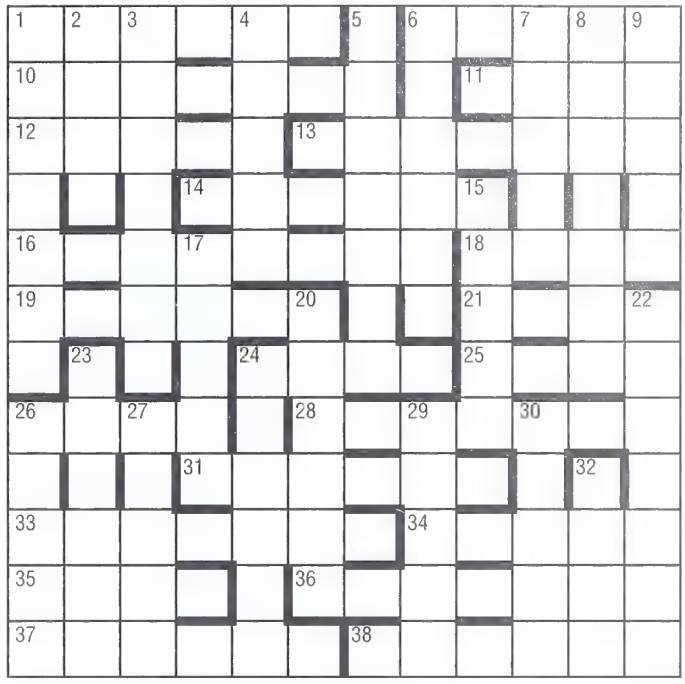
did he express much grie
seems, from various rem
made, that he had not only
Coleridge but also remembe
with something like an ol
tenderness. He told Col
nephew that Coleridge's m
"habitually present" with
another occasion, he said,
men have done wonderful th
but STC is the only wonder
I ever knew." Wordsworth
composed an elegy for th
who had been so central to t
ization of his own poetic
But he, more than anyon
have recognized the truth
epitaph that Coleridge had
for himself years earlier:

> Here sleeps at length poor C
> without screaming
> Who died, as he had always
> dreaming.

June Index Sources

1 U.S. Census Bureau; **2** Famili
(Washington); **3** Police Execut
search Forum (Washington); **4** M
landingham, Tulane University (N
leans); **5** *Fortune* (N.Y.C.); **6–8** Ce
Disease Control and Prevention (A
9,10 U.S. Census Bureau; **11**
BookScan (White Plains, N.Y.);
American CoreLogic (Santa Ana,
13,14 David Yermack, New Yo
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reau of Economic Research (Cam
Mass.); **18** Merrill Lynch (N.Y.
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treal); **22–24** Nielsen BookScan
Plains, N.Y.); **25** Amazon.com (L
26,27 Policy Exchange (London)
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(Durham, England); **30,31** Mark
National Snow and Ice Data Cente
der, Colo.); **32** NASA Institute
vanced Concepts (Atlanta); **33** J. F
Angel, University of Arizona (T
Ariz.); **34** National Nuclear Secur
ministration (Washington); **35,36**
National d'Etudes Spatiales (Paris);
NeuroSky (San Jose, Calif.); **39,40**
heed Martin Aeronautics Compan
Worth, Tex.).

PUZZLE



UPWARDLY MOBILE

Richard Maltby Jr.

Each Down answer must be altered before being entered, in a manner that must be determined by the solver. The new words produced include two proper names. Clue answers include seven proper names. Answers to 38A and 32D are uncommon, the latter being British slang. The answer at 37A is a variant spelling. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 87.

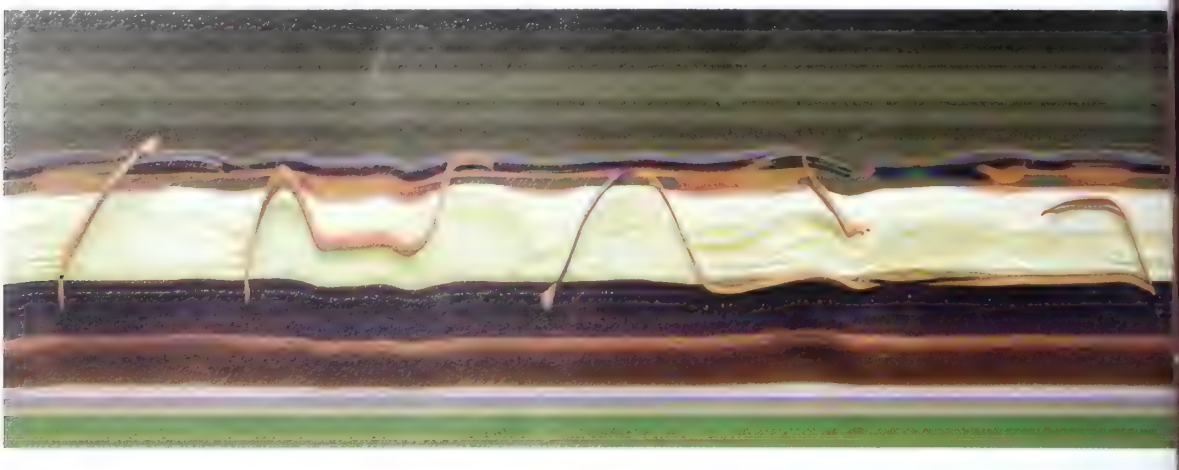
ACROSS

1. Number millions among turn to the right—it's a matter of inheritance (6)
6. Was a consumer name passed around? (5)
10. Big Bird not appearing in *Time* copy (7)
11. Holy man left with a lot of doctors (4)
12. No female in movies beats someone in a fight (5)
13. Maidens intertwined one in a band (7)
14. American fuel conglomerate comes in handy (6)
16. Following one idea gives the others a nervous reaction (8)
18. A prosecutor's names for women (4)
19. Prophet returns: possesses one with a first-class heart (6)
21. Compassion for a baseball player? (4)
24. Eastern medicine man comes back a cipher (4)
25. State of being gay is confined to bangle earrings (4)
26. Set crown the wrong way on king (4)
28. Cold area connecting foot of Pyrenees to Spain and Portugal (7)
31. As backs, all of the Canadiens didn't play (3,3)
33. Head of snakehouse performs surgery on boas (7)
34. Outside I'm bright, but that's as far as it goes (5)
35. Thus moving close (4)
36. In Latin, for example, non-British authorized book that can be read (7)
37. Red Dye #One is possibly European (6)
38. To have intercourse with bad man is curse (6)

DOWN

1. Connecting, taking top off—it's exciting (7)
2. Sound of power in a little buggy (4)
3. Blurred anterior sides relative to the front (7)
4. Fool around in the morning, land in the East (5)
5. Edward I (for shame!) died enlightened (7)
6. Drawn out editorial covering Italian leader (6)
7. Death's-head following—may it be so correct (5)
8. Florida swimmer (male) needs an athletic supporter (7)
9. Something within clandestine range (5)
15. Porter's relative has princely upbringing (5)
17. Place for White Russians married with skin blemishes (5)
20. Sexy—don't finish, otherwise you're making accommodations (6)
22. Teheran, in bits of clay (7)
23. A new catcher, husband, or newsman (6)
24. Minister turns up in jail—part of the underground? (6)
26. P.S. Hugs, love, with excellent letters and presents (5)
27. Speaking of telephones, you're lucky to be born with them! (5)
29. Pester the French horn (5)
30. Shade for, er, woman's underwear? (5)
32. Peel of lime for a five-pound note (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Upwardly Mobile," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by June 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the April puzzle, "Quo Vadis?," are Richard Tryzno Ellsberry, Baltimore, Maryland; Alex Vaughn, Old Lyme, Connecticut; and T.J.R. Weakley, Dundee, Scotland.



FINDINGS

Climate researchers predicted that much of the southwestern United States, and other subtropical regions throughout the world, will suffer a severe permanent drought, with net moisture levels dropping by about 15 percent, as a result of global warming. German researchers warned that warmer ocean temperatures could make the earth spin faster, and new data showed that Mars is also getting hotter. Wild British mushrooms have been fruiting twice a year instead of just once, and experts warned that wild magnolias face extinction because of habitat destruction and overexploitation. Scientists said that keeping people separated during a flu pandemic can reduce flu deaths. A study suggested that the health effects of exposure to nuclear radiation at Chernobyl were no worse than ill health resulting from smoking and normal urban air pollution. Oceanographers found strong evidence that overfishing sharks has led to the collapse of the shellfish industry; the sharks eat rays, and cownose rays, whose population has increased tenfold in thirty years, like to eat mollusks.

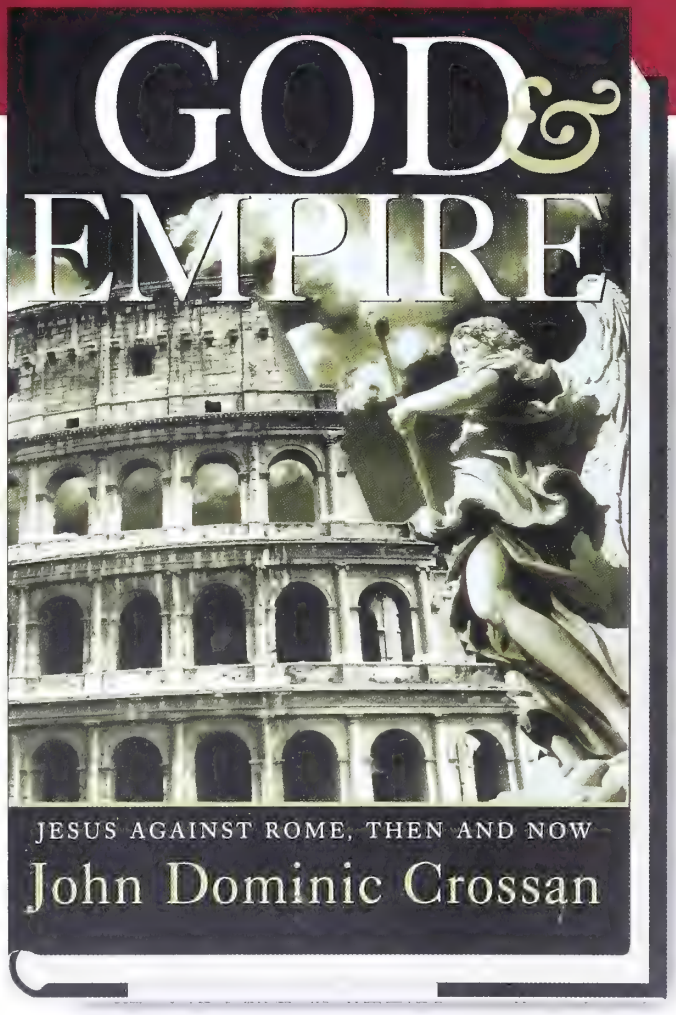
Persistent organic pesticides (POPs) found in oily fish were linked in a study to the development of type 2 diabetes; obese people with low POP levels were much less likely to have diabetes than those with high POPs. A British study concluded that job stress can lead to overeating; Dutch scientists were hoping to invent new foods that will prevent obsesity; Japanese researchers were working on a strain of genetically modified rice designed to prevent hay fever; and experts warned that global warming will be bad for people who suffer from asthma. Scientists found that smokers take more sick days than normal people, though new evidence also emerged that people who drink cof and smoke cigarettes are far less likely to devel Parkinson's disease. Other studies found that tai can help prevent shingles and that eating vitamins creases the risk of early death.

Toxoplasma gondii, a protozoan parasite that causes to oplasmosis, brainwashes rats and mice, a study found; t parasite interferes with its host's amygdala and reve es the conditioned response that causes rodents to sh the smell of cat urine, thereby making it more likely th the protozoan will be able to infect a cat and comple its life cycle. Scientists succeeded in sequencing th genome of the rhesus macaque and found that the mo key shares 97.5 percent of its genes with humans a chimps. Scientists in Nevada created a sheep-human h brid that is about 15 percent human; other researche successfully grew sperm from human bone marro which could theoretically lead to a future in which pa of lesbian mothers can produce their own daughte without the intervention of a male. Physicists observe electrons tunneling out of their atoms, and geologis found a 3.8-billion-year-old sheeted dike complex, th oldest-known chunk of Earth's crust, in Greenland. Sc entists learned how to blow up virtual stars. Robot cists were working hard to create robots that will intera "rhythmically" with humans, and experts said that th human papilloma virus could cause mouth cancer i people who perform oral sex but stressed that people nee not change their behavior. New research strongly su gested that exposure to dirt can make people happie A study found that many people who are diagnose with depression are really just sad.

"Taichi Motion Study #153," a photograph by Jay Mark Johnson.
Courtesy the artist, Aplanat Galerie für Fotografie, Hamburg, and Galerie Deschler, Berlin

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By Duncan Murrell

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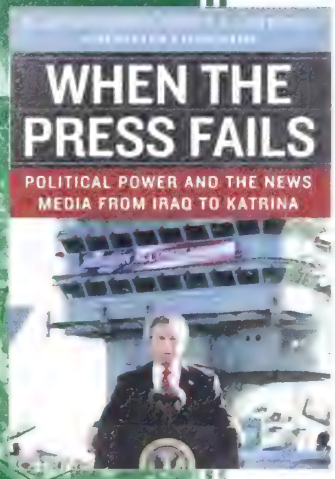
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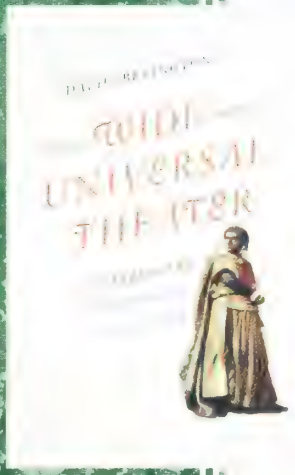
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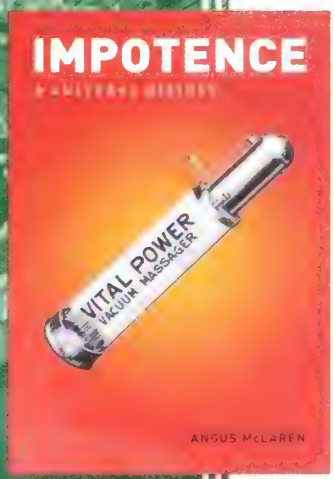
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Cover: Escape from Eden (detail), by Rolland Golden. Courtesy the artist. Rolland Golden's work in response to Hurricane Katrina will be on view at the New Orleans Museum of Art from November 2007 to February 2008.

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LETTERS

Medication and Its Discontents

Gary Greenberg's beautifully written May essay, "Manufacturing Depression," brought me back thirty-five years, when, fascinated by the riddle of consciousness, I considered switching from general medicine to psychiatry. I was amazed to discover that psychopathology, formerly ascribed to childhood experiences or faulty learning, was now due to "chemical imbalances" in the brain. I chose to remain a GP.

As Greenberg notes, today's psychiatrists still consider depression "not a psychological or existential condition but a brain disease caused by a 'serotonin deficiency' or some other 'chemical imbalance.'" True, chemical changes can accompany depression, but they've never been proven to cause it. One could argue the opposite, that behavior causes chemical changes; or, for that matter, that chemistry and behavior are simultaneous profiles of a single event. Still, "imbalance" is compelling: it offers both a clean target for a magic bullet and an ocean of commercial opportunity.

For decades, the medical staff at our hospital has regularly received high-powered lectures—along high-powered lunches—spon by Avarice Pharmaceuticals, o of its cousins, entitled "Addre Depression." The take-home sage is that depression is danger under-diagnosed, and the treat is, of course, its products. So that many physicians, attemptir be up-to-date, have devolved patients' agents to pharmaceut industry reps.

Lamentably, "imbalance" is the current state. We popularly accept emotions result from neuromole choreography rather than from twists of life. Why not just conc that we're possessed by demons be done with it? Hopefully, Ava Pharmaceuticals will develop a pi awaken the mental-health comm ty's sense of curiosity.

Jeff Kane
Nevada City, Calif.

Gary Greenberg's essay provide accurate accounting of what happ when one volunteers to be a subjec a drug trial. His recounting of eve however, does not support the d nosis he received. An important terion for major depression, and most other diagnoses listed in American Psychiatric Associatio *Diagnostic and Statistical Manua Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* (*DS IV*), is "clinically significant distr or impairment in social, occupati al, or other important areas of fu

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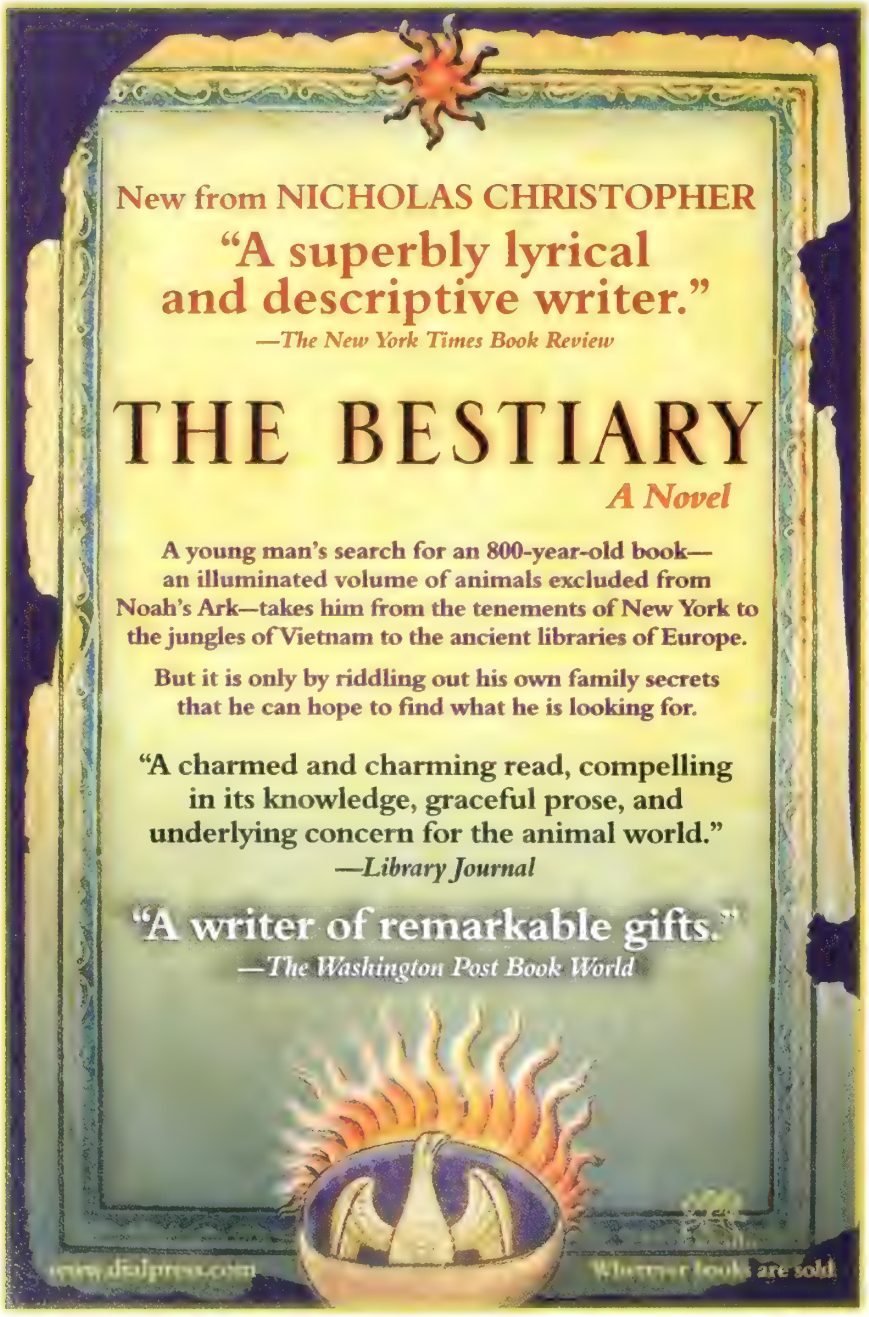
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ning." There is little in the essay that indicates he met this criterion; Greenberg's ability to write a sophisticated account and continue with his daily activities during the drug trial argues forcefully against it.

Greenberg alludes to many concerns about his growing older, his career choices, and problems in the world at large that seem to have added up to the diagnosis of major depression. We all, however, have these concerns to a degree. To consider a stress- and worry-free psyche an attainable goal—often a message implicit in drug trials—is a fiction; indeed, dealing with a reasonable amount of stress improves our mental capacities, just as a reasonable amount of exercise improves our physical well-being.

At the end of the eight-week trial, Greenberg was informed he had a "good response." Based on a lab analysis of his pills (no active ingredient present), he had the well-known "placebo response." The opportunity to unburden himself of quotidian concerns to another person, even if only in the form of answers to set questions, made him better, which was reflected in his ratings during the trial. No single factor here; the dynamic happens [illegible] between friends, in the context of in the therapist's office. The outcome of Greenberg's participation underscores the fact that investigators' pursuit of volunteers for drug trials, which often leads to minimizing symptoms in the face of [illegible] precise diagnostic formulations, contribute to overly inclusive diagnoses and thus an extraordinarily high placebo response rate in conditions otherwise known for their response to active treatment.

Robert T. Rubin
David Geffen School of Medicine
University of California, Los Angeles



All Rights Reserved?

Gideon Lewis-Kraus's May [illegible] about the Prelinger Library [illegible] World in Three Aisles," depicts [illegible] efforts of Rick and Megan Prelinger to change copyright law with a "orphaned works" lawsuit as a [illegible] of archival housecleaning by [illegible] gifted and unconventional librarians. Their lawsuit would make available for use, without penalty, creative work "presumptively under copyright even though there's no apparent [illegible] locatable or even interested owner. What Lewis-Kraus does not mention is that free-culture advocates like the Prelingers tried and failed in the effort last year.

Since 1976, original works of art have been protected from the moment of creation. The Orphan Works Act of 2006, which stalled photo agencies, publishers, and their Internet allies attempted to push through Congress, would have relegated the creative work of living working artists as "orphaned" if it lacked clear copyright. A single act of production without a copyright notice (even one where the mark had been removed) might have been enough for an infringer to deem it "orphaned" and to use it for free.

Under current law, a creator is entitled to all net profits from an infringer's use of his work. If the copyright is registered, the infringer [illegible]

d as much as $150,000 in statu-
mages. The large penalties are
ed to encourage creation and
age theft. The Orphan Works
uld have reversed this. Artists
tographers who might have ob-
to their work being used with-
rmission would have had only
ourse: federal court and, if suc-
, the imposition of a "reason-
ee.

rare show of creative solidarity,
d spectrum of art, design, and
graphy organizations and indi-
s banded together and lobbied
t the bill. Now the Prelingers
eir allies are trying to get from
urts what they were denied by
gislature: penalty-free access to
eative work of others.

Barnard
Harbor, Wash.

Are Not the World

n if an aid program works in a
an village—and Victoria
singer casts doubt on that premise
May report, "The Continuation
verty"—the same program will
ecessarily be effective in Cape
, Suriname, or Afghanistan. Al-
h symptoms of poverty may have
rsal commonality, most foreign-
ograms fail to consider variations
ople, cultures, and political sys-
. They are designed as if the
's population were homogeneous.
y Sachs avers that "the main chal-
now is not to show what works
single village or district . . . but
r to scale up what works to en-
ass a whole country and even the
d." Foreign aid premised on the
that a program effective in one
will be effective anywhere will be
ing more than a feel-good exercise
creates a fine living for some con-
ors and institutional aid givers but
s only minimal short-term help
no long-term solutions to the in-
ed beneficiaries.

Treiman
dland Hills, Calif.

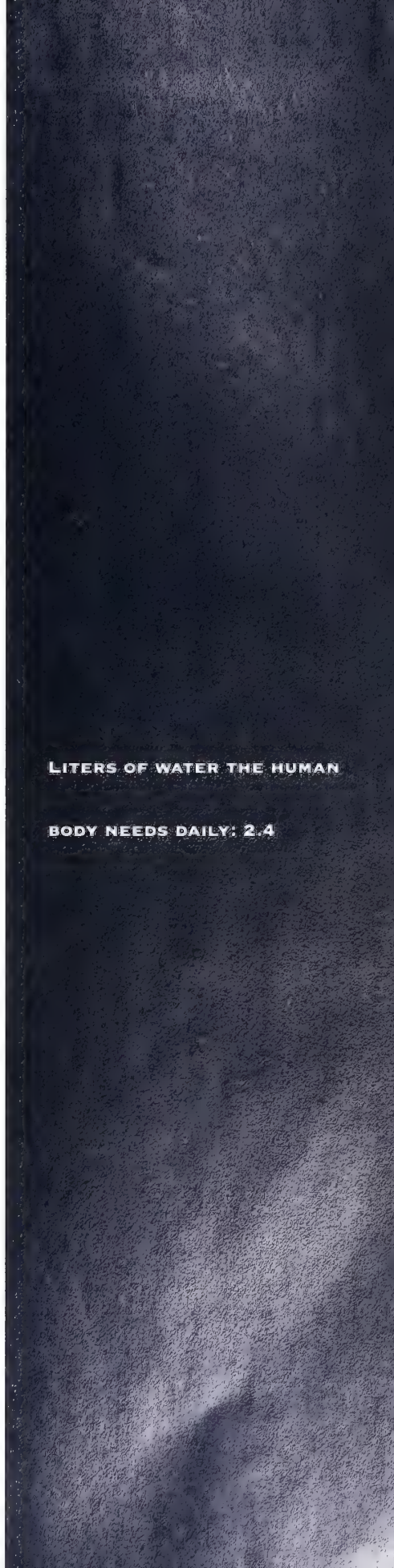
People at Risk

s a specialist in the Mandaean re-
n and as a human-rights worker for
people, I take exception to Eliot Weinberger's "Mandaeans" (Mythology, May). A reader finds no differentiation between scholarly research, Mandaean religious texts, and Mandaean oral folkloric traditions. Weinberger draws, in part, from materials in Edmondo Lupieri's *The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, and my own *The Mandaeans: Ancient Texts and Modern People*, but Weinberger's brief, contextless items are offensive and directly hurtful to a religious minority facing genocide in Iraq and severe discrimination in Iran. Many Mandaeans have fled into exile throughout the world, and the people face possible extinction, yet Weinberger relegates reference to the serious political situation to a short note at the end, without sufficient information on the Mandaeans' own organizations or the campaigns, websites, and international human-rights organizations working to help them.

Jorunn J. Buckley
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Me.

Eliot Weinberger goes to great lengths to portray the Mandaeans in an exotic light, drawing from both Mandaean and non-Mandaean sources for their history and beliefs. His essay is not, however, representative of the contemporary community of Mandaeans or their convictions, nor was it was ever intended to be. It is therefore unfortunate that *Harper's* neglected to provide this context, considering the dire situation of the community. In particular, the suggestion that the Mandaeans are antagonistic toward Jews, Christians, and Muslims may well alienate those who would otherwise be sympathetic, and will only add to the fire that is currently consuming them in their homeland. Although it is possible to find polemics against these and other groups in ancient and esoteric Mandaean literature, as Weinberger has, it would be a horrible mistake to ascribe beliefs such as these to the contemporary community, as this will do little but further endanger their lives.

Charles Häberl
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J.



NOTEBOOK

Air Quality

By Lewis H. Lapham

Pollution is not limited to the air we breathe and the water we drink; it can equally offend the eye and the ear.

—Chief Justice Warren Burger

The offense to the ear formerly known as *Imus in the Morning* achieved its much-loved, rust-belt sound with the unleaded fuels of ethnic insult and racial slur, and so it was no surprise on April 4 when the talking heads turned their attention to black girls bouncing basketballs. A sideman had seen the NCAA championship game between the women's teams from Rutgers and the University of Tennessee, and the spectacle he thought suggestive of tribal warfare between "the Jigaboos" and "the Wannabes." Don Imus, the program's host and factory foreman, acknowledged the remark with a blowing of old-time smoke. "That's some rough girls from Rutgers," he said. "Man, they got tattoos . . . that's some nappy-headed hos there."

It was early in the morning, most of the program's 2.2 million weekly fans not yet angry or awake, and none of the celebrity guests uneasy in the company of their down-home, toxic host. For important authors with important books to sell, appearances on the factory floor with Imus drummed up more business than did interviews with Charlie Rose, and if from time to time the cowboy hat referred to Arabs as "towel-heads" or to a *Washington Post* reporter as a "boner-nosed beanie-wearing Jew boy" the exhaust fumes could be excused or overlooked in the interest of the greater commercial good.

On April 4, however, the smoke drifted across the horizon of a blog maintained by Media Matters for America, an observatory in Washington that assigns monitors (all day, every day) to the nation's radio and television talk shows. Listening hour after hour to Amy Goodman and Lou Dobbs as well as to Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity, the inspectors of the nation's soul keep notes, print transcripts, file complaints. It's not often that the complaints find their way into mainstream print, but over the Easter weekend the market for scandal tends to be slow, and the Media Matters blog blossomed into an outrage as welcome as the flowers of spring.

President Bill Clinton rose in the pulpit of a Methodist church to "deplore what Mr. Imus said; it was racist and it was sexist." The Reverend Al Sharpton demanded that Imus be booted off the air with "the shoes of justice," and for an entire week the news media delighted in the spectacle of Imus's humiliation and disgrace—bigger headlines in the *New York Post* than those awarded to the war in Iraq, cover stories in *Time* and *Newsweek*, television cameras following the penitent iconoclast into the confession booth on *The Today Show*. Network management at CBS Radio and MSNBC television, the two distributors of the Imus program, released statements expressing disappointment and disgust, the hypocrisy as thick upon the page as clotted cream. The program's corporate sponsors, among them GM and American Express, withdrew advertising schedules worth a reported $50 million. The musician Snoop Dogg parsed the difference between Imus's emission and those of rappers like himself: "We are not talking about no collegiate basketball girls who have made it to the next level of education and . . . We're talking about hos that's in the hood that ain't doing shit, is trying to get a nigga for his money. . . . We got no old-ass white men that sit on MSNBC going hard on black girls."

More than once and to anyone who would listen, Imus described himself as "a good person who said a bad thing," explained that on his ranch in New Mexico he bankrolls a hospital for children sick with cancer, said that his acquaintance with black people was so solid and cool that no matter what Snoop Dogg might think or say he enjoyed the status of honorary black boy. None of the apologies were accepted, and on the afternoon of April 12, eight days after failing what amounted to a nursery-school game of mix and match ("nappy-headed" hos or strawberry-blonde "ho," but never the first adjective with the second noun), the I-Man and his cowboy hat went the way of the Montana lands bighorn sheep.

So abrupt an exit from the limelight presumably tells some sort of cautionary tale about the deterioration of the nation's moral character. Imus is by no means alone among celebrities whose conduct and deportment lately have been declared unsafe at any speed. Over the past eighteen months we've seen Governor George Allen of Virginia lose his election to the United States Senate after falling afoul of the word "macaca"; Mel Gibson obliged to seek a solution from Oprah Winfrey after having informed a California sheriff's deputy that "the Jews are res

Lewis H. Lapham is the National Correspondent for Harper's Magazine *and the editor of the forthcoming* Lapham's Quarterly.

r all the wars in the world";
r Joseph Biden forfeiting his
s at next year's Democratic
ıtial nomination for praising
r Barack Obama as "the first
ıainstream African American
articulate and bright and
nd a nice-looking guy"; Alec
in raised to the level of a
ıl-security threat for having
s daughter, Ireland, "I don't
damn if you're twelve years
eleven years old. . . . You are a
ıoughtless little pig."
intemperate or ill-conceived
s clearly suggest a coarsening
private thought and public
, but if the scourging of Imus is
to send a message, to whom is
essed, and what is the lesson
hopes to teach? The media like
e the discourtesies in the frames
stian soap opera, as if they were
ɔm an imaginary state of grace.
ud-stained idol confesses to the
stupidity or pride, consults an
ızed dealer in redemption, meets
ıe spokesperson for an aggriev-
ıority, undergoes rehabilitation
ınic for the temporarily insane,
ıen, depending on the market
ɔf his or her Q rating, disappears
ıe deserts of oblivion or returns,
tter person and a bigger act, to
ıter stage and a richer contract.
ong members of the general pub-
parables fall on stony ground,
'y because they fail to explain
Don Imus goes home to New
o and Rush Limbaugh remains at
p of the charts despite his solo
mance of a tune that he enti-
Barack, the Magic Negro," or
ıo uproar ensues when Michael
e refers to Barbara Walters as a
ɔle-talking slut" and to Diane
er as a "lying whore," or why on
Park the racial epithets float
d as freely as the balloons in the
ɔ Rican Day Parade.
ıe mortifications of the flesh take
only when the performance of
tual turns a profit (i.e., when the
in the tabloid stocks is a celebri-
sufficient magnitude to sell pa-
they can teach no useful lesson
rsons unknown to the media.
yms have no market value, and so
emain free to address their fellow
yms in languages unfit for human

consumption. No matter how careless their behavior or how tactless their choice of word, nobody bothers to wipe the smudge off the cocktail napkin or clean up the stain on the bed.

How then to interpret Imus's transformation from asset to liability if what we have in mind is a concern for our national health and public safety? We set off on the wrong foot by raising questions about artistic freedom and the uses of the First Amendment. What we have in hand is not a moral issue but an environmental problem, and instead of further confusing ourselves with political arguments, we should begin to think about regulating the manufacture of celebrity by means similar to those applicable to the operation of an oil refinery.

Celebrity is a product made from a volatile organic compound, by its nature toxic, but the entertainment industry has been slow to adopt clean-air standards; nor has it established a uniform set of rules as to the type and quantity of the chemicals that can be added to the product. The result is a troubling absence of agreement as to what is harmful and what is not—Jewish comedians allowed to tell Jewish jokes as long as they don't impugn Israel. Black rappers allowed to stomp on black people as long as the lyrics remain unintelligible to the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, Bill Maher allowed to mock fatheaded actors and empty-headed politicians but not bald-headed generals. Imus's contract with CBS entitled him to leak effluents of a specific density and grade (topics known to be "extraordinary," "irreverent," and "controversial"), and by so doing to manufacture a synthetic product capable of meeting the competition forced upon the industrial media by the organic, free-range invective grown in the comedy clubs and the blogs.

Although clear in its instruction to produce irreverence, the contract apparently didn't define the precise degree of irreverence, or specify the point at which it was likely to interrupt the cash flows from the program's sponsors. During the first week in April, when the irreverence began to flow the wrong way through the factory sound system, none of the engineers on duty in the control room knew how

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William Dalrymple



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—Brian Urquhart, *The New York Review of Books*

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...Deeply researched and beautifully written"**
—Gyan Prakash, *The Nation*

"There is so much to admire in this book
—the depth of historical research, the finely evocative writing, the extraordinary rapport with the cultural world of late Mughal India. It is also in many ways a remarkably humane and egalitarian history."
—Linda Colley, *Times Literary Supplement*, U.K.

"A brilliant, evocative exploration of a doomed world and its final emperor, Bahadur Shah II, descendent of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane"
—*Publishers Weekly*

**"One of the best history books of the year
...THE LAST MUGHAL is outstanding."**
—*Jyllands-Posten* (Denmark)

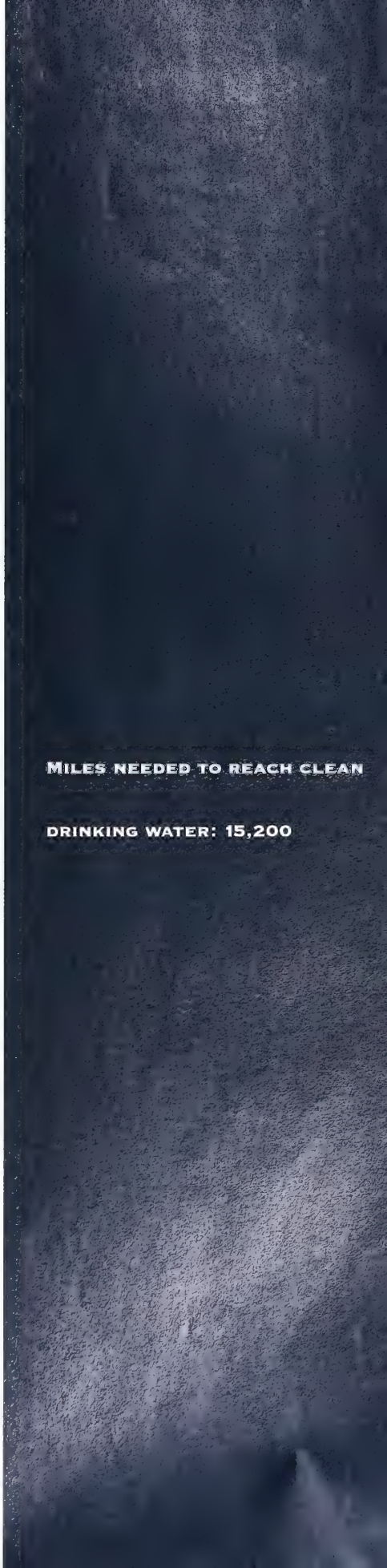
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(Disney, HBO, Infinity Broad-
) as well as to small factories
rkshops (Paris Hilton, Russell
, the Baldwin family, the estate
a Nicole Smith), the poor-con-
redits become assets that can
andered, saved, or sold on a
trading in bad air. The market
n't regulate specific emissions
each pollutant source (Ann
r can continue to refer to liberal
rats as "faggots," Russell Crowe
w telephones at hotel bellhops),
the sum total of the emissions
ls the government allotment of
conduct, the pollutant source
acquire other credits. The
lic Church once supplied addi-
margins for error by selling pa-
dulgences, which guaranteed the
ant source's eventual arrival in
n but did nothing to better the
of people unable to make the
nts in Florentine silk or Venet-
ld.

e blessing of the free market of-
ne chance of a more democratic
On the assumption that anonyms
ll as celebrities embody poten-
ources of pollution, let the gov-
ent award poor-conduct credits
ery man, woman, and child in
country. Trust the American
le to possess so vast a store of
that they will have no use for the
ege of conducting themselves in
nner unbecoming an ape, and
if they were to do so, no cameras
d show up to hold them hostage
headline. Know also that the
rican people possess a sound in-
t for easy money, and that they
e counted upon to sell their sur-
of potential pollution to the en-
inment industry at prices at least
l to the cost of blockbuster movies
Hollywood detectives, Malibu
h houses and sexist rap music. We
impose a gargantuan but whole-
e tax paid by the rich directly to
poor. Confronted with increas-
y higher costs of maintenance and
luction, the entertainment indus-
would manufacture fewer but more
spicuously obnoxious celebrities.
compensate for their loss in num-
their contracts would require them
dd more vivid material to their di-
ue with bartenders and the police,
ive up throwing telephones at ho-
tel bellhops in favor of throwing bellhops out of hotel windows.

In the short term the amount of pollution in the air might remain constant, but over the long term, together with the redistribution of the nation's wealth we would receive three ancillary benefits. First, the displays of social, moral, emotional, and intellectual collapse would become more sensational and therefore more edifying. Second, as the racist and sexist caricatures became uglier and more revolting they would show the true face of what Americans actually think is funny. Third and best of all, when buying poor-conduct credits the entertainment industry must specify the exact amount of pollution it wishes to produce (of what kind and with what motive), and we therefore will be spared the emissions of rank hypocrisy, offensive to both the eye and ear, that send Alec Baldwin to Doctor Phil, prompt the Reverend Sharpton to pose as a man of principle, inspire Leslie Moonves, chairman of CBS, to give as his reason for canceling the Imus program "the effect language like this has on young people, particularly young women of color trying to make their way in this society."

If any damage was done to the girls from Rutgers it wasn't done by Imus. His remark was so divorced from the facts as to be meaningless. He neither knew nor cared what he was talking about; he was doing the job that he was paid to do, and instead of feeding racial stereotypes into a microphone he could have been shoveling slag into an ash pit. The more deadly emission was the soap opera staged by the self-righteous scolds in the news media. In order that they might play the part of heroes, they cast the Rutgers girls as victims. For five days they bounced the basketball of their bad faith from one headline to another, promoting Imus's insult to a household word, making nifty moves expressing their pity for the poor young women of color who would stand so little chance in the society were it not for the integrity of CBS, the wisdom of the *New York Times*, the benevolence of Fox News, and the sympathy of Larry King. The cloud of hypocrisy released into the atmosphere was more corrosive than a heavy fall of acid rain. ■





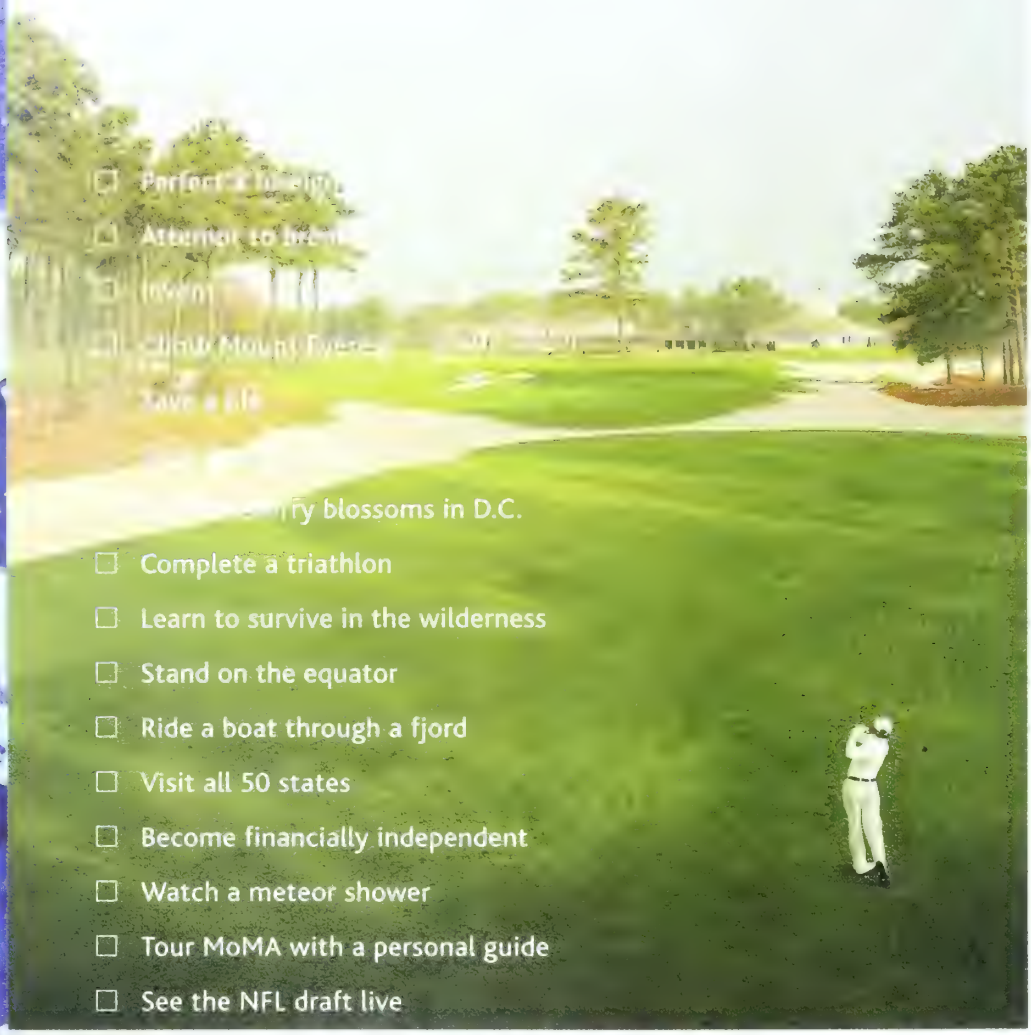
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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of U.S. prisoners freed through DNA evidence since 1989 : 201
Percentage who had been mistakenly identified by eyewitnesses : 77
ces that a judge in a 2003 study deemed a taped confession to be voluntary if only the suspect appeared on camera : 4 in 5
Chances if both the suspect and interrogator were filmed : 2 in 3
Number of days a Japanese arrestee can be interrogated without a lawyer : 23
Percentage of Japanese arrestees who confess to crimes : 92
Percentage brought to trial who are convicted : 99.9
Amount that a Colorado state prisoner is paid to work a day as a field hand at a local farm : 60¢
Amount the prisons are paid by farmers for each inmate's daily work : $77.20
nount the USDA's Rural Development program has given in aid to distressed rural areas since 2001 : $8,600,000,000
Amount the program has given to metropolitan areas, retirement communities, and resorts : $39,100,000,000
Percentage of every dollar spent at a locally owned Chicago store that is retained or recirculated in the city : 68
Percentage of every dollar spent at a chain store in Chicago that is : 43
ıated amount in state taxes Wal-Mart avoided last year by renting stores from shell companies it created : $403,000,000
Portion of the worldwide revenue from food retailing accounted for by ten corporations : 1/4
rcentage of workers at Russia's retail markets that can be foreign-born, according to a law that took effect in April : 0
Portion of the stalls at these markets that are now empty : 1/4
ntage of national news at Russia's largest independent radio network that management says must now be "positive" : 50
ıber of postings by the U.S. State Department's "digital outreach team" on Arabic websites this year : 490 (see page 18)
Number of U.S.-run Iraqi reconstruction projects declared successfully "complete" that inspectors visited this year : 8
Number from this sample that were found not to be functioning : 7
Chance that an inmate at any of the U.S.-run prisons in Iraq has been identified as a "foreign fighter" : 1 in 195
'ercentage of Baghdad residents who have a family member or friend who has been wounded or killed since 2003 : 77
Number of U.S. soldiers who have died in combat or non-combat situations while on duty since 2001 : 9,185
Number who died on duty during the Clinton years : 7,500
Percentage of U.S. soldiers who say they "know for certain" that someone in their unit is gay or lesbian : 23
Minimum number of Wiccans currently serving in the military : 1,870
Price from an Illinois company to turn the cremated ashes of a loved one into a 1.5-carat diamond : $24,999
Number of smaller diamonds the company offers in its "Family Plan" : 4
ık of Nevaeh, "heaven" spelled backward, among the fastest growing names given to American newborns since 2000 : 1
entage change in the number of Louisiana and Mississippi newborns named Katrina in the year after the hurricane : +153
entage of West Virginia public schools that will use the video game Dance Dance Revolution in P.E. classes next year : 100
k of golf and basketball, respectively, among the ten pro sports Americans view as the most "ethical" and "upstanding" : 1, 10
Percentage change since 1994 in Barry Bonds's shoe and jersey size, respectively : +24, +18
Percentage increase since 1980 in a male action figure's relative bicep, chest, and calf size, respectively : 64, 55, 70
Donation Arnold Schwarzenegger was given by Donald Trump after appearing on *The Apprentice* in March : $10,000
Amount paid on eBay in May for an unsalaried summer internship at GQ magazine : $30,200
Estimated value of the "style/grooming makeover" the intern will receive : $1,500
Amount Uncle Ben's rice spent this year to rebrand the "iconic character" of its fictional namesake : $20,000,000
Date on which he was "elevated" to "Uncle Ben, Chairman" : 3/30/07

Figures cited are the latest available as of May 2007. Sources are listed on page 102
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DEMOCRACY HYPOCRIS



In UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY, *Daniel Mark Cohen hands down a devastating indictment of the United States Supreme Court for the immaculate failure of its obscenity jurisprudence and the consequent corruption of American children by Internet pornography.*

Cohen argues that contrary to the rule of American law, but as a matter of common sense, speech is properly defined in terms of words, and so pictures do not constitute a form of speech. Hence, pornography, while it may be shielded by other provisions of the Constitution, is not entitled to the supreme protection of the First Amendment.

At last, UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY *constitutes an impassioned statement of advocacy for a forsaken constituency in this country: more than sixty million children who have been effectively abandoned by the United States Supreme Court and the American nation as a whole.*

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America . . . appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitud of our intentions . . . with a firm reliance on the protection o divine Providence, . . . pledge to each other our Lives, ou Fortunes, and our sacred Honor. – Declaration of Independenc

IF THE PEOPLE of the United States collectively endorse a single p one that, universal in its reach, transcends the necessary differences i and ethnicity that otherwise divide the nation, that prayer consists of simple words:

GOD BLESS AMERICA.

BUT WHY should God bless America when her people, in ever incre numbers, (now easily counted in the tens of millions), participate unacknowledged culture of prostitution, manifest most readily in their patronage of Internet and cable-television pornography? (For what is po raphy, after all, but prostitution mediated by photographic cameras?)

AND WHY should God bless America when, as a consequence, she i on the free, unregulated distribution via the Internet of the most vile s images so that, hourly, such pictures reach and indelibly corrupt the othe innocent eyes and chaste minds of the country's millions of unsupervise latch-key children?

GOD BLESS AMERICA?

More than two thousand years ago, many centuries before English spoken on earth, some unknown, now long-forgotten soul composed following words, translated here from the original Hebrew:

Unless the Lord builds a house, they who build it labor in vain . . .

Many will recognize that proverb as the first line of psalm 127. How is it possible that those words point to something more than the wisdo acknowledging the limit of human industry? Perhaps Samuel Ad Founding Father from Massachusetts, was seeking to convey somethin the deeper truth contained in that proverb when in 1775, on the tenuous of the American Revolutionary War, he wrote:

"We may look to Armies for our Defense, but Virtue is our best securit

If Mr. Adams' words are true, then it explains why the billions of do our nation invested in the C.I.A., the F.B.I., and the Department of Def were without force or effect in the months and days leading up to Septen 11, 2001. For, although many are acquainted with the first line of the psa few are familiar with the line that follows:

unless the Lord keeps a city, the watchman stays awake in vain . . .

UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY
FIFTY YEARS SINCE ROTH V. UNITED STATES
The National Tragedy of the Supreme Court's Misjudgment on Obscenity
BY DANIEL MARK COHEN

READINGS

[Essay]

VARIATIONS ON A MIRAGE

By Edward N. Luttwak, from "The Middle of Nowhere," in the May issue of Prospect. *Luttwak is a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

Why are Middle East experts unfailingly wrong? The lesson of history is that men never learn from history, but Middle East experts, like the rest of us, should at least learn from their past mistakes. Instead, they just keep repeating them.

The late King Hussein of Jordan was the undisputed master of "five minutes to midnight" catastrophism. Wearing his gravest aspect, he would warn us that with patience finally exhausted, the Arab-Israeli conflict was about to explode, that all past conflicts would be dwarfed by what was about to happen unless, unless . . . And then came the remedy—usually something rather tame when compared with the immense catastrophe predicted, such as resuming this or that stalled negotiation, or getting an American envoy to the scene to make the usual promises to the Palestinians and apply the usual pressures on Israel. We still read versions of the standard King Hussein lines in countless newspaper columns, hear identical invocations in the grindingly repetitive radio and television appearances of the usual Middle East experts, and are now faced with Hussein's son Abdullah periodically repeating his father's speech almost verbatim.

What actually happens at each of these "moments of truth"—and we may be approaching another one—is nothing much; only the same old cyclical conflict that always restarts when peace is about to break out and always dampens down when the violence becomes intense enough. The ease of filming and reporting out of safe and comfortable Israeli hotels inflates the media coverage of every minor affray. But humanitarians should note that the dead from Jewish-Arab fighting since 1921 amount to fewer than 130,000—about as many as are killed in a season of conflict in Darfur.

Strategically, the Arab-Israeli conflict has been almost irrelevant since the end of the Cold War. And as for the impact of the conflict on oil prices, it was powerful in 1973, when the Saudis declared embargoes and cut production, but that was the first and last time the "oil weapon" was wielded. For decades now, the largest Arab oil producers have publicly forsworn any linkage between politics and pricing, and an embargo would be a disaster for their oil-revenue-dependent economies. The relationship between turmoil in the Middle East and oil prices is far from straightforward. As Philip Auerswald recently noted in *The American Interest*, between 1981 and 1999—a period when a fundamentalist regime consolidated power in Iran, Iran and Iraq fought an eight-year war within view of oil and gas installations, the Gulf War came and went, and the first Palestinian intifada raged—oil prices, adjusted for inflation, actu-

ally fell. And global dependence on Middle Eastern oil is declining. Today the region produces under 30 percent of the world's crude oil, compared to almost 40 percent in 1974.

Yes, it would be nice if Israelis and Palestinians could settle their differences, but it would do little or nothing to calm the other conflicts in the Arab world from Algeria to Iraq, or to stop Muslim-Hindu violence in Kashmir, Muslim-Christian violence in Indonesia and the Philippines, Muslim-Buddhist violence in Thailand, Muslim-Christian and Muslim-animist violence in Sudan, Muslim-Igbo violence in Nigeria, Muslim-Muscovite violence in Chechnya, or the different varieties of intra-Muslim violence between traditionalists and Islamists, and between Sunnis and Shiite. Nor would it assuage the perfectly understandable hostility of convinced Islamists toward the transgressive West that relentlessly invades their minds, and sometimes their countries. Arab-Israeli catastrophism is wrong twice over, first because the conflict is contained within rather narrow boundaries, and second because the Levant is just not that important anymore.

The next oft-repeated mistake is the Mussolini syndrome. Contemporary documents prove beyond any doubt what is now hard to credit: serious people, including British and French military chiefs, accepted Mussolini's claims to great-power status because they believed he had formidable armed forces at his command. His army divisions, battleships, and air squadrons were dutifully counted to assess Italian military power, making some allowance for their lack of the most modern weapons but not for their more fundamental refusal to fight in earnest. Having conceded Ethiopia to win over Mussolini, only to lose him to Hitler as soon as the fighting started, the British discovered that the Italian forces quickly crumbled in combat. It could not have been otherwise, because most Italian soldiers were unwilling conscripts from the one-mule peasantry of the south or the equally miserable sharecropping villages of the north.

The fraternity of Middle East experts similarly and persistently attributes real military strength to backward societies whose populations can sustain excellent insurgencies but not modern military forces.

In the 1960s, it was Nasser's Egypt that was mistaken for a real military power just because it had received many aircraft, tanks, and guns from the Soviet Union and had many army divisions and air squadrons. In May 1967, on the eve of war, many predicted that the Egyptians would defeat the Israelis forthwith; even the more cautious never anticipated that the former would be utterly defeated by the latter in just a few days. In 1973, with much more drama, it still took only three weeks to achieve the same outcome.

In 1990, it was Iraq's turn to be hugely overestimated as a military power. Saddam Hussein had more equipment than Nasser ever accumulated and could boast of having defeated much more populous Iran after eight years of war. In the months before the Gulf War, there was anxious speculation about the size of the Iraqi army—again, the divisions and regiments were dutifully counted as if they were German divisions on the eve of D-day, with a separate count of the "elite" Republican Guard—and it was feared that Iraq's bombproof aircraft shelters and deep bunkers would survive any air attack.

[Prescription]

MILES TO GO

From a comment posted on the website elaph.com in March by the "digital outreach team" of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs. The team, which consists of two Arabic-language analysts and a foreign-services officer, regularly posts comments on Arabic websites that are considered official statements by the State Department.

When I was in college, an English literature professor assigned Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken." The point of this poem is that discovering new paths is useful because well-traveled trails will lead to the same old place. Although it was written in a different era, the wisdom of that message endures. Our Palestinian brothers can benefit from the lesson we have learned from Frost. After decades, the Palestinians' armed struggle has not improved living conditions for Palestinians, nor has it brought about a Palestinian state. This invites us to take another look at Frost's poem and to realize that taking the same path leads to the same situation (more suffering for the Palestinian people). Frost suggests we look at the other option, the unfamiliar option, the new option, the one that scares us, the one we avoid thinking of, the option of politics and democracy. Frost's message stands true, prompting Palestinians to forge ahead on the path of a two-state solution that will bring a comprehensive and just finality.



ational liberation from Japanese occupation, celebrated at the Arirang Festival," by Philippe Chancel, from North Korea, *published this spring Thames & Hudson.*

That much of this was believed at some level we know from the magnitude of the coalition armies that were laboriously assembled, including more than half a million U.S. troops, as well as tens of thousands of British, French, and Canadians, and which incidentally constituted the sacrilegious infidel presence on Arabian soil that set Osama bin Laden off on his quest for revenge. In the event, two weeks of precision bombing were enough to paralyze Saddam's entire war machine, which scarcely tried to resist the ponderous ground offensive when it came. At no point did the Iraqi air force try to fight, and all those tanks that were painstakingly counted served mostly for target practice. A real army would have continued to resist for weeks or months in the dug-in positions in Kuwait, even without air cover, but Saddam's army was the usual Middle Eastern facade without fighting substance.

Now the Mussolini syndrome is at work over Iran. All the symptoms are present, including tabulated lists of Iran's warships, despite the fact that most are over thirty years old; of combat aircraft, many of which (F-4s, Mirages, F-5s, F-14s) have not flown in years for lack of spare parts; and of divisions and brigades that are so only in name. There are awed descriptions of the Pasdaran Revolutionary Guard, inevitably described as "elite," who do indeed strut around as if they have won many a war but who have actually fought only one—against Iraq, which they lost. As for Iran's claim to have defeated Israel by Hezbollah proxy in last year's scuffle, the publicity was excellent, but the substance went the other way, with roughly 25 percent of the best-trained men dead, which explains the tomblike silence and immobility of the once rambunctious Hezbollah ever since the cease-fire.

Then there is the new light cavalry of Iranian terrorism that is invoked to frighten us if all else fails. The usual Middle East experts now explain that if we annoy the ayatollahs, they will unleash terrorists who will devastate our lives, even though thirty years of "death to America" invocations and vast sums spent on maintaining a special international terrorism department have produced only one major

[Baedeker]

WHEN I WAS IN BAGHDAD

From Instructions for American Servicemen in Iraq During World War II, *a pocket guide published in 1943 by the United States Army Special Service Division. A new facsimile edition will be published next month by the University of Chicago Press.*

You have been ordered to Iraq (i-RAHK) as part of the worldwide offensive to beat Hitler. Herr Hitler knows he's licked if the peoples united against him stand their ground. So he and his propaganda machine are trying to spread disunity and discontent among their opponents whenever and wherever they can. The best way you can prevent Hitler's agents from doing their dirty work is by getting along with the Iraqis and making them your friends. If you understand the people and the country, you as a human being will get the most out of an experience few Americans have been lucky enough to have. Years from now you'll be telling your children and maybe your grandchildren stories beginning, "Now, when I was in Baghdad—"

You have heard and read a lot about the "mysterious East." You have seen moving pictures about the colorful life of the desert and the bazaars. When you actually get there, you will smell and feel a lot of things the movies didn't warn you about. But don't get discouraged. Most Americans and Europeans who have gone to Iraq didn't like it at first. Might as well be frank about it. They thought it a harsh, hot, parched, dusty, and inhospitable land. But nearly all of these people changed their minds after a few days or weeks, largely on account of the Iraqi people they began to meet. So will you.

That tall man in the flowing robe you are going to see soon, with the whiskers and the long hair, is a first-class fighting man, highly skilled in guerrilla warfare. Few fighters in any country, in fact, excel him in that kind of situation. If he is your friend, he can be a staunch and valuable ally. If he should happen to be your enemy—look out! Remember Lawrence of Arabia? Well, it was with men like these that he wrote history in the First World War. Yet you will also find out quickly that the Iraqi is one of the most cheerful and friendly people in the world. If you are willing to go just a little out of your way to understand him, everything will be okay.

bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996, and two in the permissive environment of Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994, along with some assassinations of exiles in Europe.

It is true enough that if Iran's nuclear installations are bombed in some overnight raid there is likely to be some retaliation, but we live in fortunate times in which we have only the irritant of terrorism instead of world wars to worry about—and Iran's added contribution is not likely to leave much of an impression. There may be good reasons for not attacking Iran's nuclear sites—including the very slow and uncertain progress of its uranium enrichment effort—but its ability to strike back is not one of them.

The third and greatest error repeated by Arabophiles and Arabophobes alike, by Turcologists and by Iranists, is also the simplest to define. It is the odd belief that these ancient nations are highly malleable. Hardliners keep suggesting that with a bit of well-aimed violence ("the Arabs only understand force") compliance will be obtained. Yet what happens every time is an increase in hostility; defeat is followed not by collaboration but by sullen noncooperation and active resistance too. It is not hard to defeat Arab countries, but it is mostly useless. Violence can work to destroy dangerous weapons but not to induce desired changes in behavior.

Softliners make exactly the same mistake in reverse. They keep arguing that if only this or that concession were made, if only their policies were followed through to the end and respect shown, or simulated, hostility would cease and a warm Mediterranean amity would emerge. Yet even the most thinly qualified of Middle East experts must know that Islam, as with any other civilization, comprehends the sum total of human life, and that unlike some others it promises superiority in all things for its believers, so that the scientific and technological and cultural backwardness of the lands of Islam generates a constantly renewed sense of humiliation and of civilizational defeat. That fully explains the ubiquity of Muslim violence and reveals the futility of the palliatives urged by the softliners.

The operational mistake that Middle East experts keep making is the failure to recognize that backward societies must be left alone, as the French now wisely leave Corsica to its own devices, as the Italians quietly learned to do in Sicily, once they recognized that maxi-trials merely handed over control to a newer and smarter mafia of doctors and lawyers. With neither invasions nor friendly engagements, the peoples of the Middle East should finally be al-



tled," by Martin Klimas, was on display last month at Foley Gallery, in New York City.

lowed to have their own history—the one thing that Middle East experts of all stripes seem determined to deny them.

That brings us to the mistake that the rest of us make. We devote far too much attention to the Middle East, a mostly stagnant region where almost nothing is created in science or the arts—excluding Israel, per capita patent production of countries in the Middle East is one fourth that of sub-Saharan Africa. The people of the Middle East (only about 5 percent of the world's population) are remarkably unproductive, with a high proportion not in the labor force at all. Not many of us would care to work if we were citizens of Abu Dhabi, with lots of oil money for very few citizens. But Saudi Arabia's 23 million citizens also live largely off the oil revenues that trickle down to them, leaving most of the work to foreign technicians and laborers: even with high oil prices, Saudi Arabia's annual per capita income, at $14,000, is only about two thirds that of oil-free Israel.

Saudi Arabia has a good excuse, for it was a land of oasis hand-farmers and Bedouin pastoralists who cannot be expected to become captains of industry in a mere fifty years. Much more striking is the oil parasitism of once much more accomplished Iran. It exports only 2.5 million barrels a day, compared to Saudi Arabia's 9 million, yet oil still accounts for 80 percent of Iran's exports because its agriculture and industry have become so unproductive.

The Middle East was once the world's most advanced region. These days its biggest industries are extravagant consumption and the venting of resentment. According to the United Nations, the region boasts the third-lowest adult literacy rate in the world (after South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa), at just 63 percent. Its dependence on oil means that manufactured goods account for just 17 percent of exports, compared to a global average of 78 percent. Moreover, despite its oil wealth, the entire Middle East generated under 2 percent of global GDP in 2005—less than Germany.

Unless compelled by immediate danger, we should therefore focus on the old and new lands of creation in Europe and America, in India and East Asia—places where hardworking populations are looking ahead instead of dreaming of the past.

[Dialogue]

THE DISCREET CHARM OF M. SARKOZY

From an interview with Nicolas Sarkozy by the philosopher Michel Onfray, published this spring in issue 8 of Philosophie Magazine. *Sarkozy was elected president of France on May 6. Onfray is the author of thirty-two books, including* Atheist Manifesto. *Translated from the French by Tobias Grey.*

NICOLAS SARKOZY: What do I represent for you? Dare we pursue the logic you set out on your blog: that I am a demagogue, the incarnation of some filthy beast?

MICHEL ONFRAY: Not the incarnation—but there is one point on which we'll have some trouble understanding each other: religion. You've written that you like going to mass with your family because you feel reassured.

SARKOZY: I am not a regular churchgoer. But I believe, I hope, I doubt. Ever since man has had knowledge of his destiny, he has asked himself fundamental questions. Why were we born? Where are we going? Does life open onto nothingness?

ONFRAY: So religion is there to reassure man, to pacify him in the face of death? I think you're right: God is a fiction invented by men so as not to confront the reality of their condition. There's hope and sense in philosophical research, whereas what religion offers is foolish.

SARKOZY: I have sometimes sought happiness and even found it. And so what? What is your vision of philosophy—*carpe diem*, who cares about tomorrow?

ONFRAY: I believe in knowing yourself.

SARKOZY: But such knowledge is impossible, it's absurd! In 1993, I had to go into a preschool classroom eight times to negotiate with a hostage taker known as "the Human Bomb." Eight times I was frightened in a different way. We never know ourselves completely.

ONFRAY: But I think it's possible to get closer and closer to understanding oneself. We can find out about ourselves through history. Finding oneself close to the presidency must generate existential feelings—

SARKOZY: I've often felt illegitimate, for reasons I'm not about to explain, and this made me work harder than others. It was a way of legitimizing everything that happened to me: mayor at twenty-eight, minister at thirty-eight. Finally, I understood that all this effort wasn't enough. I discovered a humane part of me that was missing, a hidden force that I did not suspect existed.

ONFRAY: In politics you make a great deal about the value of work. But when you get paid to do a job like mine or yours, it's more symbolic than anything. To read, write, and hold conferences doesn't have much in common with working on the assembly line in terrible conditions, eight hours a day.

SARKOZY: When I travel around I'm always struck by how much happier workers seem in the factories than in the offices. In the time of Zola's *Germinal*, down in the mine, even if it was physically hard, there was friendship and solidarity, whereas when you're in front of a computer with an assistant manager standing over you, you feel isolated.

ONFRAY: My mother was a cleaning lady, my father a farmworker. They could hardly avail themselves of any working-class solidarity. Certain situations, poverty and ostracism in the suburbs, for instance, sometimes bring out the worst in people. For whatever reason, you don't seem to grasp these mitigating circumstances.

SARKOZY: But what do you make of our choices, the freedom of each individual?

ONFRAY: I don't want to give them an exaggerated importance. A pedophile doesn't decide one fine morning to be attracted to children. I think we are all shaped by our environment, by familial and sociohistorical conditions.

SARKOZY: Are you a communist?

ONFRAY: Neither communist nor liberal. I think there are alternatives, notably libertarian, for capital management.

SARKOZY: So you're interested in complexity?

ONFRAY: Of course! Do you recall a philosophical work that made a particular impression on you?

SARKOZY: In 1995, I was going through a difficult period. In the eyes of the media I had gone from "the Mozart of politics" to a treacherous and false-hearted Iago. It was at this moment that I read some letters from Seneca to his friend Lucilius. Reading this book amid my problems moved me because it was at once simple and very profound—that the idea of pain is worse than the pain itself.

ONFRAY: We possess power over ourselves, over what happens to us and what affects us, because it all boils down to representations.

SARKOZY: I have often asked myself this question when meeting ill people in hospitals. Suffering is often a letdown compared to what we imagine. Can we say the same thing about happiness? I don't think so. All my life, people have told me to wait, not to be in a hurry. As a child, I had to wait for permission to go; as a teenager, I had to wait to become an adult; the adult had to wait until the previous generations gave up their power. Then, one day, the same ones who told me it's too early told me in the same peremptory tone, "It's too late." I tell my children, "Never wait!"



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ONFRAY: We have that in common, not liking to [illegible] I presume you never grow bored—

SARKOZY: Never. It's foreign to me.

ONFRAY: I don't know what being bored is either. "An aimless will," said Arthur Schopenhauer. It's never happened to me. I always find life magnificent, because it is saturated with passions. Let's build crowded moments and that's enough!

SARKOZY: Listen, I'm sorry to say it, but we could go on holiday together!

ONFRAY: Are you joking?

SARKOZY: You don't go on holiday with someone because you agree with him about the problem of social security. Deep down, the most important thing is style.

ONFRAY: I couldn't agree more—

SARKOZY: Take Céline, for example, who was capable of writing a phrase like "Love is a poodle's chance of attaining the infinite." Everything rings true in this phrase: love will make a poodle out of you, and yet it's an absolute infinity.

ONFRAY: Céline was a novelist who found an impassable, inimitable style, and at the same time could be read by everyone. It's not intellectualism on the Joyce scale, it's slap-bang in the people's tongue. He represents French genius—in what is worst, too, like anti-Semitism. But he brings a language and a vision of the world that is at one with an era of mobs and crowds.

SARKOZY: For a long time, I got drunk on crowds, from their applause, their excesses, perhaps even their hysteria. And now I am more appreciative of their silence. It expresses much more than any applause.

ONFRAY: The mass is at once fascinating and worrying. The Nietzschean that I try to be always has this phrase in mind: "It's just as odious for me to follow as it is to lead." Direct and animal contact with a crowd confers a kind of frightening power, but I find there's another, greater power, which causes this power to subside.

SARKOZY: Yes, there is a greater power, which is to persuade the crowd to think as opposed to react. It took me a long time to understand that. I believe in transgression. But to transgress there must be rules! There must be authority, laws. Without rules there can be no transgression. Thus no freedom. Because freedom is transgression.

ONFRAY: The libertarian who I am is not against rules! I am for there being a few rules, so they can be respected and not broken. There shouldn't be laws that invite transgression, but codes, pacts, renewable contracts, passed by individuals. I think that we can offer libertarian resistance to capitalism by creating alternative zones in a world we disapprove of, nomadic free zones, ephemeral, anticapitalist communities. But of that and other things we'll talk again on holiday!

[Poem]

HEIDEGGER'S A.M.

By Les Gottesman, from the Spring issue of The Antioch Review.

Coffee breaks
the chain
of neglect
of the problem of being.

Coffee grounds
the problem in ancient inquiries
concerning being not being beings.

Before coffee
what is not sought
is not unfamiliar
though ungraspable, hot,

but after the first shot
everyone understands
"The sky is blue," "I am happy,"
statements like that.
A white ring mars a dark table.

The problem, the mug
being unmistakable.

[Faits-divers]

LITTLE DEATHS

By Félix Fénéon, from Novels in Three Lines, *to be published in English for the first time in August by New York Review Books. In 1906, Fénéon, who was born in 1861, wrote 1,220 brief items under the rubric News in Three Lines for the Paris daily newspaper* Le Matin, *which were collected after his death in 1944. Translated from the French by Luc Sante.*

"If my candidate loses, I will kill myself," M. Bellavoine, of Fresquienne, Seine-Inférieure, had declared. He killed himself.

Scheid, of Dunkirk, fired three times at his wife. Since he missed every shot, he decided to aim at his mother-in-law, and connected.



Line, *by Amy Cutler, was on view last spring at Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, in New York City.*

Louis Lamarre had neither job nor home, but he did possess a few coins. At a grocery in Saint-Denis, he bought a liter of kerosene and drank it.

Since Delorce left her, Cécile Ward had refused to take him back unless he married her. Finding this stipulation unacceptable, he stabbed her.

In the vicinity of Noisy-sur-Ecole, M. Louis Delillieau, seventy, dropped dead of sunstroke. Quickly his dog Fido ate his head.

"I could have done worse!" exultantly cried the murderer Lebret, sentenced at Rouen to hard labor for life.

In Le Havre, a sailor, Scouarnec, threw himself under a locomotive. His intestines were gathered up in a cloth.

At the station in Mâcon, Mouroux had his legs severed by an engine. "Look at my feet on the tracks!" he cried, then fainted.

Among the Arabs of Douaouda, a couple captured an overzealous suitor and mutilated him, permanently canceling his virility.

What? Children perched on his wall? With eight rounds, M. Olive, property owner in Toulon, forced them to scramble down all bloodied.

In Marseille, Sosio Merello, a Neapolitan, killed his wife She did not wish to market her endowments.

At eighty, Mme. Saout, of Lambézellec, Finistère, was beginning to fear that death had forgotten her. While her daughter was out, she hanged herself.

Le Verbeau hit Marie Champion right on her breasts, but he burned his eye, because acid is not a precision weapon.

Medical examination of a little boy found in a ditch on the outskirts of Niort showed that he had undergone more than just death.

At the Trianon Palace, a visitor disrobed and climbed into the imperial bed. It is disputed [illegible] Napoleon IV.

The schoolchildren of Niort were being crowned. The chandelier fell, and the laurels of three among them were spotted with blood.

Standing on her doorstep, modiste Rudlot, of Malakoff, was chatting with a neighbor. With an iron bar, her wild husband made her shut up.

Three is the age of Odette Hautoy, of Roissy. Nevertheless, L. Marc, who is thirty, did not consider her too young.

There is no longer a God even for drunkards. Kersilie, of Saint-Germain, who had mistaken the window for the door, is dead.

Four times in one week servant Marie Choland set her employer's farm on fire. Now she can burn down Montluçon prison.

A poor box dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua was smashed in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The saint is on the trail of the thief.

In Oyonnax, Mlle. Cottet, eighteen, threw acid in the face of M. Besnard, twenty-five. Love, obviously.

[Strategy]

THE GREEN MAN'S BURDEN

From An Introduction to Planetary Defense: A Study of Modern Warfare Applied to Extra-Terrestrial Invasion, *by Travis Taylor and Bob Boan, published last year by BrownWalker Press. The authors are consultants who have worked for NASA.*

We dedicate this book to those unfortunate citizens and heroes who lost their lives in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America. America was unprepared for those attacks. Being similarly unprepared for an invasion from extra-terrestrials would prove far more catastrophic and would likely end humanity. It is our hope that this book will impel the United States to take advantage of lessons learned from its lack of planning and preparation. A response to the call to plan and prepare will add great purpose to the September 11 victims' unfortunate fates.

This book is a starting point for developing defensive and offensive concepts in the event that an attack from advanced extra-terrestrials occurs. The possibility of extra-terrestrial life is, without a doubt, finite. In fact, the probability is overwhelming. We would be extremely arrogant, and perhaps ignorant, to believe Earth to be the only celestial body with life-forms similar to our own. It is also likely that if ETs exist, some of them might wish us harm for reasons known only to them.

A text of this type might have been useful to the Native Americans when the Europeans—though not from a distant celestial body, ETs of a sort themselves—entered the Americas. The Europeans were from a much more technologically advanced civilization than the Native Americans—just as visiting ETs would be more advanced than we are. The Europeans entered the Native society and began to conquer and assimilate it. In some cases, this occurred peacefully; in others, not so peacefully. There was little the Natives could do to stop the advance of the white man. At best, they delayed the inevitable by adopting the military technology of the Europeans, but it was too little, too late. This text would have been of value only if the Native Americans had heeded the call for preparation, as we ask our civilization to do.

The Native Americans employed many tactics that are today known as guerrilla or, more properly, asymmetric warfare. This type of warfare can be seen in Operation Iraqi Freedom: the superior forces of the United States have been plagued by Iraqi insurgents who use improvised explosive devices and other terrorist tactics. If an alien invasion occurs, humanity might just find itself in the same situation as the Iraqi insurgents.

There is no doubt that we would be the Natives if attacked by aliens, and we must assume the Europeans—ETs this time—are coming. Will they be nasty or nice? Do we wish to travel our own Trail of Tears? Will we trade Manhattan, America, or perhaps the globe? Or will we become extinct, as did certain Native Americans? In the event that some smooth-talking aliens show up with shiny trinkets and strands of beads, we will, hopefully, be more prepared than the Native Americans were. Had the Indians themselves been making preparations for the arrival of the Europeans and had the various tribes joined forces, history would have a very different story to tell. We should learn from the fate of the American Indian. Otherwise, we will be forced into a never-ending underground resistance that in the long run will prove ineffective. Now is the time for preparation, before it is too late!

[Digressions]

SAVED BY THE BELL

From recordings made last September by Matthew LaClair, seventeen, of two meetings of his eleventh-grade history class at Kearny High School, in Kearny, New Jersey. In February, LaClair's parents filed a complaint that their son's First Amendment and civil rights had been violated after his teacher, David Paszkiewicz, allotted class time to discussion of his religious views. Paszkiewicz has since been reprimanded by the school board, and LaClair was transferred from his class. As part of a May settlement, the school will offer teachers and students training on the separation of church and state and the distinction between evolution and creationism.

DAVID PASZKIEWICZ: I'm going to keep this short—every day we'll devote five minutes or so to you guys trying to make an atheist out of me.

FEMALE STUDENT: Let's say I show up at the Gates of Heaven or the Gates of Hell and I see Jesus, and then I realize, Okay, this is real now, I believe, I won't denounce Christ. Is that too late?

PASZKIEWICZ: It's like a soccer game. Once you get that red card, you're out of the game. You get a warning. How many yellow cards do you get? Two. After the second one, you're done. This life is the playing field.

FEMALE STUDENT: For a Muslim who's never seen the Bible, how is He trying to get him to follow Him if he's never heard of it?

PASZKIEWICZ: He's in the Koran, you know—they've heard of Him. Man has a conscience. Everybody on this planet has this concept of right or wrong. My dog doesn't bite me because he's suffering from PMS—it's instinct. If he feels threatened, he bites me. I'm using that figuratively, because my dog wouldn't bite anybody. But you guys know what I'm saying about dogs, right? There is no such thing as a bad dog—they operate on instinct. Humans are different. We're moral beings. You take any culture on this planet, it has a basic concept of right and wrong. What they worship may be different, but there's something inside of them that tells them there's something greater than them. Find me a culture that doesn't have a god, I'll give you an A+ for the class. Don't use the Soviet Union, because their god lives with Satan.

FEMALE STUDENT: Isn't there, like, a culture that doesn't believe in anything? Atheists?

PASZKIEWICZ: Does an atheist have a concept of justice? Where does that come from?

FEMALE STUDENT: I don't know—their human, um, brain?

PASZKIEWICZ: The highest value in public education is tolerance, but tolerance of what? There are a lot of things I don't want my kids tolerating. Ethnic diversity? Yes. Deviant sexual behavior? No. I still believe in the concept of sin. All that stuff is considered old-fashioned nowadays. Let's suppose you have a religious family. You surrender your kid to the state from preschool on through the twelfth grade. Mom and Dad are trying to tell you that the Bible is God's word, and their lives are deeply rooted in faith, yet the "smart" people—I say that in quotations, because they're not really all that smart—the teachers you're exposed to, never once will you see them crack open a Bible, never once will you hear them quote it, and never once will you hear a prayer from their lips. Over the course of twelve years, what's the transfer? Smart people don't have faith, don't believe.

MALE STUDENT: But then there's people like me—my mom and my dad never go to church.

PASZKIEWICZ: Well, that's their prerogative, but should they impose that on the rest of the world?

MALE STUDENT: What would you do if one of your kids after a while said, "Thanks for teaching me all this, but I don't agree, I don't have faith"?

PASZKIEWICZ: Until you're eighteen, you have to do it. If my kid is age twelve and he's telling me, "Dad, I appreciate your time and effort, but I've decided in my twelve years of wisdom I'm going to stop going to church"—after I break his backside, we're going to have a little attitude adjustment. He's gonna get in the car with the rest of the family and go to church.

MALE STUDENT: Isn't the whole point of public school so that you can separate personal beliefs from nonreligious teachings?

PASZKIEWICZ: Mm, no. The purpose of public school is to provide free education for people that can't afford education. What it's become is social engineering.

MALE STUDENT: What if some students don't believe in the Bible?

PASZKIEWICZ: That's their prerogative. What if the student doesn't believe in evolution?

MALE STUDENT: Well, evolution is scientific.

PASZKIEWICZ: Is it?

MALE STUDENT: Yes. I could get you a whole bunch of information on it.

PASZKIEWICZ: Yeah, I'm thirty-eight years old, I've seen the information on it. Take the big bang theory. The theory is that there was nothing out there, there was no matter. But yet nothing exploded and created something. Let me give you a clue, guys: if there's nothing—it can't explode! Okay? And that is supposed to have created order, all of the order you see



Krumme Lanke 2, *by Dieter Mammel, whose work will be displayed in September at Melanee Cooper Gallery, in Chicago.*

in the universe. How many of you have ever witnessed an explosion? Did you ever see a firecracker blow up? Did you ever see a fireworks show? Did you ever see a gun fire? Did you see the twin towers collapse on TV? Did any of these ever create order? You know what, no explosion has ever created order in all of recorded human history. That's observation. Nobody ever recorded an explosion creating order, yet we make this assumption about an event that occurred a billion years ago? That's not scientific. There's nothing scientific about it. It sounds cool on paper, but it defies human reason.

MALE STUDENT: If I have faith, if I truly, truly believe that a man, let's say, 2,766 years old, with a blue face and a pink shirt—and he always wears the same thing—if I have true faith that that man created the universe, does that mean that it really happened?

PASZKIEWICZ: No. It's a good argument, though. You guys were following what he's saying, right? Some of you probably disagree with what I've put on the board. That's okay—you're not going to be tested on it, you understand. You're going to be tested on populism.

[Futurism]

WHY ARE WE IN ZEFRA?

From Crisis in Zefra, *a novel by the Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts of the Canadian Department of National Defense and Karl Schroeder, a science fiction author. The novel, which predicts the effects of emerging technologies on warfare, is set in the year 2025 in the fictional African nation Zefra, where an international peacekeeping coalition including Canadian forces has been deployed. In the novel, the term "minder" refers to a personal communication device, and the term "moblog aggregator" refers to an online news service that collects live video feeds from individuals with digital cameras present at the site of a news event.*

Zefra was on the move. From Warrant Officer Desai's perspective, what she was seeing on her screen had the quality of a slow dance—or the swirl of a growing vortex in coffee being stirred.

"It looks like coordinated movement on the

ground, sir," she told the major. "Thousands of people are on the march. I've never seen anything like it." What she was seeing wasn't like riots, or even like the planned movement of troops. Crowds were coalescing in different parts of the city and moving purposefully toward key intersections.

"They're flash mobs, sir, that much we know. Each one is the result of a localized text message appearing on the phones of people in a particular neighborhood. One message said Canadian troops had barged into a mosque—not true, of course, but it went out to a Muslim newsgroup and people poured into the streets near the place. Another said somebody was trying to sneak a tanker truck full of water out of the city—that one tied up the main road. I'm trying to correlate the messages with their targets, to anticipate what groups might be flashed next."

Desai called up the main situation map. With the flash mobs and projected positions of the rebels combined, it was clear that the city was being cut in two. The U.N. forces had concentrated around the bombed aid station and the market, across town from the industrial area; flash mobs made a dotted line that blocked every intersection leading to that part of town. The coalition couldn't deploy nonlethal crowd-control measures to disperse them, because each mob had a different motive—some were protesters, but some were composed of people whose minders had told them of an unexpected sale on saris, or of the unannounced visit of a local video hero. Blasting away at such groups could ruin the hearts-and-minds effort.

On another screen there was a news feed showing the bombed aid station. "One extraordinary feature of this incident," a commentator was saying, "was the prompt response by emergency personnel. In fact, the majority of the people who responded weren't even on this continent. Flash-mob response teams have been used for years; within seconds of the bombing, all persons in Zefra known to have medical or first-aid training had their minders ring. Many headed straight for the aid station. Remarkably, though, a quick-thinking aid-station worker at the scene organized a handout of augmented-reality glasses. Through an experimental program started by Doctors Without Borders, each set of glasses automatically called a volunteer medical worker in France or Morocco. Those that responded were immediately 'on the scene' through the telepresence effect of the glasses, able to guide the hands of bystanders who wanted to help. Word is that triage was remarkably organized and swift and that several lives were saved through extraordinary interventions that could not otherwise have occurred."

Desai was trying to improve her search results when she heard a heated conversation start up—physically nearby, not within the virtual space of her headphones. The major was on the phone. "No, our troops have not fired on anyone! What you're seeing is a false feed. No, a false feed. I can see the market right now, everything's fine. You need to—" Desai turned her display back on and was instantly high above Zefra again.

She felt a growing sense of unease. First the flash mobs, and now an apparently sophisticated real-time moblog aggregator spoof. There was more going on here than an isolated attack, or even an attempt by some locals to gain control of the city. It was all being played to a wider audience. The real purpose of the day's chaos had yet to be revealed.

"It's ironic that it is Canadians who are being killed," the major said absently. "After all, it was our philosopher Marshall McLuhan who said that politics would eventually be replaced by imagery. Today, we prove that adage."

[Transcript]

PATERNITY LEAVE

From a recording of a February 21, 2004, conversation between Omar Khyam and Mohammad Sidique Khan. The conversation took place in Khyam's car, which had been bugged by British intelligence agents. Khan, who was born in Britain to Pakistani immigrants in 1974, was among the four suicide bombers responsible for the attacks on the London transit system that killed fifty-two people on July 7, 2005; he spent several months in Pakistan between November 2004 and February 2005. The recording was presented as evidence at a trial that resulted in Khyam, twenty-five, being convicted in April, along with four others, of plotting to set off bombs made of fertilizer in Britain. In Arabic, haraam *means an act prohibited by Islam,* deen *means religion, and* kuffaar *means unbelievers.*

MOHAMMAD SIDIQUE KHAN: Are you really a terrorist?

OMAR KHYAM: No, I'm not a terrorist, but they are working through us.

KHAN: Who are? There's no one higher than you.

KHYAM: No. Right now I'm still emir of the brothers. I want to apologize, because when you come down you always end up speaking to someone else. In this country, we work that way. It's better security for everybody. If you go now, that's it, because every time you come back you're going to make yourself hotter. Your youth, traveling in and out of Pakistan—they

watch that. So when you come back and meet up with the brothers, you make the brothers here hotter as well. This is a one-way ticket, bruv. As long as you're going to leave, you may as well rip the country apart economically. All the brothers who are leaving are running scams, and I advise you to do the same. Twenty grand is good money, bruv. I can set it all up for you. I believe it is the purest of wealth, more pure than your nine-to-five jobs. They are taking it from us, and we are taking it back. That's all I've got to say, bruv. If there is anything you would like to ask, then fire away.

KHAN: I know it's really out of order, but I was hoping for a flat extension. My wife's having a kid, and I was hoping I could get to the hospital.

KHYAM: I have something for that, bro.

KHAN: The child is due May 25. I'd like two, maybe three weeks after that just so I can make sure my wife is physically okay and the child's all right. That is the absolute latest. Is that okay?

KHYAM: No problem, bruv.

KHAN: Going through the airport with normal tickets, that's okay?

KHYAM: That's okay, bruv, because you're a Paki. Get your parents to pick you up. But getting into Pakistan, you're just as much at risk as a Paki, 'cause of the regime and the *kuffaar*. We're not different because we've got Pakistani parents.

KHAN: What do we need to buy?

KHYAM: You won't be allowed to take any of the jihad stuff on the flight. The kit we have is almost ready. I can take you to it tomorrow morning. It's about an hour's drive to where it is being stocked. Then you go and get a rucksack. You need a sleeping bag, one that goes inside, so it needs to be compact. And boots, a good pair of boots. Go for a breathable jacket. No need for Gore-Tex.

KHAN: With regards to the babe, I'm debating whether or not to say goodbye and so forth.

KHYAM: You know what my advice is, right? Next month they're going to start raiding big time all over the U.K. Tell them you love them, bruv, but because we love the *deen*, it's better that we stay away from them. The only advice I have is total obedience to whoever your emir is, whether he is Sunni, Arab, Chechen, Saudi, or British. Total obedience. I don't know if you heard about the brother who disobeyed one order and got his throat cut? The biggest lesson I learned from that bro was total obedience to your emir unless he tells you to do *haraam*. The second thing you have to understand is that you need a reason to go to Pakistan. You're going to be a British guy who's come to study in Pakistan because it's a lot cheaper. You will be enrolling in college, doing electronics courses, computer courses, whatever you want to do, and you will be given a normal lifestyle. That's all that will happen for the first four or five months. We need to get intelligence, and we want them to follow us until they think, These guys are nothing. When we feel the time is right, operations will start. Everybody wants to fight, everybody wants to go to the front. It is not about us holding back, but we need to know when we send a brother that he's not fifty-fifty, because if he gets caught, we will be held accountable because we weren't 100 percent. We don't want it so that if we had waited an extra month, everything would be cool, but because we made a rash decision, you got caught, and because you got caught, you're going to be tortured, punished, and we're going to feel bad.

[Avowal]

A LITTLE TERROR

From a documentary aired in February on German television about Reda Seyam, a German citizen and suspected Al Qaeda agent who allegedly operated in Bosnia during the 1990s. Seyam sued for the right to name his sixth child "Jihad" after a registry in Berlin rejected his application on the grounds that the name could "endanger the child." In February, a court overturned the decision on the grounds that Jihad is "a recognized male forename in the Arab world and loved by Muslims." The German Interior Ministry is appealing the decision. Translated from the German by Geoffrey Garrison.

REDA SEYAM: Jihad is eight months old. He's a Berliner, born in Berlin.

INTERVIEWER: Jihad is an unusual name for a German. Why Jihad?

SEYAM: Jihad originates from the Koran. It has many meanings, such as striving to stay on the straight path.

INTERVIEWER: But you have just shown me that jihad is a call to war, to struggle. Is it not a burden for your child to bear such a name?

SEYAM: I think he will be proud that he has this name. Even if we're forced to change his name in documents, Jihad will stay Jihad. Yes, he is fighting now—just born and already in court. You've already begun your fight, boy. Did you hear that?

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Friedrich Nietzsche

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[Fiction]

THIRTEEN DREAMS

By Naguib Mahfouz, in the Spring issue of Southwest Review *and included in* Dreams of Departure, *published by the American University in Cairo Press. Mahfouz, winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize in Literature, died last summer at ninety-four. The Fatiha is the first chapter of the Koran. Translated from the Arabic by Raymond Stock.*

DREAM 105

All the men in our quarter get their grooming done in Uncle Abduh's salon—pulled in by the irresistible woman who sits behind the counter. We all want to better ourselves financially, so we have our beards trimmed there every morning in the realm of beauty.

One day as I walked down a street that was shining clean and lovely, the belle of Uncle Abduh's shop drew close to me. I had to turn and stare at her. Suddenly she stuck out her tongue at me—then, just as quickly, her face changed into a thick block of wood.

Fleeing from her as fast as I could, a great laugh caught up with me. Peering in the direction from which it came, I saw the gorgeous creature dancing in the arms of her boss, both in the grip of merriment and glee.

DREAM 106

The ministry shook with the news that a coup d'état had taken place early that morning; the employees all gathered before the television to catch the first official bulletin. One of the older men said that he'd heard the same announcement early in his youth.

Meanwhile, I discovered that the coup's leader was one of my closest friends. After broadcasting the fact excitedly, I relaxed with joy, convinced that life would now be laughing with me.

But my aged colleague recalled that the world had laughed for him once, too—when he'd found himself condemned without a trial.

DREAM 113

At last, the new minister arrived.

I presented myself to him as his parliamentary secretary, but he didn't understand a word I said. I tried to explain my work to him, but he brushed me off nastily, ordering that I be transferred from my position—and so began my life's suffering.

Then Fate decreed that he and I should be thrust together in an unexpected venue: prison. Once over the shock, I began to remind him of our first encounter and all that came from it—until he himself recalled it, expressing his regret and apologizing for what he'd done to me.

At this, I seized upon our being held in the same place to tell him about the job of parliamentary secretary.

DREAM 117

I was sitting in the cafe, when, without seeking my leave, our neighborhood's chief bully sat down next to me.

As I welcomed him with distaste, he announced that he had chosen me to marry his daughter, a divorcée. My limbs trembling, I replied that I was going to wed my paternal uncle's daughter that weekend.

He answered with confident simplicity, "You're going to marry my daughter, and your uncle's daughter's going to marry me."

DREAM 128

An antiques shop shining with brightness and cheer. A miraculously pretty girl sat inside, serving the patrons. Walking around it for a while, I came upon a restaurant.

I ate a sandwich and smoked a cigarette before going back for another glimpse of the adolescent beauty. But instead of her, I found in her place a creaking old crone. My breast quivered as my eyes searched in vain for the ravishing one for whom I'd come.

I kept staring in confusion at the mirror over her head. There I beheld an old man leaning on a heavy cane, whose legs, and heart, and memory, had faltered.

DREAM 148

The competition between trains to Alexandria and autos on the Agricultural Road grew more and more intense.

Finally, the directors of the railroad met and decided to create a special car for uproar, with women and complete liberty of behavior. There would also be a salon in every wagon dedicated to drinking, singing, and dancing.

So I kept on drinking, singing, and dancing, waiting for the chance to slip away to the rumpus room of delights.

DREAM 151

Under the tree we would sit with him, for evenings of both enjoyment and learning, when once he excused himself in order to take his medicine. He went up to his flat—but didn't come back.

When one of us went to check on him, he found the apartment locked up tight from the outside. So began a fruitless search for him in all his haunts, as anxiety gripped us all equally—those who loved him, and those who hated him, and those who were indifferent to him as well.

Meanwhile, at our mosque, the imam led the Prayer for the Absent on the soul of the one who was no longer seen.

DREAM 155

I was informed that my noble mentor, Sheikh Mustafa Abd al-Raziq, had caught a slight cold. I decided to visit him, but instead I found him standing in front of my door, with tears streaming down his cheeks. He regarded me with his wise expression as he wept.

"Master," I told him, "it's nothing more than a minor illness; there's no reason to cry." But he answered, "I'm not weeping for myself."

Then I understood: the lament was for us all. So I seized the chance to ask him, "What should we do, then, about humanity as a whole?"

"You have a lot of pharmacies full to the brim with all sorts of medications," he replied, "not to mention the deadly popular remedies."

DREAM 157

According to the medical report, I only had a few weeks to live. First I was struck by sadness—then by a wave of recklessness. I began to eat food that the doctors had forbidden me to touch for years. And I finally committed myself to my girlfriend S., asking her to marry me.

"You'll lose a great, innocent friendship," she told me, astonished, "while getting nothing in return." But I pressed her anyway until she gave in.

Two days later, a doctor friend said that a world-famous specialist would be visiting Egypt, and they had booked a place for me with him: Congratulations! I was consumed with joy from head to foot—until I remembered all the deadly food that I had devoured, and the marriage to which I had tied myself without really wanting it.

My ecstasy turned to vexation and concern.

DREAM 161

At first the lissome, enchanting young woman hovered around me. Then she took me by the arm into a hidden-away corner, where there waited a carriage to which a donkey was harnessed. She boarded it and motioned to me, so I also got in, huddling next to her.

She took the reins and drove the carriage with skill. The donkey began to move very slowly down the street jammed with people and all sorts of vehicles, until it reached the Desert Road. Then it began to go faster and faster as though racing the cars and buses, until it seemed to fly in the air.

"Where are we going?" I asked the bewitching one in fright.

"To wherever the donkey stops," she replied, "when he runs out of steam."

DREAM 172

I went to the public bath to remove whatever clung to my body and my soul. As I stood naked in the steam room, waiting for whoever would massage me, a handsome young woman came in.

Exposing all of her charms, she began to rub me delicately and tenderly. This upset the others present terribly.

But I paid them no mind—and thanked Fate for its blessings!

DREAM 179

My dear, deceased friend came to visit me. He queried me, "Why are you so sad?"

I told him that my weak eyesight and hearing had cut me off from the sources of culture that I used to read, hear, and see. So he took me to a publishing house managed by one of our university colleagues and asked him for a work on all the modern ideas about science, philosophy, and literature.

The man produced a big book. Along with it he gave us a brand-new printing of the Holy Koran, saying that the hefty tome contained an interpretation of the sacred text that had never been seen before.

We took these gifts with us. On the street my friend said, "I will come to you every evening to read you a chapter from the Glorious Koran, along with a chapter from the other book, until we finish them both."

"May God grant you mercy," I welcomed him, "and set you to dwell in the broadest glades of Paradise."

DREAM 188

I was walking with Sheikh Zakariya Ahmad toward the hill covered with banks of flowers. At its center, Umm Kulthoum stood with a delegation of people from the arts, such as al-Hamuli, Uthman, al-Manyalawi, Abd al-Hayy Hilmi, Sayyid Darwish, Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, Munira al-Mahdiya, Fathiya Ahmad, and Layla Murad.

Umm Kulthoum sang:

I heard a voice calling before the dawn.

She kept repeating it until we all grew anxious. Then the sound grew fainter little by little until it was gone.

Next, Munira al-Mahdiya sang:

The night that you came
To Muntaza,
We had hardly sat down,
Our cups in our hands,
When, ah!
The day had come.

After her, Sayyid Darwish sang:

Visit me once each year, for it's wrong to abandon people forever!

When he'd finished, Sheikh Zakariya sang:

Old closeness from the beautiful past, if only you could return.

As for me, I just recited the Fatiha over them all.



Untitled (2005), ink on paper, by Laylah Ali, from her Typology Series, will be exhibited this fall at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, in Iow City, Iowa

Artwork courtesy the artist; 303 Gallery, New York Ci and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelph

IN THE YEAR OF THE STORM

The topography of resurrection in New Orleans

By Duncan Murrell

:T ONE

ME TO TOWN IN THE BRISTLING DARK of a dred highway signs ruined and powerless. wind had twisted their posts until they bent as if genuflecting. I wasn't used to it being lark along I-10, the flat -laner from Mobile ugh Mississippi to New eans. In the daylight it was n and deep and thick and terious, but also beautiful. v it was just wild. I knew at was out there, the aps of canebrakes, the es of lowland and bayou, acres of grass and hillocks ine. No mercy. I punched station wagon up to ity and hit Elysian Fields levard at around ten P.M. There was some light in city at least. A few stop- its worked, and a few ises along Elysian Fields had light. The rest re still empty that first week of January 2006. wn by the river there was plenty of light, d it was easy to pick out my turn onto North mpart, a left past The Phoenix, where the stlers and the leather boys and the bears re already out, and down almost all the way the tracks, to the old shotgun where I'd cided to live. There weren't many people ound, but I knew where I could get a drink just as soon as I got the car unloaded. I got on the gas a little too much.

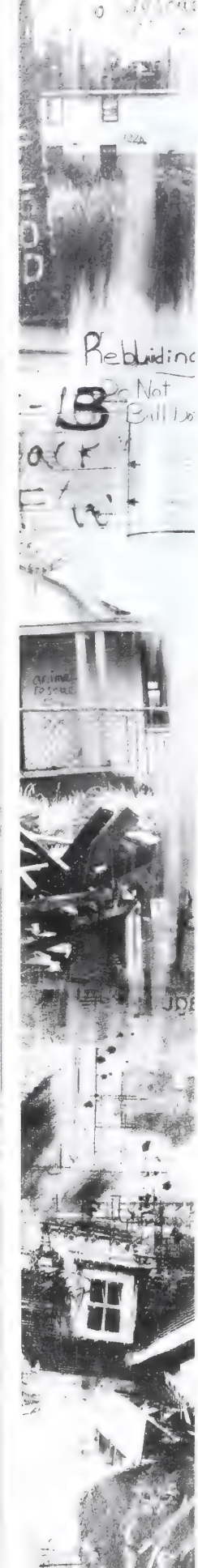


In the street a woman stood watching my headlights run up on her. She had light eyes and skin that could have been black or white. She'd pulled her hair back and tucked it under a fedora. She was carrying an old seabag, and after I'd slammed the brakes we made eye contact. She was tall and stood only slightly stooped. God knows how old she was, I couldn't tell. But I thought she looked like she wanted to tell me something, which normally I wouldn't have thought, but this was New Orleans, where the women were wise and keen and walked the streets bearing their lives in sacks, always ready with an introduction to the beyond. So I waited, wondering what she would say and whether she intended to get out of the street. She mouthed these words:

Why don't you slow the fuck down, bitch? Then she continued on down St. Roch. When I passed through the intersection, I thought about stopping to talk to her. Surely that wasn't all she had to say. But I also wanted to get to my house and get my drink on at Smitty's, and so I resolved to go find her some other day. I had time to get the story. I knew what that story would be. Chaos would resolve itself through conflict into

Duncan Murrell's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"The Swarm: An Eruption in the French Quarter," appeared in the August 2005 issue.*

ges of flood-damaged photographs found after Hurricane Katrina by Will Steacy. Courtesy the artist Peer Gallery, New York City. This page: "Father & Daughter, New Orleans, Louisiana." e border illustrations by Brian Hubble. Source photographs by Ruth Robbins



redemption and inspiration, the people of New Orleans would endure their trials, their resilience would be known in their success. I would find that place full of tough and contrary people in love with their city, headsuckers and rosary prayers and maskers all. Such a place, never overcome in three hundred years of disease and high water, would only [illegible] make good. This had always been the story. I would simply observe, and in the end I would walk away happy, my story in hand. *Reckoning on their success.* It would be easy to see.

I talked to the woman with the bag many times after that. Month after month I ran across her walking here and there, all over the city. I think she lived everywhere. She told me her stories, she bitched at me, she hit me up for money. She was drunk one day and in church the next. I saw her shouting at the mayor once. After many months in the ruined city, she heard my confession. Now I wish I had never gone to New Orleans. I had no business there. I have nothing but penance to do now.

In a room overlooking the wounded garden behind St. Louis Cathedral, men and women sat at the foot of the Transylvanian expatriate while he read from a collection of old essays gathered up and released soon after the hurricane. The rug was soft. The young men let the older people sit in the antique chairs. The Transylvanian, now a professional New Orleanian, announced

In the few months since the storm, nearly everything one might call a treasure had been threatened, lost, or destroyed. But this was the city again

his love of the city and especially his love of bohemia. He described muses, the scene passing by the sidewalk window at Molly's, the beauty of Lafayette Cemetery uptown. That orbit—between the rambling Garden District manses and the cramped French Quarter, with detours into the Faubourg Marigny and the Bywater—had been his for three decades. This was a city the slight old woman in the green wool suit jacket recognized. It was the old city wound down along the riverside on the natural river levee. She fiddled with the voluptuous, silver fleur-de-lis pin on her lapel. I watched her dab at her eyes more than I watched the Transylvanian. It was a comfortable city, this bohemia. She could depend on it now. If it had once seemed dangerous, it was now a relief. Her muse wore gold and green and purple, she wa[s] and assuring and at peace, she stood p[o] still and modeled for posters.

A few blocks away and across Ramp[art] man in the black T-shirt sold the last [of] Heinekens. He had his dirty white cool[er] wagon and a wad of cash in his pocket. H[e] lightened his load, he weaved through th[e] ond line to catch up with the ba[nd] Claiborne, where the overpass cast an [arc] over the old center of a nearly vanished [neigh]borhood. His T-shirt had a design on it [in the] shape of the Warner Brothers insignia [and a] pun on the name: *If You See Da Police, W[atch] Brotha*. As he ran, he passed by white peo[ple] bikes made to look like motorcycles. He [held] his head. Down St. Bernard he went, passi[ng] the skeletons of old storefronts and h[ouses] some of which had been damaged in the [hur]cane and flood, some of which had been [left] down for years. He pulled up on the n[eut]ground under the bypass just as the brass b[and] tore into a vamp that echoed among the [con]crete pilings until the shouts and the wh[istles] and the brass became one sound, the sound [of a] thousand people come home.

Back in the days of Congo Square, where [slaves] were allowed to gather on Sundays and fo[r fu]nerals, that moment when the mood cha[nged] and people got on up was called *cutting the [rug]*, *loose*. It had a literal meaning then, and m[eant] it still does. The beer man had begun the d[ance] the street outside St. Augustine's Cath[olic] Church, in the ancient black neighborhood c[alled] Tremé. Around the corner stood the Tom[b of] the Unknown Slave, a cross leaning against[the] ground, as Christ had leaned it on his wa[y to] Golgotha, made entirely of forged shackles [and] chains. Even in mid-January, the grass had b[egun] to overtake it again. It had the illusion of sp[on]taneity, as if you'd just rounded the corner out[side] the old, filigreed church and stumbled on a cr[oss]. There is no tomb in the strict sense, no bones, [and] the shrine itself is made of Mississippi River b[ank] chain and scrap metal. It invites possibility [and] something lingering in the cracks of the ir[on]; something left behind by the slaves, some[thing] blood. A cell, maybe. The point of the shr[ine], though, is that there's nothing left. All the c[ells] have dispersed, died, or become part of the An[glo] ican body.

What's left is a second line, forming up [in] front of the church. Brass bands tune up, the [club] men of the social and pleasure clubs straigh[ten] themselves, and the rest fall in behind, shout[ing] out to old friends and hugging the necks of fa[m]ily back for a time from Atlanta and Mempl[is]. It's no ordinary second line, either, but a ci[ty]wide summit of neighborhood marching so[cie]eties and brass bands parading for unity. Un[ity]



state of grace known by few yet expected of
hopeless.
here's white people, where all these white people
ng from? the beer man said to me. There were
e people, yes. The second line was, after all,
of the treasures of New Orleans. In the few
ths since the storm, nearly everything one
it call a treasure had been threatened, lost,
n, or destroyed, and so if there was a treasure
to be grabbed you grabbed it, even if it
n't yours and you felt a little uncomfortable
it, even if you were most comfortable danc-
it the back of the line. This was the city again,
exceptional New Orleans. Turning down Es-
ade from Claiborne, the second line ran
a white neighborhood, and there were the
e drivers at their rooming house and the la-
d photographer of erotica sipping on tea, and
e were the kids on the corner waving the fa-
s street signs from their neighborhood. *Piety,*
re, Pleasure: the streets that launched one
aphor a thousand times in the weeks after the
d. But that day, in that second line, people
w how to get to Piety and Desire, they knew
streets and their turns and their landmarks.
se were real places, and this was a real city that
symbolic of, or analogous to, or reminiscent
nothing else but home.

About the time the Transylvanian adjourned
Molly's with his entourage, three people were
t just as the second line ended near the Zulu
b. No one saw anything.

At Molly's, the Transylvanian touched the leg of a young woman who described herself as a "professional muse." There was pink fuzzy fringe on the lips of her boots, and the Transylvanian invited us to stroke her legs while his wife watched. *Fucking pussy*, he said when I declined. I admired the former owner's urn over the register. An artist left his paintings of cadavers on the bar while he did push-ups in the corner.

So there it is: grace, alcohol, violence, music, sex, death, bohemianism, melancholy, strange ritual. I had a po'boy that day too, and I rode my black bike across the Marigny and the Bywater in the bottom of night. I admired the glow that bent over the levee from the unseen river. I wondered at the speed of the clouds. The wheels of my bicycle crunched over the remnants of all the old slate roofs now powdered and chipped and lying in the street. I thought I saw buds on the tulip magnolia outside my room when I got home. Darkness, clouds, flowers, fertility.

This was the city as I'd known it before, which made it seem all the more imitative. They were the details of a city that had been a living rebuke to Americanism, and they had become emblems of something lost.

I rode my bicycle and drove my car for weeks through the old neighborhoods. The flood had instantly reduced the city to its old shape, a long, curving, narrow settlement along the river.

band & Wife, New Orleans, Louisiana"



It is a city of triangles and grids laid down in approximation of that undulating landscape. At the diminishing point of the sliver, in what's known as Riverbend, I sat on bar stools made of mannequin legs. During those weeks I avoided the destruction out beyond the lights. Some things are inherently deranging. I had not experienced the disaster firsthand, and so I had none of my own memories of it, nothing with which to order it. To me it could only be large, sweeping, immense, and uniform, and I was afraid to see it for fear that I would then see nothing else. I needed preparation.

So I rode up Prytania and down Magazine, and then down Burgundy all the way to Poland Avenue, just a little way from the Industrial Canal and the Lower 9th Ward. There were signs on the telephone poles, and over time the WILL GUT HOUSES signs gave way to the WILL TEAR DOWN HOUSES signs. Most of the children who had returned to the city without a berth in one of the private or parochial schools spent their days on the corner, mimicking the touts and runners, nearly angelic in their perfect white T-shirts, spinning their chopped-out bicycles from the corner store to the alley and back. The zoysia grass started greening uptown by mid-February, and so the trucks that pulled around Lee Circle looking for Latino day labor started carrying edgers and mowers too. The cranes and the herons returned to Audubon Park, and the joggers.

There overhung the city during those days a humidity of optimism every bit as oppressive and stultifying as summer after rain. Forbid that some people should wonder whether the city would fail, whether friends would ever return, or whether still have their job in six months. To name



things risked giving life to them. The city still shucking and jiving for the rest of the country, earning its pennies and promising to sumpin' real good and straight and honest-wit yo money mistah sorry we such a *inconvenience*. Intimations of failure or lack of will were unacceptable.

One day the president came to town, and I went down to Jackson Square to see a demonstration. I had seen angry people and sad people, but I hadn't seen many organized people. On the street cranky shopkeepers bent over maps, and young women rang by on bicycles sprouting delicate plastic flowers. I watched the protest get organized in the amphitheater across Decatur from the square. I choked down a beignet and coughed up a cloud of powdered sugar. The girls from the upper school at Sacred Heart Academy filed off the bus and into standing rows on the amphitheater steps, as if the

"Necklace, New Orleans, Louisian

about to give a concert. They carried lettered signs: FIX THE LEVEE OR WE ARE . And: JEFFERSON THOUGHT WE WERE H THE MONEY. I waded into the scrum at ottom of the amphitheater, past Sister Lieux in her life jacket, who was being gued about the Louisiana Purchase by a ewed college boy. The girls were making ants on the spot: *Fix the Levee, Fix, Fix the* and at the dead center of the assembly one red-headed woman in an orange rain o and heels. She gestured to the girls as if cting them. The girls would huddle for a conds, and out would come another pep-cheer about saltwater intrusion and engi-g practices.

e rally was the work of Shawn Holahan, comey and the woman in the poncho. In I would come to realize that what was d on the steps of the amphitheater was a aux of Shawn's mind and its obsessions.

few weeks later, once I'd introduced f, she took me up to the 17th Street Canal h, where it was being repaired under the nce of the Army Corps of Engineers. n drove her Caravan and talked continu-aking it as her duty to show me the whole t once, or at least everything her fifty years aught her to remember. She wore big glass-d flowing skirts, and grinned at me like an when she wasn't confessing her doubts or g me someone or other was a real asshole. n she relaxed you could hear the yat in her , which she sometimes exaggerated for t. *Here in Nawlins, down in da swamp,* she'd nd laugh. *Da swamp* carried so many differ-neanings for her. It was just a perfect phrase verything.

hawn fiddled with the junk—coins, pieces m, old papers—that had lodged in the ole. She talked about the lakefront. "If I come back and be able to walk to the front with my dog, that's it. I might not e back. That's a non-negotiable, that's my -bottom requirement. I've got to be able to *from* my house *to* the lake. That's it." A est requirement.

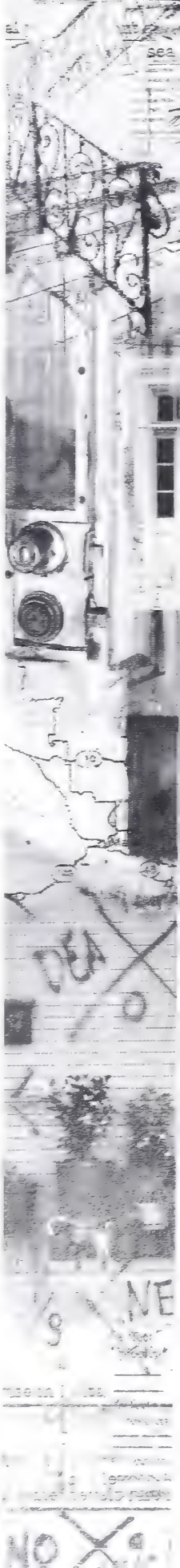
e careened back and forth across Lake Pon Gentilly, cutting across City Park and driving ugh the emptiness of an untended golf se, always past flooding the points where the ds had broken, until finally, when we were ed and staring at heavy equipment near the Street Canal, she said: "Do you mind if I trate this?"

e got out of her Caravan and hiked up onto earthen levee. She went slowly. We stepped urvey markers and she studied the warning, paring the numbers to what she knew rations mainly. We got as close as we could to the workers, who were driving sheets of metal deep into the earth where they were supposed to have been when the water rushed in, nearly twenty feet deeper in places. Shawn told me she came often to observe the men working the breach. This was one of her new pastimes, she said. On the crest of the canal levee she walked slowly, and her red hair blew across her face. My eyes teared up from the dirt in the air. I thought she looked like someone pacing a widow's walk, but perhaps that was just the context. She said she didn't trust that repairs were actually happening unless she laid her own eyes on them, and she sometimes worried that when she turned away the workers would disappear. She looked down the line of concrete walls that topped the canal farther down and showed me how they bowed out here and there. I wasn't sure there was anything that would make her feel secure.

During those weeks I avoided the destruction out beyond the lights. I was afraid to see it for fear I would see nothing else. I needed preparation

Sometimes, in the months that followed, I walked by the old apartment that Shawn's grandparents used to have in the Quarter. In front, green leaves pushed up through the tiled and cracked sidewalk. Had it still been in the family, and had her grandmother Colette still been alive, she would have been there to see a man named Stacy, fresh from lung surgery, wading through the water under her window, trying to keep his sutures clear while making his way home to my neighborhood, where, high on the Percodan he said they'd been handing out like aspirin at Tulane University Hospital, he calmly and thoroughly polished every bit of silver in the house while waiting for the water to subside.

People told their stories without effect, without striving to be responsive to anyone's lesson. The stories changed in their particulars from telling to telling, sometimes fabulous and other times merely sad and mundane. I used to think that something had turned everyone around me into liars, but after a while I quit pointing out the inconsistencies. Sometimes they had two dogs with them in the car, sometimes only one. Sometimes I-10 was flooded, sometimes not. Sometimes they had been shot at while holed up in the St. Paul Lutheran Church down the block, sometimes they only thought they'd been shot at. Sometimes they only thought they'd been shot at. Sometimes





times *they'd* heard an explosion at the Industrial Canal, and sometimes it was a friend who'd heard it. It didn't matter. The stories weren't for anyone but themselves. They contained no moral, there was no evidence to be extracted from them, nothing to be learned. Conclusions were for writers and people with microphones. If the facts changed from one telling to the next, the storytellers barely noticed, and the smooth vacancy that so often dropped across their faces was the giveaway. They *weren't* stories, exactly, but recitations of the visions contained in their heads.

As the year dragged on, it became impossible to tell whether the stories had become more perverse and wrenching because the desire to express only optimism had been overcome by the endless bad news, or whether that endlessness had itself been so cruel that benign memories mutated and were reborn under pressure, coming to describe not past events but a present state of mind. That was all in the future. The year began with raised fists, oaths to rebuild, constant invocations of people's gumption. The year began with mozzarella and tomatoes on fresh baguettes at the Sound Café, brooms swishing along the

Christ lay everywhere, bronzed in His moments of agony: next to the root-ball of a toppled pine, in a pile of garbage, next to a toy Jeep

street, the sweet voice of the barista tugging her dreads, and the sound of the Hot 8 playing in the corner back by the piano, backing the poetry of the neighborhood girl who made it out and back.

I rode my black bike to St. Louis Cathedral for mass. Ash Wednesday at St. Louis Cathedral, first service, 7:30 A.M., in the year of the storm. It was bright and hot, and I was sweating in my coat and tie. The streets were empty of all but the few people out spraying down the sidewalks and putting the last of the Mardi Gras trash into neat piles. The trash trucks jerked down the narrow streets, taking everything in. I was astonished to see how quickly it had all been cleaned up. I wheeled down empty streets that had been busy the day before, full of light and shouts. More disturbing was the absence of color, or the relative absence of color. The streets of the Bywater, the Marigny, and the Quarter seemed duller and darker for being clean and abandoned. Here was a place that, for several months since the storm, had contained the stations of a minor resurrection: a party, a mask, a family reunion, a boy on a ladder high above our thousand heads. The[re] had known what was coming, and what it[s] look like, and where it would be. They kne[w] to expect, which was some ration of joy [and] comfort of a near horizon. After that, wha[t] they expect? On Ash Wednesday, I locke[d] cycle outside the cathedral and joined the[m] inside the gaudy church to consider the da[y] ceding the death of Christ and to recei[ve] mark. I walked out and rode home slowly [I] n't know what to do. Understanding wh[at] happened to the city seemed impossible n[o] task too big. There was no longer a know[n] to follow, no tale or tradition that had a beg[in] and end, and in that instant the city was [a] a city choked by endless streets that led past [...] es containing the unknowable.

Lent began.

Shortly after Ash Wednesday, I went [to] see the compound of the Sisters of the [Holy] Family. The order of black nuns was estab[lished] in the 1840s by a free black Creole woma[n] first housed in the old Orleans Ballroom i[n] center of the Quarter, once the sump[tuous] venue of the Quadroon Balls and a fixed po[int] the orbit of white Creoles and their concub[ines].

For many years the sisters ran an orpha[nage] school, and motherhouse out of the old [slave] room in the Quarter. Well into the twen[tieth] century, they ruled their block in the Qu[arter]. The white kids of the neighborhood, [who] played on roller skates in Jackson Square [and] games of tag along the slate sidewalks [that] smothered in concrete, gave them no [quarter]. They were married to Christ now, after all.

The sisters moved out to the New Orl[eans] East area in the 1960s, into a charmless co[m]tion of blocky and institutional brick and [alu]minum buildings, removed from the city's [his]toric, conflicted, guilty, dirty, gorgeous cen[ter]. Out off the highway.

After the storm most of the sisters went [to] Shreveport. I tried to spend some time [with] them, thinking they had some special kno[w]edge of the character of New Orleans. I thou[ght] of them, in my ignorance, as being the c[on]science of the whole city. I thought that I wo[uld] see, in every sister's face, the history of pov[erty] its victims, and their redemption. What a t[ale] and perfect discovery that would have be[en] had I been able to find any such living ic[on] walking around the place up off Chef Ment[eur] Highway, beatific in their sacrifice. But th[ey] were gone. The flood had spoiled every bit [of] their school and motherhouse and chapel, a[nd] there had been some deaths during the storm [in] a rest home they operated. After a while th[ey] quit returning my phone calls.

Around the back of their compound, in



ll grove of pines, I found the remnants of lest brick monuments marking the Stations ıe Cross. Each had been given in memory of eone else: a nun, or a priest, or someone's her. Most of them had been toppled in the d, thrust upon one another and broken at crumbling mortar binding the uneven rses. The Ninth Station, marking the third e Christ fell under the burden of the cross, been tipped over so that the cross was per-ly inverted and Christ appeared to be flying ıugh the air. *I am like water poured out; All bones are racked. You have brought me down to dust of death.*

t had been hard for me to imagine how much er stood on the land a few months before un-I came upon those monuments. Christ lay rywhere, bronzed in His moments of agony: t to the root-ball of a toppled pine, in a pile garbage, next to a radio-controlled toy Jeep t must have floated in from one of the hous-down the road. Miles of hollowed and quiet ghborhoods stretched out in every direction. e chapel between the motherhouse and the ool had been stripped and gutted by some-e, and only in there was Christ in His proper ce, on the cross above the altar, gathering a ılky gray dust.

After that I began to notice that people had ıe missing, people who had returned to the city :he winter, or who had come to it for the first ıe thrilled by the possibility of building something. These were the people who could leave. Many more couldn't, no more able to leave than they were able to soar out of their bodies.

PART TWO

THIS IS HOW IT WORKED IN A LITTLE house in Central City on South Liberty. The neighborhood was always a fast and hard neighborhood, but now, after the storm, it had become the stone-cold center of what New Orleanians feared would overtake them: murder, drugs, poverty, overcrowding, lawlessness, delinquency. Central City is upriver of the French Quarter and the Central Business District and on the wrong side of St. Charles Avenue. In this little house lived three women: a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter. In the little house, Tanya Harris got ready for work. Her grandmother, whom she and her sister called Nini, puttered around the kitchen. Their homes, or what was left of them, sat in the Lower 9th Ward, a few miles and a canal away. Nini had grown up on Philip Street in Central City sixty years before. She had hated it too. She had hated all the bars, and the fighting, and the sinful living. Next to it the Lower 9th had seemed like the country. You could grow vegetables there, and sit outside in the dark without wondering whether someone would come along with a knife. She and her husband had been the first of Tanya's family to move to the Lower 9th.



Her house on Delery had floated across the street, past the four cement lions that stood watch over her front walk, and into Mr. Johnson's yard. *Well,* she said when she heard about it, *Mr. Johnson can't say I never ate him nothing.* She wanted to get *back* out of Central City as quickly as possible.

In the months since the storm, Tanya

voters" I watched Tanya pick up her ring
phone, notice that it was Spike Lee
and put him through to voice mail so sh
finish telling a story.

Tanya Harris had become a player, thou
was not exactly comfortable with that fa
was, she said, the latest in a long line
black women, and she had no problem spl



Harris's life had been rearranged, and not just because she now lived in a neighborhood "with that plantation mentality, where no one owns a house but everyone drives their big-ass cars up to their raggedy-ass doubles." She had become, after years of bouncing in and out of college, and from one job to another, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) organizer for the Lower 9th Ward. It was a position of considerable prestige and influence, no matter what Tanya tried to tell me. It was not unusual to be hanging around Tanya someplace and to watch a city council member appear, approach, and pay tribute to her. I watched Oliver Thomas, the council president, smile and whisper conspiratorially that the new flood-advisory maps would show the Lower 9th to be at a greater elevation than anyone had thought, then give her a meaningful look as if *he* had somehow miraculously raised up the neighborhood and *Would she be so kind as to remember him to the*

her mind. But organizing and being respons
for *saving the Lower 9th,* as her grandmother
it, had made her quit thinking about her clot
her hair, and her friends. She wor
ten hours a day, with smoke break

"Let's get in the evacuation mobile," Ta
would sometimes say to me, and off we would
in her car to see her old house, or to drive by
sister's, or to go meet some inmates of the Orle
Parish Prison to clean up the neutral ground
Caffin Street near Fats Domino's place, or ove
the Sun Ray Grill for lunch, or to a bar to m
some of her coworkers and her sister, or down
Martin Luther King School to watch offici
hold portraits of Dr. King up in the sun and t
to the cameras about the injustice of keeping t
school closed, or over to City Hall to greet v
ers, or over to the Convent of the Holy Ang
to harangue National Guardsmen. For months
had one long conversation. This was her art, t
real source of her influence. She could *talk.*

"Rocker, New Orleans, Louisia

t me show you something," she said once,
ıg the corner in Holy Cross, a part of the
: 9th, and heading toward the river levee.
think people are paranoid? Look at this."
parked at the end of the street, walked up
vee, and sat on a park bench overlooking
ver.
ok down there," she said, pointing up the
toward the Quarter and the CBD and the
en District. "What do you see?"
ive me a second."
'hat do you see?"
he Riverwalk. Warehouses, docks. More
ıouses. The Quarter."
'hat don't you see?"
h come on."
o, uh-uh. *You* come on. You were the one
said, 'Don't you think people are being
ıoid about the developers?' *You* said it.
out there."
kay."
ow look behind you."
looked behind me and saw miles of
houses, now empty and mostly ruined,
ing right up to the river levee that towered
them.
could be open riverfront here."
very other place along the river is already
ı, and there aren't any other places you
l build, maybe, some giant condos with
views. But hey, I'm not *saying* anyone's
g to be building condos here. I'm not *say-*
hat anyone else looks at this and sees it
way. All I'm saying is that folks aren't
ıoid for noticing it, and noticing that
when all the other destroyed neighbor-
ls in the *white* part of town have their
r and electricity back, no one up in here
a goddamned thing. No one can get start-
uilding. I'm not saying I've seen Donald
ıp down in here, but I am saying that no
s in any hurry to get us up and running
n. The power company's always got an
ıse, the water board's always got an
ıse, the council's always got an excuse.
i while they're talking and talking and
g, this neighborhood on the river sits here,
we're waiting for something to happen. I
't think it's paranoid to wonder what that's
ıg to be."

/e walked back down the levee and got in
car. As we turned around, she pointed out
classroom trailers at Holy Cross School,
atholic boy's school with a predominantly
te student body. "Well, I was wrong," Tanya
said. "I forgot. *They* got power
months ago, in January."

One day the house of a musician I knew
ght fire. Bart Ramsey was a well-known bandleader and songwriter in the city who played a lot at The Spotted Cat on Frenchman Street with his newest band, a gypsy swing combo featuring two honest-to-god French guitar players raised on Django Reinhardt. That morning I woke up and there was no power in the apartment. The power went out often, always making me worry that I alone had been cut off. I went outside and down the alleyway that divided our shotgun from an old warehouse. In front of the corner bar one of the ladies who ran the place was sweeping the sidewalk. This was the bar where an old and calloused black man in a riding cap once said this to me: *You the nigger in the joint, get me? This is our place. You welcome to come in here, but damn, you ain't having fun, you uncomfortable, you'll never have fun, and that ain't right. We got to put up with that all day, right? You make us sorry for you, like we done something to you. Just not what a man come to think about in his bar, you know? Just this one place on the street for us.*

"I'm not saying I've seen Donald Trump down in here, but I am saying that no one's in any hurry to get us up and running again"

I cringed at the bright-green lizard that ran across my bare foot, and yelled down the block.

"You got power?"

She pushed her hat up on her forehead some, and smiled back at me.

"Nope."

About then I smelled the smoke and heard the helicopter. We both looked up and saw the Coast Guard helicopter carrying the 800-gallon bucket of water slung by a wire underneath and headed a few blocks away toward St. Claude. The bucket overflowed. Drops of water caught the sun and looked like confetti.

"Fire," she said, and kept sweeping.

I got on my bike and peddled over toward the smoke, which was white and rushed straight up into the sky before curling over on its black center. At the coffee shop on the corner of Burgundy and Mandeville, the fire department manned a cordon. A block up, a curtain of smoke stood across the block, and occasionally men in masks and tanks would emerge from behind it and disappear again. One of the department's chaplains sat down with an old man who ran a vampire tour in the Quarter. The man yanked at his long white beard and sat with his several relatives and followers, all of them robed in Red Cross blankets.





Later I stood on the steps of the old, abandoned elementary school across from the house that had burned. Squatters had lived in that house without power and had probably started a fire to stay warm. They were long gone. The house that Bart and his wife lived in next door had caught and was ruined, but it was still standing. I didn't approach Bart, but I watched him watch the fire inspector sort through the charred rubble. He was very intent on the man. Bart's two cars still sat in front of the house, windows exploded, tires melted, each of them gray and colorless and indistinct, as if someone had begun to erase them. The inspector crested one mound of blackened timber and disappeared in the gray and black landscape. Through the still-standing frame of the front facade, the house looked like a diorama of somebody else's world.

The sun lay upon the city with only heat and no brilliance. There were no reflections, no sharpnesses. Nothing could hide in that light

After Bart's house burned, I decided to go see the destroyed city, to really study it. I couldn't avoid it anymore. After that I went into the destroyed city constantly and compulsively. At first I craved the shock. Then I thought it was something rare and extraordinary. Months later, it was the only place I felt calm. It became possible to walk by great mountains of rubble without noticing, as if they weren't there, or as if they had always been there.

One day, bright and piercing and blue, I went down to the Lower 9th, near Tennessee, and in the rubble of one disappeared house I watched two filmmakers get out of their van and set up a funeral wreath on a stand atop an old slab foundation. The one filmmaker filmed the other one, in a black suit, bowing his head as if in remembrance or prayer. A few takes, a few angles. I had walked a mile over from Hardin Elementary, near a church where six people had drowned, and so I at first assumed they were marking the death of a *person*. Not so. They were mourning, or rather filming themselves mourning, a place. They quit filming, the man in the suit grabbed the wreath, and off they went. They didn't even leave the wreath.

There were always very few people in this part of the Lower 9th, but you were more likely to run across someone the closer you got to the lev-

ee breach, where the canal barge that had r
loose lodged itself like a bath toy stuck r
drain, and where the water had rushed in w
speed and power of a tidal wave, lifting a
ishing houses, people, dogs, cats, and lawn
ers. The barge stayed there, hanging o
edge of the neighborhood, until March.

In this area the Red Cross van traced
search pattern, back and forth, the man
the wheel calling out to no one, "Hot me
water, hot meals annnnnnnnd water." Th
where artists drifted to paint the sul
neighborhood, so picturesque and empt
artist showed me a flattened penny taken
the rubble underneath the barge. *This is w
all about, man.* Sewerage and Water Boar
desultorily hunted for water leaks. Young,
arrived activists presumptuously staked cla
a whole block of the neighborhood and p
signs insulting tourists.

This was where the kings came, an
princes, and the movie stars. "They pi
our neighborhood," one old man said t
watching a motorcade go by. "They say,
look how terrible this is,' and folks write
checks, and we don't see a dime. They r
in cash money, and all I got is this slab
them." He waved his arm at a collecti
about a dozen old lawn mowers, rusty and
ered in sludge. A gaudy display of lost cl
hung from trees and stretches of barbed
The Lower 9th, most of it, was easy to desc
Like a bomb went off. That was the most p
lar expression, containing a neat bundl
familiar and violent images.

It was the other part of the city that most fr
ened me. The sun lay down upon it with
heat and no brilliance. There were no reflecti
no sharpnesses. Dirt, dust, or plywood had ta
care of the windows, and most of the cars were
gone. This was the new part of the city, built
the old cypress swamp. It was easy to go for m
without seeing a tree of significant size castin
shadow. There were some, but they only emp
sized the dull weight of the sun on everyth
else. Nothing could hide in that light: every s
beam, every broken sheet of drywall, every pl
living room set taken up by the water, rearrang
and piled up in the center of the house. Noth
had gone very far. Unlike the emptiness at Fl
da and Tennessee down in the Lower 9th, th
neighborhoods were full of everything but peop
There were the houses, there were the boats, th
were the gardens untended but still sprouting u
governable tomatoes and gourds. The memor
of gardens. Through the windows I saw pictures
children eating fried fish while their parents ma
crawfish wave at the camera. I saw pots and pa
piled neatly in corners, as if the storm knew th
belonged together. The books appeared to ha

owed the water and come alive, briefly flap-
around and bumping into one another be-
lying in place with wings stretched, rigid
rown.

is is only what I could see through windows.
ld not break in, even though many doors had
d in their jambs and could be pushed aside.
e into other empty places in the city, but not
houses. They were not exhibits to be pawed.
New Orleans Petting Zoo of Abandoned Hous-
ouch the ruined curtains, smell the dried shit,
with the lock that locked the door that barred the
hat would have saved the old diabetic. Wonder
money box still hidden in the wall. Pull the cop-
d sell it! They ain't coming back!

ese houses were still part of a life, more
200,000 lives, all now open and unguard-
thousand miles away, how could you start



ew life knowing that the remains of your
one lay out in the sun for the world to see?
only that, but this old life of yours, which
might have loved more than others ever
ld understand, now looked rotten, lifeless,
undifferentiated from every other rotted
g for miles around. How could you explain
f for *that*?

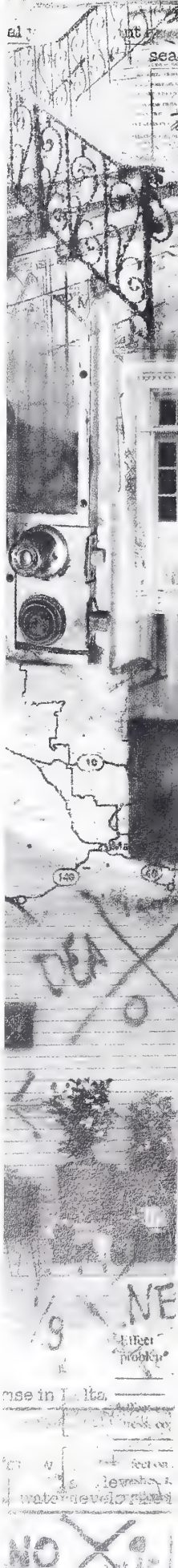
he absence of life distinguished Lakeview,
tilly, parts of Broadmoor, parts of Mid-City,
St. Bernard area, the Desire area, the upper
tches of the old St. Roch neighborhood, oth-
arts of the 7th and 8th wards. Hundreds of thousands of houses, stores, gas stations, churches, schools, playgrounds, basketball courts, driveways, streets, sidewalks, mailboxes, porches, bars, car washes, and parks: a collection of empty or abandoned things, mile after mile after mile. The collection only grew bigger out Chef Menteur Highway into St. Bernard Parish and farther on into Plaquemines Parish. Many more miles. I once drove, walked, and biked for three hours through Lakeview and Gentilly without seeing a person. A month later, I drove thirty miles through those same neighborhoods and counted thirty-two people. They all wore disposable white jumpers, face masks, and blue booties to cover their shoes.

I shouldn't say that the abandoned and destroyed city was entirely lifeless. There were weeds, mold, spiders, butterflies, moths, and dogs. Especially dogs, rooting through piles of garbage.

There was beauty in this abandonment, if only because there is beauty in singularity and symmetry. I'll admit it: I learned to love the destroyed city, to demand nothing of it. The place was miraculous. In the absence of people, it twisted itself in accordance with nature's design, spawned new forms, banished unessential things such as lawns and light after dark. It became again an unknown earth in which anything was possible. An ocher trace of high-water lines marked the border with civilization.

The destroyed city possessed its own iconography. There was the roof without a house, the roof in the middle of the street, the house flipped on its side, and the johnboat that crashed through a living room and became stuck. But they were not the abominations. The abominations were the little walkways lined between perfectly clipped and perfectly dead boxwoods leading up steps to a stoop suspended in the air. The abominations were any of the little hints that this ground had been loved before it was salted. The souls snatched up left the evidence of their existence in the half-made beds spied through broken windows and in the strange, runic graffiti sprayed on the doors by rescuers marking a trail through the emptiness.

At night, tired from traipsing the city, I lay in my bed and listened to the great pile driver on the Industrial Canal pounding and pounding, almost never stopping, and yet still not finished repairing the levee. It was not a comforting sound, but at least it was familiar. So was the sound of the train rolling past my house at all hours. Sometimes I'd wake up and go to the window and watch a half-mile of FEMA trailers heading out into the



m, New Orleans, Louisiana"



city from the river, and I'd think, *Good*. And sometimes I'd look out and see another half-mile of identical trailers, perhaps the same trailers, going the other direction. Back and forth and back and forth.

I met The Adjuster on a small street in Lakeview, under a live oak where the curb was clean and across the street you could see a cottage that, miracle of miracles, had been built on posts in the old way. The windows had blown out, and spatters of black mud dotted one side like embedded shrapnel, but it was square. The Adjuster's hair was mostly dirty gray, streaks of black at the edges, and he'd taken enough care to comb it back with some kind of pomade. White shirt, button-down collar, short sleeves, white undershirt an inch shorter than his cuffs, khaki slacks, steel-toed black boots. He had not been an adjuster long. This was the latest in a long series of jobs and businesses that either had failed spectacularly or had just dwindled to nothing after many years. He was not a failure. *I've worked every day of my life, you write that down*. He was just unlucky.

But he'd been lucky enough to live someplace else when the storm came. He'd been lucky to get some training as an adjuster. He was working for a big company he wouldn't name.

We sat and I ate some greens and beans out of a container I'd brought. He had a tin of fish and a little bottle of some Indian hot sa[uce] kind they sold at a falafel joint d[own] Carrollton toward the river. We talke[d] realized he and I had been spendin[g] trudging after each other in a big circle [in] the dead city, making our notes. He'd lap[ped] because his work was more urgent.

We stared at that house, and he point[ed] things like the carpenter's gothic in the [gable], the angle of the roof, the way the porch [was] just a few degrees down toward the fron[t of] house, just like it should. It had bee[n] merged for weeks and yet it was still sta[nding], not broken, only disheveled some and [a bit] shocked at events. The house had charac[ter], said, and immediately added that it was [silly] to say such a thing. A house was a house [of] and nails. The windows had been ok[ay] they'd been taken from somewhere else [in the] city. In fact, he said, he wouldn't have [been]



surprised if the whole damned thing had b[een] hauled up from the Faubourg St. John to [the] lot right after they finished drying out [the] swamp and laying down the fill. A lot of pe[ople] had done that.

"Are you inspecting it?"

"Yeah."

"You finished?"

"Yeah. I think. For now."

I wanted to know about what he'd seen [as] one of the thousands of insurance adjusters w[ho]

escended on the city to report back to the
e who held the money.
just wanted to talk about that house,
h. He ran his finger along the inside of his
etting the grease.
nat was a good house. It was built like they
o, when people knew about floods and high
nd wind. It was built for that. You couldn't
wanted a better house than that if a storm
oming."
o it's in good shape."
s an awful damned mess."
carefully wrapped his tin up in a plastic
ry bag and set it next to where he was sit-
to be taken away later.
ooked at the house, but I couldn't see what
is talking about.
o that's good, right? It's totaled?"
picked up that tin and took it over to
ittle white pickup, and came back and
l over me, scraping his boots on the curb.
as looking at another house, which had
collapsed on its slab. Spanish tile lay in
piles on the ground below the corners of
oof.
lo, can't say that. Don't know what they'll
up with in the end, but I don't think
ll give them that. They'll short it, proba-
because their house was well built and
't knocked flat out like some of these oth-
like that piece of shit right there." He
ted at the house with the Spanish tile.
lidn't say anything at first. This seemed the
t part of it for him.
ou're the bearer of bad news."
e looked at me and his eyes went wide.
m not the bearer of anything. I make the
ews."
e got in his truck. I walked over when he
d down the window.
been put out on the street a few times in my
Evicted. There is nothing worse than that.
now what? I've got a job and a good pay-
k, but I'm the guy putting people out now.
ems like it's one or the other. But I can't
. This is the most I've made in a long time.
't quit."
fter a few months, I decided he was the per-
who most understood the varieties of
ruction and loss, and the person least able
uggest anything to do about it. I met him
etimes. I talked with the owners standing by
their arms crossed, watching him peer here
measure there and sketch this. They knew
t was coming most of the time, and so did
It was humiliating for everyone. What they
ted to hear was that their insurance compa-
would save them, that it would have mercy,
it would not try to squeeze every fucking
ar it could out of the disaster. It was the thing he most wanted to say and never could say. Usually the owners knew well enough not to ask.

One of those owners took me up into her attic. We went upstairs and stepped through a closed door at the top. This floor, which had not been damaged at all, contained what was left in the house: trophies, boxes of mementos, old bottles. They were the things that are put aside, marked for disposal someday, and forgotten. It was this that saved them, that they'd been shoved off someplace out of mind that, coincidentally, happened to be high and dry. When the storm came, most of what had been cherished and kept close disappeared. What had been forgotten remained. We stood in the attic and talked about homeowners insurance, neighborhood associations, the tenacity of mold. I stared into the narrow dormer and through the window at its end, which looked out on the live oak in the front yard. It was early afternoon, and the sun that came into that narrow space was indirect, diffuse, and lovely. It was not hard to imagine her young daughter sitting in the window and drifting off, watching the birds in the branches and the people coming and going on the sidewalk. The neighborhood would not have seemed so trampled and routed, and the world would have seemed big and not merely what was confined within levees and flood walls. That window was one thing, I understood from this woman, that had been cherished and had not disappeared. It was not just a window and it was not just a reminder of the life before. It *was* that life, it contained it still, and the finger smudges were only moments away from reappearing.

The city was not entirely lifeless. There were weeds, mold, spiders, butterflies, moths, and dogs. Especially dogs, rooting through piles of garbage

I went to Audubon Park. I drove up Magazine Street, past the old coffee shop that had closed, past the British antiques shop where I'd watched an older customer weep over her stolen silver and lost friends, and all the way to the zoo, where the dead animals were being replaced. This is how I came to mark the city, and how I knew I was going dangerously wrong: it was mostly the awful and the pitiable that remained as points in my psychogeography.

A sunny and mild day in the beginning of





May. People on bicycles pedaled around the nearly two-mile loop, and others in bright running clothes puffed along behind them. Old women in trainers ambled down the middle, talking of easy things and beautiful children. At the eastern edge the path cut close to the water. There was a bench overlooking a small island full of trees, each of which had been claimed by an egret or a heron for its nest. There were hundreds of white birds in the trees, on the ground, and in the water. Geese patrolled the edges like cops. I walked the path behind a man on Rollerblades in pink tights and a ducktail who carefully and gracefully weaved between the bicyclists and the runners and the old ladies. He took a few spins each time the path was momentarily clear. Tulane students sat out on the grass or in the manicured garden. The houses along Audubon Park, as everyone knows, are extraordinary. Someone rode by on a horse. I

There I was, a stop-sign runner in a city ablaze with murder and fear, down for my crime while young men hunted one another with guns

counted the cypress knees in the water and listened to the grit under my shoes.

"This is so different," I said to one gray-haired man I passed. He was strolling around in a brown corduroy jacket and a dark homburg. I took him for a professor because he held his hands behind his back. I was getting lazy.

"From what?" he asked in response, wary but polite. I fell in next to him and told him about my travels through the dead zone.

"I've seen that," he said.

"It's just, weird, I don't know. How can the same city contain these two places, you know? In my mind, I imagine there's no sun over there right now, but I know that's ridiculous."

"It is."

"Do you think about this?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Who are you? What do you do?"

"I'm kind of a journalist, sort of."

"Interesting. Then you can *sort of* figure out, I hope, why I don't spend a lot of time purposely horrifying myself. It's too complicated to explain. And now, I'm sorry, I don't want to be rude, but if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go walk over here and catch the rest of that sun. I guess you came out for the same reason, right?"

We had come back to the bench overlooking the herons, and I left him there not knowing whether he was a professor, or where he [illegible] or what he had lost. He was just a m[illegible] homburg hat turning his face toward the [illegible]

So what if some of the old trees in th[illegible] had been snapped off or pushed down out [illegible] ground, revealing rot at the center? Th[illegible] natural, it would have happened someda[illegible] way. Children ran down the path, fallin[illegible] themselves into the grass, daring one ano[illegible] climb the fallen trees.

I walked back to my car and drove dow[illegible] the Irish Channel, to Parasol's. It's an old join[illegible] of the main gathering places of the New O[illegible] Irish. It claimed the best roast beef po'boy [illegible] city. I sat in the little bar, back on the ledge[illegible] the wall, and watched some baseball. Th[illegible] came down through the windows and glar[illegible] the television. I didn't care, because I was [illegible] dropping on a few of the neighborhood l[illegible] older women with men at the other end of t[illegible] They talked about christening gowns and [illegible] children while stubbing out Salems. Outsid[illegible] air was still and full, and I rode with the wi[illegible] down back to the Bywater, where some loca[illegible] were practicing on their trumpets and trom[illegible] out on the corner at Chartres.

Do I have to say that after I'd bee[illegible] Parasol's, once before, it had been robbe[illegible] next day, or that the first murder in my n[illegible] borhood since the storm took place on Cha[illegible] one night after I'd informed a friend at [illegible] Spotted Cat that the intersection of French [illegible] and Chartres was one of the safest places to l[illegible] the city, one night after I'd parked two s[illegible] away from the spot where the young man [illegible] Do I have to mention that our bartender [illegible] night hanged himself months later?

It had been a very nice day. Palmettos [illegible] tered in overgrown courtyards, drone roc[illegible] played at the Circle Bar while photos of [illegible] water and melted things flashed behind the[illegible] little family with a cooler of boudin walked h[illegible] pily back along the neutral ground to their tr[illegible] If the night-blooming jasmine had survived, s[illegible] a day argued, then people might survive and m[illegible] some kind of normal thing of th[illegible] lives. It would be all right.

Right about that time I started to hear t[illegible] *the niggers were coming*. They were coming b[illegible] to elect *that retard Nagin* to office again, [illegible] then rob and shoot everyone.

"Why," I asked the old man at Smitty[illegible] "would they vote for Nagin? They didn't vote [illegible] him last time."

"Because they're niggers, that's why. They're g[illegible] ing to bus the niggers in and steal that electi[illegible] You mark my words. By the busload. The busloa[illegible]

Smitty's was where you went to die: for the d[illegible] the week, the month, and, when it was time a[illegible]

put in *sixty fucking years on this barstool*, as
ld boy put it, forever. You'd get a photo on
antelpiece above the fireplace that no longer
ed. Friday was shrimp and crawfish precooked
gs. A small mug of Bud was $1. Bucky, who
d the place, spoke through an artificial lar-
The men in this bar were the boys he'd grown
ith, sitting in their fathers' old seats.

y neighborhood, the Bywater, which had
thing of a reputation before the storm as a
n for smash-and-grab artists, muggers, and
coke dealing, after the storm became qui-
d peaceful at night. People rode their bikes
ywhere, no problem. It was an unusual feel-
o pleasant that my neighbors came to require
hey could imagine staying in the city and re-
ling, they said, if it was like this: if the front
on their porches weren't stolen for the scrap
, if they didn't get thunked on the head and
ed off while locking their bikes, if people
't get shot on Chartres Street near French-
at two A.M. Such things were more than
edies or glimpses of mortality. They were
e than crimes: they were betrayals, the first
of a city that could only disappoint them.

ne night at Smitty's a man they called Wolf-
—white beard, broad shoulders, small eyes,
ered nose—escorted me to my car for my own
ection. There was a man dealing on the op-
te corner. The next time I saw Wolfman, he
the dealer had later been arrested for pos-
on by one of the cops who was a friend of the
He talked about the inevitable invasion of the
gs. He was equal parts outrage and relish. He
d the thugs—whom he distinguished from
er black people, a fine distinction he con-
tly recalibrated—but there was some part of
, evident in the apparent pleasure he took
elling me *what the deal was*, that needed to be
langer, real or just perceived. He was a hard
n who had raised hard children, and such a
n could only be fully apparent in the presence
threat. He told me how the men of the neigh-
hood would have to arm themselves and pay
ntion now. He described a neighborhood of
laws. His friends would be the posse.

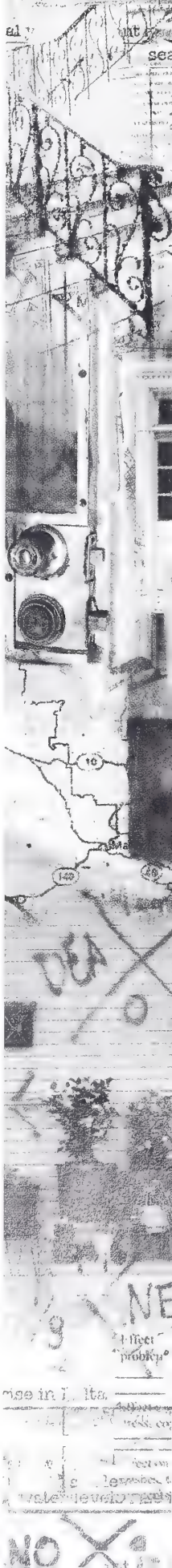
They reelected the mayor despite the dismay
people like Tanya Harris and the old men at
itty's, unlikely allies. It broke Tanya's heart, she
i, to hear that the mayor received so much sup-
t from evacuees in Houston. *He's the reason*
r asses are still sitting in Houston. What were you
king? I tried to talk to the mayor, but the mes-
es I left with his assistants went unanswered.
nya said he'd won because older black people,
o could remember a time when hoping for a
ck mayor was futile, could not let go of the fact
a black mayor very easily. *Anyway, we can't do*
better than Mitch Landrieu, the son of an old
yor? There was something exhausting about the
idea of anointing a dynasty, what with Mitch's sister Mary a U.S. senator from Louisiana. *Might as well dig up one of the Long brothers and make him governor again.*

PART THREE

THE NATIONAL GUARD ROLLED BACK into town a few hot days after gunmen shot and killed five young men in Central City. It had been only six months since they'd left the first time. The mayor tried to assure us that he had asked *before* the shootings for the National Guard to help with the looting problem in the deserted part of the city, but it was impossible to watch that convoy roll into town carrying their weapons and *not* think, just briefly, that they were there to hand us our asses for being delinquents.

The next day I drove down South Peters in the Warehouse District, headed toward the Quarter, more uncertain than ever of why I was living there. I swear I stopped for the stop sign at St. Joseph. I had been pulled over a couple months before for running that very stop sign and had spent three hours at the Old Algiers Courthouse sinking deeper and deeper into the moist couch in the courtroom of the traffic court, listening to seventy-five other New Orleanians discuss the inflation of traffic fines. Shawn had told me not to pay it, that they'd never catch me because the accounting system was a mess, but she didn't know the dude *I* knew, who the week before had been pulled over on an outstanding traffic warrant and had spent the night in the Orleans Parish Prison listening to this sort of conversation: *It's up in there, I put it up in there. Dig it out. Deeper, Jesus. [Grunt.] Awright, let's smoke that shit.* That was why you showed up for traffic court.

But now I had been pulled over for the second time at the same stop sign. *Bullshit.* It was so hot on South Peters, I took off my seat belt and my shirt. *Fucker will have to deal with my big white belly.* I was angry. Everything was an affront. At the hotel down the street, I could see glimpses of guests gallivanting around the pool, occasionally sending up splashes like great white eruptions of ice. I hated them, and I hated the cop, who took twenty minutes to run my plate and fill out exactly five boxes on the ticket. It got hotter and I got angrier. I lit a cigarette because it can't ever be *too* hot for a cigarette. Ten blocks away, on roughly a northwest heading, Tanya's mother and grandmother were likely spending the day hunkered down in their shotgun avoiding the next round of bullets. They still hadn't been allowed to move back to their own neighborhood. Seven blocks away, bearing northeast, I knew a man who sat like a Gargantua atop the gorgeously restored building that housed his office, surrounded by piles and piles and piles of art made by



artists who would never, ever live in a Garden District mansion like his. I imagined the Gargantua looking out his window, pleased with the view, not knowing (as he once told me) that there was a place called Central City below him, and wondering whether they would have okra at Café Reconcile that day.

And there I was, as I imagined it, a lawless stop-sign runner in a city ablaze with murder and regret and fear, down for my crime while

ceased to make decisions and only moved
someone told me to move, I went.

Moose jumped and howled and stalk
little stage and read his poetry. Moose
Mohawk, buttons, and old-school suspen
gave him my card and mumbled some
about enjoying the show and so on and
ever felt like it he could call me. I went
The next time I saw him his throat had
cut ear to ear, and we toasted his mortalit



squads of young men hunted one another down alleys and around convenience stores and between abandoned cars and under that house where girls blew old men for cash money, while other violent men armed themselves and rode out after these outlaws they'd heard about.

He gave me my ticket. I drove away.

Some nights I lay on my back in my apartment and watched the termite alates rise and fall and disappear into my lamp and behind the couch. Every day I swept up wings and put them out the back door, watching them catch and roll on air currents I couldn't feel, disappearing back into the jungle where the feral cats moaned at night

Melissa, one of the saintly bartenders at Smitty's, told me to go see a show at the Sidearm up on St. Roch, and because I didn't think about what to do anymore, because I had

Through the night I took calls from the la
with bags. Today she was the graying mothe
a young son who had died in the crib. Now
was young, and she made blank books out
other books to sell in the Quarter. Now she
sixty, living by herself in the Bywater and sh
ing at the crowd at Markey's that she had ne
had a child and that she had wanted one,
that all she wanted to do was to fucking move
Florida where she would become someo
someone who works with kids because she fu
ing loves children, and she had wanted o
And she was still one herself. And no, she
not drunk and did not need a cab. And ye
asshole, she did remember how to get home.

I quit writing. I spent a lot of time thinki
up excuses to leave.

One day I got a call from the preache
daughter, a woman who had no interest in wu
es or mopers. She told me I ought to get up
my fat ass and come out with her to gut a hou

"Cooking, New Orleans, Louisian

the Episcopalians, and I agreed. I had gut-
me houses before, it was something I knew
ld do. One last thing and then maybe I
l go.

here had been a moment that I hadn't
ed, a moment in the city when gutting a
e transformed from a pragmatic act into an
tion of faith. The irrational act of gutting a
ned house was something like spitting in
iver for luck. It was useless but still a token,
fering.

s an odd formulation, *to gut*. Gutting is only
in the power of fire and man. Floods drown,
does rip, man and fire *gut*. A man can gut
r, a tarpon, a hog, another man. We gut liv-
things. When we build a house, we don't
of how it's *growing*, yet at the very end we
t. It contained life. Like a skin, I guess. Now
ntained only the crude evidence of life,
ped by the water in a broken and warped
in the middle of the room, one pile for every
n in every one of a hundred thousand hous-
ach one reaching to the ceiling and marking
spot where the water surrendered.

he first thing was to remove the piles to the
t. Reaching into those piles was an inva-
of privacy. There were clothes, inspira-
al tracts, letters from mama, dildos, legs
n chairs that were otherwise carried away,
ections of ceramic dolls, photographs of
isms and unmentionable acts, children's
ks in a house where there had been no chil-
n, seashells, countless beads, urns, ruined
s, Bibles, palms, prayer cards, prayer can-
, scented candles, massage oil, old ammuni-
, pots, iron skillets, Revere knives and forks
spoons, shoes that had grown queerly
ted and cracked, knobs from doors, draw-
cabinets, acres of thin veneered paneling
ked by air bubbles, and papier-mâché masks
fell apart in your hand.

he house stood in an old neighborhood of
ntilly, part of a development of single-story
lexes in the American style built after
rld War II for returning veterans. Our crew
e young college-age volunteers working
n the Episcopal Church, the preacher's
ghter, and me. The young'uns were tan, cal-
sed, and sweet. They were efficient, respect-
and contemplative.

A woman had died in the house during the
d. That was new for me. One day the sister
he dead woman drove by while the crew was
king, and she became too upset to stop. She
lived in the back apartment and had left
ore the storm. Her sister had decided to stay.
t was always a shock when the first crew mem-
put the first hole in the house with a sledge-
nmer. We would be spending the day doing vi-
nce in order to save the house, and that took
some getting used to. A couple minutes at least. Then I was absorbed by the sound and the feeling of a house ripping apart. I swung my crowbar into the softened Sheetrock, slamming through to the plaster and beyond, past the rusted and ruined wire backing, finally seeing light on the other side. That day I went at it hard. I noticed that the others were not moving so frantically, but I didn't care. I found an intricate, embroidered bag of cat toys and inspirational photographs of the Superdome at dusk, and I set those aside to give to someone. I thought about taking the bag as a souvenir, but I left it. I didn't need more souvenirs. I propped it up on the windowsill for someone else to take. Maybe her sister had made it for her.

At lunch, the preacher's daughter went over to a po'boy stand and brought some food back, including a foot-long catfish po'boy for me, dressed with extra tomato. Although I knew better, I ate the whole thing. It was 98 degrees out.

It wasn't long after beginning work again that I began to get light-headed and then confused, dreamy, and a little depressed. I thought of the woman who had died.

I calculated that she would have had two feet of clearance between the ceiling and the top of the water. I imagined her standing on her stove, holding her head up. I imagined her holding herself above the water for a long time, into what had become an eerily quiet and abandoned night. I saw her the next morning, watching the sun glint off the ripples and the current moving slowly past her chin and around the doorway into the living room and out the window. She was entirely alone then, there was no one for miles around. I wondered at what point she gave up. The water, even in the last days of a hot New Orleans summer, would have sucked the heat out of her body. She might have been hypothermic at the end, pulled irresistibly toward sleep and rest. I wonder who she was thinking about when she finally let herself slip under the water, finally certain of what would happen to her, where it would happen, and under what circumstances. I had seen enough of her things to know she would have been praying.

This was it, the irreducible truth. What had happened in that house could not be factored or multiplied. This was true of every other house and face and street I'd seen. They each contained the disaster in solitude.

People in New Orleans talk about their sacred ground, the parts of the city that became *campo santo* for them after the hurricane. That little apartment is mine. I dream of her, and I don't know what she looked like. I should have been there when she needed help. When I got home that night, I drank too much and took





too many pills. I wished her sister had never come back to see it. I don't even know her name, this woman who kept pictures of the city around her living room captioned with messages of inspiration, little sayings to start her day. I would like to know what she would say to me if she knew I'd ripped apart her home, if she knew I'd seen her private things, that I'd looked into her bag.

They were still discovering bodies in the Lower 9th. Hurricane season had begun again. I began to hear people say that if we could only make it through *this* hurricane season, *then* the city would begin to recover in earnest. The summer had brought resignation: write off the whole year and hope that October would bring some good news. A whole year in the life of a city. The money had not arrived. This was the money that Congress had promised to make up the difference between what insurance companies had paid out and what it would take to actually rebuild houses and businesses, money that had been held over the heads of every New Orleanian since the fall, when the first politician first mentioned it, money that had been fought over and denounced and coveted, money that had birthed every sort of advisory committee and commission and blue ribbon panel and planning process and recovery authority, money that had sent the local gray beards to bow and scrape before the nation in the hope that the city might get out from under the memory of the Long brothers and Edwin Edwards and every other Louisiana scalawag. Money so powerful it had transfixed a whole state without ever appearing.

So let's drink. Let's pour out a toast first: to our most benighted, broke-ass, star-crossed, tortured, betrayed, foreign, vilified, lovely, ruined city, the city that had been our most vulnerable, not just because of its topography but because it had been beaten down by neglect and abuse. It had been weak, but never too weak to show the rest of the country a real good time whenever the rest of the country came calling. God, I heard Billy Graham say at the New Orleans Arena from his fully automated pulpit, had not caused the storm. He had allowed it to happen, the Reverend Graham said, and then he called us down to the altar to be saved. God had just watched. What a show, too! So drink to the stoning of the whore. Everyone loves a good whore-stoning. Drink to that.

I finally abandoned New Orleans nearly a year after the flood. A tropical storm named Ernesto had formed in the Atlantic and was predicted to head straight for New Orleans as soon as it got out in the open. I was eating lunch with two writers well versed in the literature [illegible] ter, and nearly all we could talk about a meddling of low pressure systems, the ty of warm Gulf water in our doom. *strikes again on the anniversary of the storm cane kills hundreds more*. Furrowed brows, calls back to headquarters in New York too perfect, but I believe in magic. I fled

Headed toward Mobile, I became aw cumulus cloud over the Gulf, a conti white, an end of the world cloud that to rise up from the horizon to the da bands of the outer atmosphere, all cre and bulging glaciers and boiling pools of ing white lava. It followed me. I noticed behind the listing hulk of an abandoned coaster. It followed me across Mississippi, changing its position, always off to the and a little ahead. It appeared to get l more bloated, more dramatic, and more owy as I drove. I began taking pictures while traveling eighty miles an hour do highway. I weaved across lanes and on shoulder, trying to document the fact that being followed.

I finally gave it up when I noticed the trooper. I was not drunk, but neither w have been able to explain the importan those pictures. I might as well have been d I required documentation so that when discovered my wrecked body, taken up i cold white mist, flayed by the wind and de ed broken on the side of the road, there w be no question of what had happened. thing I had learned in New Orleans was t was too much to ask strangers to figure t out for themselves; they needed pictures could look at and cluck over.

The people I write about have stayed in city, and I believe they'll remain. It's home, they can live there even among the rubble disappointment because they've known n than that and they can imagine the *Resilience in their success*. I can't define succ Maybe staying was all. They endured. T endured more than I ever did. I took what s I had and drove away.

The cloud, which must have been m miles off the coast and far larger than appeared, tailed me until I began passing exits for Dauphin Island, Alabama, where first of the petty thieves and fallen women a failed sons of the French bourgeoisie lan before being shipped to the settlement at t bend in the river, where they would inven city. Had I quit stomping on the pedal a stopped the car, I might have heard the clo talk to me. I know what it would have said, n that I had escaped without leaving a sign. would have said, *Thief*.

THEIR MEN IN WASHINGTON

Undercover with D.C.'s lobbyists for hire

By Ken Silverstein

In March, when the U.S. State Department announced its new global survey of human rights, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared that the report demonstrated America's commitment to civil liberties, the rule of law, and a free press. "We are committing ourselves to stand with those courageous men and women who struggle for their freedom and their rights," she said. "And we are committing ourselves to call every government to account that still denies the basic rights of its citizens as options rather than, in President Bush's words, the non-negotiable demands of human dignity."



Flipping through the report, however, one cannot help but notice how many of the countries that flout "the non-negotiable demands of human dignity" seem to have negotiated themselves significant support from the U.S. government, whether military assistance (Egypt, Colombia), development aid (Azerbaijan, Nigeria), expanded trade opportunities (Angola, Cameroon), or official Washington visits for their leaders (Equatorial Guinea, Kazakhstan). The granting of favorable concessions to dictatorial regimes is a practice hardly limited to the current administration: Bill Clinton came into office having said that China's access to American markets should be tied to improved human rights—specifically its willingness to "recognize the legitimacy of those kids that were carrying the Statue of Liberty" at Tiananmen Square—but left having helped Beijing attain its long-cherished goal of Permanent Most Favored Nation trade status. Jimmy Carter put the promotion of human rights at the heart of his foreign policy, yet he cut deals for South American generals and Persian Gulf monarchs in much the same fashion as his successor, Ronald Reagan.

How is it that regimes widely acknowledged to be the world's most oppressive nevertheless continually win favors in Washington? In part, it is because they often have something highly desired by the United States that can be leveraged to their advantage, be it natural resources, vast markets for trade and investment, or general geostrategic importance. But even the best-endowed regimes need help navigating the shoals of Washington, and it is their great fortune that, for the right price, countless lobbyists are willing to steer even the foulest of ships.

American lobbyists have worked for dictators since at least the 1930s, when the Nazi government used a proxy firm called the German Dye Trust to retain the public-relations specialist Ivy Lee. Exposure of Lee's deal led Congress to pass the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA), which required foreign lobbyists to register their contracts with the Justice Department. The idea seemed to be that with disclosure, lobbyists would be too embarrassed to take on immoral or corrupt clients, but this assumption predictably proved to be

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Illustration by Jeremy Tramm

ward J. von Kloberg III, now deceased, for years made quite a comfortable living by representing men such as Saddam Hussein of Iraq (whose government's gassing of its Kurdish population he sought to justify) and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (for whose notoriously crooked regime he helped win American foreign aid). Two other von Kloberg contracts—for Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania and Samuel Doe of Liberia—were terminated, quite literally, when each was murdered by his own citizens. In the 1990s, after Burma's military government arrested the future Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and cracked down on the pro-democracy movement she led, the firm of Jefferson Waterman International signed on to freshen up the Burmese image.

Although there are distinct limits to what they can achieve, lobbyists are the crucial conduit through which pariah regimes advance their interests in Washington. "It's like the secret handshake that gets you into the lodge," as one former lobbyist told me. Occasionally, firms will achieve spectacular successes for a client: one particularly remarkable piece of lobbyist image management, for example, occurred in the mid-1980s, when the firm of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly helped refashion Jonas Savimbi, a murderous, demented Angolan rebel leader backed by the apartheid regime in South Africa, as a valiant anti-communist "freedom fighter." Savimbi visited Washington on numerous occasions, where the lobby shop had him ferried about by limousine to meetings with top political leaders, conservative groups, and TV networks. Black, Manafort checked repeated threats by members of Congress to cut off aid to Savimbi's rebel group, which was burning and raping its way through Angola with the help of American taxpayers.

Generally, though, lobbyists' victories are more discreet. In 2004 six former members of Congress served as "election observers" in Cameroon and offered an upbeat assessment of President Paul Biya's overwhelming reelection victory, which a local Roman Catholic cardinal described as "surrounded by fraud." It turned out that the firm of Patton Boggs, which worked for the Cameroonian government, had arranged the trip of allegedly independent observers, whose expenses were paid by the Biya regime. Between 1999 and 2000, the Carmen Group received more than $1 million from the government of Kazakhstan to help "establish President [Nursultan] Nazarbayev as one of the foremost emerging leaders of the New World." The lobby shop sent four writers—syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, *Providence Journal* associate editor Philip Terzian, R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. of *The American Spectator*, and Scott Hogenson of the Conservative News Service—on all-expenses-paid trips to Kazakhstan, and upon their return all wrote stories, ranging from critical but sympathetic to slavishly fawning, which the Carmen Group circulated on Capitol Hill.[1]

The U.S. General Accounting Office estimated in 1990 that less than half of foreign lobbyists who should register under FARA actually do so, and there is no evidence that matters have improved. In theory, violators can be heavily fined and even sent to prison, but almost no one has been prosecuted for ignoring the act, so there are few risks for non-compliance. Those firms that do register generally reveal little information beyond the names of their clients, the fees they pay, and limited information about whom they contact. Because disclosure requirements are so lax, it is nearly impossible to monitor the activities of foreign lobbyists. What little knowledge we do have of lobbyist-orchestrated diplomacy—including most of the projects discussed above—has been gleaned not from FARA filings but from serendipitous revelations or investigative reporting.

Which leaves Americans to wonder: Exactly what sorts of promises do these firms make to foreign governments? What kind of scrutiny, if any, do they apply to potential clients? How do they orchestrate support for their clients? And how much of their work is visible to Congress and the public, and hence subject to oversight? To shed light on these questions, I decided to approach some top Washington lobbying firms myself, as a potential client, to see whether they would be willing to burnish the public image of a particularly reprehensible regime.

The first step was to select a suitably distasteful would-be client. Given that my first pick, North Korea, seemed too reviled to be credible, I settled on the only slightly less Stalinist regime of Turkmenistan. Until his sudden death last December, President-for-Life Saparmurat Niyazov had built a personality cult that outdid that of any modern leader except possibly Kim Jong Il. High school students were required to study *The Ruhnama*, Niyazov's book of personal and spiritual wisdom, described on its official website as being "on par with the Bible and the Koran." The self-declared "Turkmenbashi," or "Leader of all Turkmens," Niyazov had his image plastered on billboards and buildings across the country, as well as on the national currency, salt packets, and vodka bottles. He named after himself not only a town but an entire month of the year (the one we unenlightened non-Turkmen still call January). Any opposition to the Turkmen government is considered to be treason, and thousands of political dissidents have been imprisoned. In 2004 a man seeking permission to hold a peaceful demonstration was sent to a psychiatric hospital for two years.

Following Niyazov's demise, Minister of Health Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, the Turkmenbashi's personal dentist, became acting president.[2] He had been responsible, according to the BBC, for implementing Niyazov's 2004 reform of the health service, "which many observers have blamed for its near collapse." Berdymukhamedov was confirmed as president in an election held in February—he ran against five other candidates, all from the ruling party, and won 89 percent of the vote—in a balloting that he described as being held "on a democratic basis that has been laid by the great

[1] *The most notable entry in the latter category came from Tyrrell. Despite traveling to Kazakhstan soon after a presidential balloting that was widely condemned as rigged, he wrote that the country "has at least four highly competitive political parties . . . the freedoms of our Bill of Rights, and commendable tolerance."*

[2] *Berdymukhamedov was relatively unknown when he was declared acting president. Some have speculated that he is the Turkmenbashi's illegitimate son, which would explain his unexpected ascendancy.*

leader," but which just about one else deemed to be a sham. s victory was always certain…and ficial structures worked to ensure utcome," the International Crisis p said of Berdymukhamedov's tri- at the polls.) In an early inter- after becoming president, he said Niyazov was his role model; as for ocracy, he said, "This tender sub- e cannot be imposed by applying imported models. It can be only ully nurtured by using the wise nal experience and traditions of ous generations." He has allowed new Internet cafés to open in Ash- , but business has reportedly been , perhaps due to the soldiers post- the doorways or to the hourly fee, h runs about $10, more than the age Turkmen's daily income.

would have difficulty passing for men, I knew, so rather than ap- ching the firms as a representative he government itself, I instead d be a consultant for "The Maldon up," a mysterious (and fictitious) that claimed to have a financial e in improving Turkmenistan's ic image. We were, my story ran, oup of private investors involved in export of natural gas from Turk- istan to Ukrainian and other East- European markets. We felt it would ngthen our business position in kmenistan if we could convey to erican policymakers and journal- just how heady were the reforms ng plotted by the Berdymukhame- government.[3]

flacking for Turkmenistan did not self trouble the lobbying firms, my cription of The Maldon Group was gned to raise a number of bright red

is not uncommon for lobbying on behalf oreign governments to be contracted ugh private firms. Sometimes the firms apparently acting in their own business in- sts: for example, a Washington-area con- ction and real estate company called erican Worldwide in 2001 hired Patton gs to improve relations between the Unit- States and Angola, where the firm had n pursuing business deals. In other cases, firms are just cutouts for the regimes in stion: when Jefferson Waterman worked Burma, it was actually paid—in the man- of the German Dye Trust—by a firm ed Myanmar Resource Development, ch was fronting for the country's generals. it is unclear whether U.S. lobbying firms w, or care about, the difference.

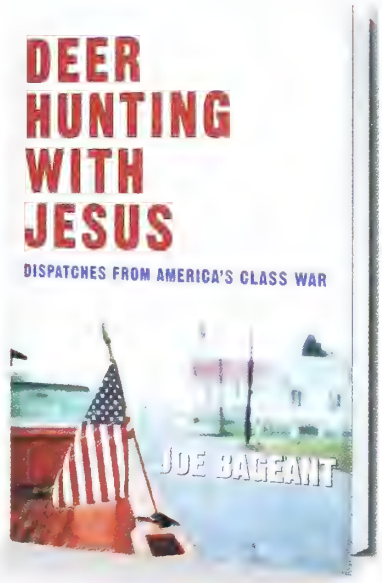
flags. Turkmenistan has vast reserves of natural gas, from which it earns about $2 billion per year in export revenues, but the whole business has been marked by flagrant corruption—as can be ascertained very quickly by anyone who cares to perform a Google search. A 2006 study by London-based Global Witness reported that Niyazov kept billions of dollars in gas revenues under his effective control in overseas accounts. "Perhaps the murkiest and most complex aspect of the Turkmen-Ukraine gas trade," the report went on to say,

> is the role of the intermediary companies that have inserted themselves for more than a decade between Turkmenistan, Russia, Ukraine and Europe. These companies have often come out of nowhere, parlaying tiny amounts of start-up capital into billion-dollar deals. Their ultimate beneficial ownership has been hidden behind complex networks of trusts, holding companies and nominee directors and there is almost no public information about where their profits go.

Before approaching the lobbying firms, I made a few minimal preparations. I printed up some Maldon Group business cards, giving myself the name "Kenneth Case" and giving the firm an address at a large office building in London, on Cavendish Square. I purchased a cell phone with a London number. I had a website created for The Maldon Group—just a home page with contact information—and an email account for myself. Then, in mid-February, soon after Berdymukhamedov's ascent, I began contacting various lobbying firms by email, introducing my firm and explaining that we were eager to improve relations between the "newly-elected government of Turkmenistan" and the United States. We required the services of a firm, I said that could quickly enact a "strategic communications" plan to help us. I hoped that the firms might be willing to meet with me at the end of the month, during a trip I had planned to Washington.

At around three on a pleasantly warm February afternoon, Barry Schumacher, a senior vice president at APCO Associates, ushered me into a conference room at the firm's downtown Washington office, near the in-

"A raging, hilarious, and profane love song to the great American redneck."
–SHERMAN ALEXIE



"Dead serious and damn funny... Bageant writes with the ghosts of Hunter S. Thompson, Will Rogers, and Frank Zappa kibitzing over his shoulder...Takes Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter With Kansas* to the next level."
–*Mother Jones*

"Brilliant... Joe Bageant evokes working class America like no one else." –HOWARD ZINN

"Maddening and provocative." –STUDS TERKEL

"Joe Bageant writes like an avenging angel."
–MARK CRISPIN MILLER

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...corner of 19th and H Streets N.W. ...companying me was "Ricardo," a ...nish-born Maldon Group consultant (in actuality, a friend I had re...ted to come along, since it seemed unlikely that a firm like mine would send a single associate to meet with potential lobbying firms). APCO was the first firm I had contacted, because it was such a natural candidate to represent Turkmenistan: it has experience working not just on behalf of authoritarian regimes in general—the dictatorship of General Sani Abacha in Nigeria, for example, which employed the firm in 1995, the same year it hanged nine democracy activists—but for Caspian regimes in particular, having done P.R. work for the oil-rich kleptocracy of Azerbaijan.

APCO, Schumacher had written eagerly to me by email, had "worked on image, policy, foreign investment and reputation issues for a host of governments." He touted the firm's "key professionals," among them former members of Congress and former administration officials. In a follow-up note, he did ask if I might provide a bit more information about The Maldon Group, since, for obvious reasons, he hadn't been able to discover anything about it. "We prefer to be discreet due to the sensitivity of our business," I replied. Schumacher understood; he even volunteered that APCO would be "more than willing to sign a confidentiality agreement." I assured him that if we were to proceed to the stage of contract negotiations, The Maldon Group would "certainly be able to satisfy any reasonable concerns" about our ability to pay, but until then, I wrote, "we're not prepared to share much more than what I've already told you at the level of preliminary conversations." To which Schumacher promptly replied, "I understand, and this is not unusual for us."

Now, as Ricardo and I entered the meeting room, three of Schumacher's colleagues rose from their seats around a conference table to greet us. There was Elizabeth Jones, a former assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia until 2005 and an ex-ambassador to Kazakhstan; Robert Downen, a professorial type in a shirt and tie who had previously served as a senior aide to Senator Robert Dole and was a fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies; and, in a pinstriped suit, Jennifer Millerwise Dyck, a former spokeswoman for the CIA (where, I later read in her biography I received that day, she "initiated the agency's first coordinated corporate branding and advertising strategy") and for Vice President Dick Cheney.

The conference room, located just past the reception desk, was bland and sparsely decorated. A coffeepot and a black plastic tray of cookies lay on a countertop just across from where I sat. After offering us refreshments, Schumacher commenced with a PowerPoint slide show, which he projected onto a wall. One of the first slides was called "Soft Soundings," and it ran through what Schumacher described as a "vox populi of policymakers" on the subject of Turkmenistan, gleaned from interviews conducted by him and his colleagues in preparing for the meeting with The Maldon Group. Now is "Turkmenistan's most important moment since independence," read one quote, attributed to an unnamed foundation fellow. "No one is looking for perfection on democracy and human rights reforms," read a second sounding, this one from an administration official. I wagged my head, encouraged by this welcome news.

"This really is an opportunity to define the new government of Turkmenistan," Schumacher said, and at this point Jones took over. After speaking with her former colleagues at the State Department, she said, she had concluded that the Bush Administration was hoping to improve relations with the Berdymukhamedov government. Her contacts at State weren't expecting "miracles" in terms of political reform; even a few small steps, like the new Internet cafés, would provide some "good hooks" APCO could use to promote the regime.

"People like Beth can call up these policymakers," Schumacher said with a shake of the head, as if he himself were in awe of Jones's access. "Getting information like that with a couple of phone calls is priceless." Schumacher said he had made calls of his own and had learned from a staff director at "a key committee" that hearings on the topic of energy security were coming up. "Turkmenistan has a role to play here and [that] helps us talk ab... positive way," he said. "It's not hook."

In addition to the core tea... the table, Schumacher ... APCO had on hand a numb... er heavies who could be cal... to assist the Turkmenistan c... These included former Sen... Riegle, who, Schumacher s... tight with Senate Majority ... Harry Reid; and former Cong... Don Bonker, who had close ... Tom Lantos, the new Dem... chairman of the House Fore... tairs Committee. But what ab... Republican side? I asked wi... cern. Schumacher assured me ... firm had access to people in b... ties, "not because we've cont... money" (though APCO empl... subsequently discovered, ha... tributed more than $100,000 ... the last three election cycles) ... cause of the high esteem in wh... firm's stable of former officials w... erally held. And, he added with ... Dyck had such strong ties ... G.O.P. that she alone was "wor... of APCO's Democratic lobbyi...

"What can I say?" Dyck cr... throwing her arms out.

Turning to media strategy, ... macher presented APCO's bro... view of the coverage. The bad ... almost all mentions of Turkme... were negative. On the upside, ... wasn't very much coverage to spe... Now was the time to strike. Was... worried, I asked, that the Turk... regime would be held to impossibly ... human-rights standards? Schum... sought to put my mind at ease. ... any P.R. campaign there were bou... be "isolated incidents that look a... and it's up to the communications ... pany to figure out a way to be ho... about them, to react and to put the ... proper perspective, to make sure ... don't derail the campaign." On the ... er hand, he allowed that something ... ally terrible"—the words dangled in ... air—would be hard to overcome.

There was also the nagging ques... of public disclosure. Yes, Schuma... said, APCO would have to register ... The Maldon Group would need to p... vide some additional informatio... that time, but there was no nee... lose sleep about that. "We live up to ...

it and letter of the law, but we ıld provide minimal information," said. "[We'd] say we're working for e Maldon Group on behalf of government and would file semi-ıual reports. And that's it."

But what if we get calls from jour-ists? I asked.

If they call you," Jones said with a big smile, "refer them to us."

Later in the presentation, a slide ealed the proposed budget for PCO's Turkmenistan operation: 0,000 per month, plus expenses timated at about 10 percent of s), and more for any travel outside Washington. Paid advertising and cial events would cost extra, and humacher proposed that we set up new website for the Turkmen Em-ssy in Washington, which would st The Maldon Group another 5,000.[4] In total, getting out our ssage about a new and improved rkmenistan would require about 00,000 over the first year.

What would we get for our money? PCO's strategy was laid out on a slide titled "Elements of a Communica-ons Program," of which there were ur. The first was "policy maker out-ach," and thanks to its political con-cts, APCO would have no problem re. "Anyone who tells you they can t a congressman to do what you want ght not to be believed, but we can t in the door and make the case," humacher said.

APCO would easily be able to range meetings between Turkmen fficials and key members of Con-ess, and might be able to organize fact-finding trip to the country as ell. Given the recent scandal sur-unding the lobbyist Jack bramoff, it would be difficult and ven unwise for The Maldon Group o sponsor a congressional trip di-ectly, Schumacher said, but there ould surely be official delegations raveling to the region, and "we have the contacts to urge them to stop there."

Downen stepped in here, suggesting it was premature to rule out the possibility of organizing a private junket to Turkmenistan for a crew from Congress. True, The Maldon Group shouldn't organize it directly, but he'd had personal experience with academic groups sponsoring trips. "Maybe Turkmenistan has a think tank or university," he offered. "Under the old rules, any bona fide academic institution could sponsor [travel]. Under the new rules I'm not sure, but I can check."[5]

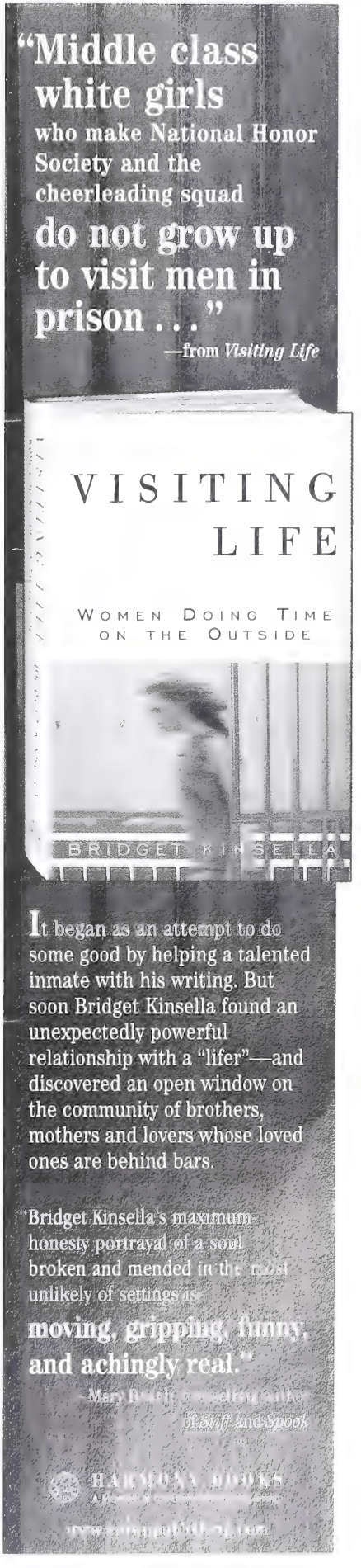
The second element of the strategy was a "media campaign." In a slide entitled "Core Media Relations Activities," APCO promised to "create news items and news outflow," organize media events, and identify and work with "key reporters." As this was her field of expertise, Dyck presented this slide. The media would be receptive to stories about Turkmenistan with the change of government, she said, plus "energy security is an additional hook. We can also bring things like Internet cafés to their attention."

In addition to influencing news reports, Downen added, the firm could drum up positive op-eds in newspapers. "We can utilize some of the think-tank experts who would say, 'On the one hand this and the other hand that,' and we place it as a guest editorial." Indeed, Schumacher said, APCO had someone on staff who "does nothing but that" and had succeeded in placing thousands of opinion pieces.

Discussion about the strategy's third item—building "coalition support," which meant developing seemingly independent and therefore more credible allies to offer favorable views about Turkmenistan—was brief. As a slide on the topic put it, we would need to start small, given that the "closed nature of country has inhibit-

This, admittedly, would be money well spent. The "Latest News" on the embassy's current website dates to September 18, 2000, and includes one item about a phone conversation between the Turkmenbashi and the president of Uzbekistan and another that reads, "On virgin lands cotton is harvested with machines."

[5] Indeed, such a trip can be arranged under the rules passed by Congress earlier this year. These rules say that lobbying firms cannot pay for or arrange for congressional travel—with three exceptions: one-day trips, travel paid for by nonprofit groups, and travel paid for by universities. So The Maldon Group's very own congressional delegation to Turkmenistan would essentially be ready for boarding as soon as APCO found a Turkmen university willing to officially sponsor it



investment and exchanges." For [illegible] would be current and potential corporate investors in Turkmenistan, as well as "think tank experts and academics."

How could we use think tanks and academics? I wondered. "I'm glad you asked," Schumacher said with a chuckle. He flipped to the next slide, which discussed the fourth element of the campaign: "events." One possibility, Downen said, would be to hold a forum on U.S.-Turkmen relations, preferably built around a visit to the United States by a Turkmen official. Possible hosts would include The Heritage Foundation, the Center for Strategic & International Studies, and the Council on Foreign Relations. "Last week I contacted a number of colleagues at think tanks," Downen went on. "Some [illegible] could easily be engaged to sponsor or host a public forum or panel that would bring in congressional staff and journalists." The only cost would be refreshments and room rental. Schumacher joked that APCO would bake the cookies to save The Maldon Group a little money—and could yield a tremendous payoff. "If we can get a paper published or a speech at a conference, we can get a friendly member of Congress to insert that in the *Congressional Record* and get that printed and send it out," Schumacher said. "So you take one event and get it multiplied."

Another option, he explained, would be to pay *Roll Call* and *The Economist* to host a Turkmenistan event. It would be costlier than the think tank route, perhaps around $25,000, but in compensation we would have tighter control over the proceedings, plus gain "the imprimatur of a respected third party." In order that the event not seem like paid advertising, the title for the event should be "bigger than your theme," Schumacher explained, even as it would be put together in a way "that you get your message across."

So we wouldn't call it "Turkmenistan Day"? I asked.

No, Schumacher replied. "Energy Security" would be a better theme.

"Or 'Caspian Basin Pipelines,'" Jones added.

"That's how you do it," Schumacher said. The Maldon Group wouldn't have its own speaker on the dais, but APCO would line up a few people—possibilities included an administration official or an executive from an American firm involved in Turkmenistan—to speak for us. While promising reform was important, we would probably want to focus on matters like energy and regional security. "In a world where the administration wants some realism, there may be ways to get positive messages out," Schumacher said. A concluding slide laid out the broad benefits that The Maldon Group could expect to see for our $600,000. These included raising Turkmenistan's profile "as a nation important to the United States," building a "broader base of support" for the country, and improving media coverage. After a series of firm handshakes, I promised I would be back in touch as soon as I had consulted with my superiors in London.

The following morning, Ricardo and I headed to the offices of Cassidy & Associates, perhaps the most prominent of all the Washington lobby shops.[6] It was founded thirty-two years ago by Gerald Cassidy, a former staffer for George McGovern, and for much of its existence was known as a strongly Democratic firm. Cassidy pioneered the practice of lobbying for earmarks—the polite term for pork—but also represents Fortune 500 corporations as well as foreign countries and businesses. Its current clients include Teodoro Obiang, who has ruled the small African nation of Equatorial Guinea since 1979, when he executed [illegible] cle. Between 1998 and 2006 [illegible] was paid more than $235 m[illegible] lobbying fees, more than ar[illegible] firm in Washington.

Cassidy's headquarters a[illegible] block away from APCO's bu[illegible] more elegant. The firm occup[illegible] entire fourth floor of its buil[illegible] that one enters the offices upo[illegible] the elevator. A receptionist wa[illegible] cardo and me into a large co[illegible] room with a beautiful wood ta[illegible] ished to a bright sheen. The [illegible] about twenty seats around th[illegible] and eight settings had been l[illegible] with a glass, each set atop a pape[illegible] er embossed with the firm's nam[illegible] table held an assortment of can[illegible] drinks, a pitcher of ice wate[illegible] lemon slices, a cup of sharpene[illegible] cils, and a pile of yellow legal p[illegible]

A phalanx of six Cassidy o[illegible] soon entered the conference roo[illegible] dressed in elegant business at[illegible] varying shades of black, gray, an[illegible] blue. There was Chuck Dolan, a [illegible] senior P.R. consultant for the [illegible] Edwards campaign; Gordon Spee[illegible] firm's pudgy, baby-faced direc[illegible] business development; tall, thin [illegible] ald Warburg, a former Hill staffe[illegible] company vice president; Chr[illegible] Moran, who during the meeting [illegible] me she had previously worked for [illegible] di Arabia and helped boost its i[illegible] with an "allies program" that sen[illegible] itors to the country; and Dy[illegible] Bartlett, another P.R. specialist wo[illegible] firm biography said he had helped [illegible] porate CEOs "face the nation's to[illegible] est journalists."

The sixth member of the Ca[illegible] team, and its clear leader, was firm [illegible] chairman Gregg Hartley, who wit[illegible] crew cut and serious manner initiall[illegible] minded me of a drill sergeant; but s[illegible] he loosened up and proved to poss[illegible] certain folksy appeal. Until 200[illegible] had been a top aide to then House [illegible] jority Whip Roy Blunt, and he ma[illegible] tains close ties to top Republican[illegible] Congress. When Hartley quit his [illegible] job and decided to become a lobby[illegible] a "bidding war for his services ensue[illegible] the *Washington Post* later report[illegible] "Cassidy . . . won it with an offer of [illegible] under $1 million a year," plus a "s[illegible] stantial percentage" of the lobby[illegible] fees Hartley generated. Hartley's hir[illegible]

I had phone and e-mail exchanges with two other firms, the Carmen Group, which attracted my interest because of its work for Kazakhstan, and The Livingston Group, which is headed by retired Congressman Bob Livingston of Louisiana and has represented Azerbaijan and Turkey. Livingston's work for the latter country has included general public relations, advocating for Ankara's right to purchase advanced American weaponry, and keeping Congress from declaring as genocide the Turkish massacre of Armenians during the early twentieth century. Both firms expressed interest in working for The Maldon Group and offered to sign confidentiality agreements, but they also made efforts, albeit modest, toward [illegible] for additional information about my firm, and so I canceled my meetings with them. If The Maldon Group actually existed, though, I have little doubt that both firms would ultimately have been willing to handle the account.

ed a key moment in Cassidy & ciates' transformation during the decade into a lobbying enterprise is increasingly identified with the ıblican Party.

s was the case with APCO, idy had immediately offered to t with me. In an initial phone versation with Speed, Hartley, Dolan, the three had asked a few softball questions about Maldon Group (and, like CO, offered to sign a confidenty agreement) before they be- their sales pitch. Hartley point- out that Cassidy's work for atorial Guinea was "a very simisort of representation to what 're talking about" with Turkistan. The Obiang regime had ived a bit of bad publicity—he ıtioned here a banking scandal olving the government—and sidy's first job had been "to ıtify inaccurate or biased stories try to correct them."[7] Hartley boasted about Cassidy's politicontacts, saying, "We strongly eve in a bipartisan [approach] mirroring the power structure.. You have to find champions on h sides."

Hartley returned to that theme ing the meeting at Cassidy's of- . His firm, he said after passing Rido and me copies of a corporate chure,[8] had "strong personal relanships" with policymakers, and just to a committee chairman e and there, as was the case with ıe of its competitors. Cassidy had ties across the board—at the staff level, the committee level, the Republican and Democratic leadership, and the administration.

"We know you're talking to other firms," Hartley said pointedly. "You're going to have a hard time matching . . . [the] types of successes" his firm had racked up. For example, thanks to Cassidy's aggressive media strategy and trips it had organized to Equatorial Guinea for congressional staffers, things were now looking up for the government there. The proof: three years ago, Hartley said, *Parade Magazine* had ranked Obiang as "the world's sixth worst dictator," grimacing as he stated that last word. "He's still not a great guy," he went on, "but he's not in the top ten anymore, and we can take some credit for helping them figure out how to work down that list. Is he going to win the U.N. humanitarian award next year? No, he's not, but we're making progress."[9]

Now Warburg took over the meeting. He talked with some passion about two "remarkable lobbying campaigns" that the firm had been involved with, both of which had succeeded in getting the U.S. government to move "against its express will." The first was eliminating a longtime trade embargo against Vietnam, which the firm had achieved over the opposition of the families of POWs and MIAs. The key to success was assembling an outside pressure group called the Multinational Business Development Coalition, which was made up of major American corporations seeking business in Vietnam. "The U.S. had no relations," Warburg said. "We changed that policy, ended the embargo, and opened Vietnam up to U.S. economic exchange."

The second campaign, Warburg said, involved winning permission in 1995 for President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan to make a private visit to the United States "over the express oppo-

found this amusing, because he almost ainly was thinking of me: in 2003, while king at the Los Angeles Times, *I had ken the story of the hundreds of millions dollars of Equatorial Guinea's oil revs that were deposited at Riggs Bank in shington, under Obiang's effective con- . A Senate investigation not only con- ed what I had reported but uncovered n more dirt, such as the fact that Obiang l family members had stashed millions of lars in offshore accounts.*

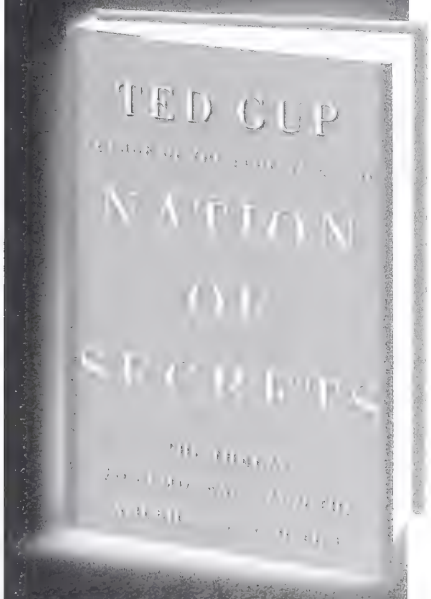
he brochure said that Cassidy offered "A udition of Ethics and Integrity that goes the core of our beliefs" and made the im, a brazenly cynical one even by the ndards of Washington, that Gerald Cassy had founded the firm "to ensure that nericans have access and the ability to rcise their First Amendment right to peon their government."

[9] *When I checked later, the progress seemed pretty modest. Obiang is indeed out of* Parade*'s top ten list for 2007; now he's number eleven. In a brief summary,* Parade *noted that in 2003, "state radio announced that Obiang 'is in permanent contact with The Almighty' and that he 'can decide to kill without anyone calling him to account and without going to Hell.'"*

FROM THE AUTHOR OF
THE BOOK OF HONOR

WELCOME TO AMERICA, THE SECRETIVE

where the need to hide the truth has replaced our right to know it.



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Doubleday

[illegible] the executive branch." At the time, Taiwan's embassy wasn't even allowed to lobby in Washington without permission from the State Department. Evading that obstacle was simple: since the government couldn't retain Cassidy, a Taiwanese think tank fronting for it did. President Bill Clinton had said he wouldn't allow Lee to come to the United States, so Cassidy, Warburg recounted, began a campaign to lobby Congress. After both chambers passed resolutions in support of a visit by Lee, the White House caved. "The president of the United States reversed policy," said Warburg. The campaign had been so brilliant, in fact, that graduate students had written theses on it.

Warburg also mentioned his past work for Merhav, an Israeli firm with major interests in Turkmenistan, for which Cassidy had obtained Export-Import Bank financing for a trans-Caspian pipeline. Unlike the case with other lobbying firms The Maldon Group might hire, "We really know Turkmenistan. It wouldn't be on-the-job training for us."

When Warburg had represented Merhav, he met a number of Turkmen officials. "Unfortunately, the previous government had a history of shuffling ministers," he said. "I won't pursue the metaphor." To which Hartley added, "We won't ask where all of them were shuffled!" There was general merriment, which seemed inappropriate, given that sixteen ministers were jailed or sent into internal exile last year, one of whom is believed to have died in prison.

Hartley announced that he and his colleagues had a few questions about The Maldon Group. I would be as helpful as I could, I replied, but discretion was our firm's lifeblood; while it pained me "to look like I'm being evasive," there wasn't much I could say.

"We're going to ask questions, and you may have to throw the wall up," Hartley said. "Don't mention names if you can't mention names."

The questions were quite easy to handle: I did little more than toss out the same scraps of information I had given them before. We were a small group of British, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European investors; we had a close relationship to the government, but there were no Turkmen officials involved in The Maldon Group. I reiterated my concerns about public-disclosure requirements, and Hartley assured me I could rest easy. "We have to disclose who we represent, but there doesn't have to be great detail," he said. "The way we would handle this, there'd be very little about you and virtually none about your investors."

When it was time for the hard sell, Warburg began by giving me a piece of intelligence he had picked up—something, he said, for me to share "with your friends and investors back in England." The previous week, he claimed, there had been a meeting on Turkmenistan at the highest level of the U.S. government. "We'd like to make sure you're on the agenda for the next such meeting," he said pointedly. "We'd like to be involved in prepping the individuals before such a meeting, and we'd like to be involved in interpreting the outcome to your investors, and through you to the government in a way that really empowers you in that market." Hartley, too, sought to emphasize how interested Cassidy was in winning the contract. "This is the sort of thing we do extremely well," he said at one point. "It's the kind of stuff that gets our juices flowing."

Of course, there was the question of money, specifically how much of it The Maldon Group would need to hire Cassidy. For Turkmenistan, Hartley said, there could be no quick, easy solutions; hence, he proposed a three-year effort at from $1.2 million to $1.5 million annually—and that could run higher, he warned, if a do-gooder organization like a human-rights group targeted the regime, necessitating intensified spin control by the firm's lobbyists. "You've looked at our bios," he said. "Look at our track record and what we've charged for other representations . . . and you'll see you're not being gouged."

While insisting that I didn't write the checks, I said the figure seemed reasonable to me.

"Others will do it for less, but [illegible] won't get people with our exp[illegible] our knowledge of Turkmen[illegible] ties to [the] State [Department], [illegible] tional Security Council, and s[illegible] of the intelligence communit[illegible] burg said.

Cassidy saw its strategy as [illegible] two central prongs, one tar[illegible] policymakers and the other a[illegible] ing the media. Among the q[illegible] tions I'd asked had been wh[illegible] was advisable to arrange a [illegible] Turkmenistan for members [illegible] gress. Hartley said that it wa[illegible] would be critical to pick "th[illegible] members of Congress," wh[illegible] defined as those with "a le[illegible] that will be instrumental in un[illegible] ing progress on our represent[illegible] As at APCO, the Cassidy tea[illegible] that the post-Abramoff cl[illegible] would make it harder to arr[illegible] private trip for members of [illegible] gress—"but not impossibl[illegible]" Hartley's words. In the meanti[illegible] less visible trip for Hill st[illegible] could be more easily accomplis[illegible]

Bringing Turkmen offici[illegible] Washington was also a [illegible] though we needed to be realis[illegible] The Maldon Group said it wo[illegible] Berdymukhamedov to addr[illegible] joint session of Congress, Ca[illegible] would tell you that's not pos[illegible] Warburg said. On the other h[illegible] might Cassidy be able to arran[illegible] coffee in the Senate Foreign [illegible] tions hearing room of the [illegible] Capitol where the foreign min[illegible] is warmly received?" Yes, it [illegible] well might.

Also, The Maldon Group sh[illegible] not underestimate the value o[illegible] ranging a trip to Turkmenistan [illegible] journalists and think-tank anal[illegible] which was something Dolan sai[illegible] had done for the Valdai Inte[illegible] tional Discussion Club, a gr[illegible] funded by Russian interests tha[illegible] fers all-expenses-paid trips to Ru[illegible] Amid the general pampering, [illegible] Western academics and repor[illegible] who attend are granted audien[illegible] with senior Russian political figu[illegible] During the meeting, Dolan sin[illegible] described it as a way to give pe[illegible] "firsthand information" and m[illegible] tioned that past attendees had [illegible] cluded Ariel Cohen of The Herit[illegible]

lation, Marshall Goldman of rd, and Jim Hoagland of the *ington Post*.[10] A similar pro- might work for Turkmenistan, gested.

o weeks after the meeting, Cas- id out more of its strategic think- a twelve-page proposal that it o me by email. The firm's lobby- ould educate senior government ls and opinion makers "on posi- levelopments taking place in nenistan," and would sell the ry on the basis of its "strategic tance in Central Asia" and the al role" it could play in American y security. Cassidy's preliminary ch already had determined that was "accelerated interest" in nenistan "at the highest levels of .S. government." This was a great tunity, since it would make it eas- reach out to government officials ll as the media, but it also pre- l a challenge, as "greater attention ring greater scrutiny."

course, "attention" and "scruti- re essentially synonymous; the reason that more of it posed a enge to Cassidy's proposed lob- campaign was that in the case of menistan, the truth was almost r good. Cassidy had, in fact, al- uncovered troubling news: "We become aware," the proposal said ously, "of U.S. determination to ssively push an agenda of human s and democratic reforms in ex- ge for greater engagement with abat." (This supposed discovery surely a scare tactic. The Bush inistration has openly prioritized

ter returning from his Valdai trip last Hoagland wrote a critical but not en- unflattering piece about Vladimir , whom he and other junketeers had 'at his sprawling dacha in suburban ow." The Russian president had taken ions from the group "between servings opus carpaccio, baked sea bass and figs yogurt sorbet, all prepared by his Ital- hef and washed down by an unassum- inot grigio." Other Valdai Club mem- ave been even more cooperative. Soon returning from his Valdai-sponsored sion, Cohen co-authored an essay that l on Congress to approve Permanent nal Trade Relations with Russia, saying successful approval of such legislation d be "an important step in strengthen- e U.S.-Russia economic relationship." ke Hoagland, he didn't mention any- about who sponsored his vacation.

trade and business promotion, not human rights, with other major Caspian energy producers. According to a well-placed source, State Department officials have made it very clear that the Bush Administration's major policy goal in Turkmenistan is opening the country to investment by U.S. energy firms.) To deal with the threat of scrutiny, Cassidy would seek to drive "the story being told about Turkmenistan by the media, rather than merely reacting to it. By engaging with correspondents, we will coordinate a global message about political, social and economic progress."

As part of this initiative, the firm would plant pro-Turkmenistan op-eds from friendly authors it recruited. Cassidy would also put together "a list of potential vulnerabilities, such as humanitarian issues, social conditions and otherwise.... With these issues in mind, we will conduct 'worst-case' scenario planning and response development by anticipating crises, preparing spokespeople, [and] drafting statements." In other words, Cassidy would have an emergency-response network in place should, for example, opposition members happen to be mowed down by government guns. "We will be your eyes and ears in Washington, D.C.," the proposal said.

In the weeks after my meetings, both APCO and Cassidy contacted me, eager to carry out the Turkmen campaign. I replied with notes of regret, explaining that The Maldon Group was unsure about how to proceed but that for the time being, at least, their services would not be required. Still, it was hard not to daydream about what might have been accomplished for the "newly elected government of Turkmenistan" if I'd actually had the few million dollars to spare. In May, I attended "Angola Day," an all-day conference that had been organized on behalf of the regime of President José Eduardo Dos Santos, which, while not equaling the Turkmen rulers in flair, is nevertheless one of the most crooked and predatory in the world. Angola Day's sponsors included the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which hosted the event at its downtown headquarters, the Angolan government, and the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce, which receives financial support from American oil companies.

It was impossible to say whether a lobbying firm was directly involved in orchestrating the event. But other than its unfortunate title—had APCO been running the show, it would have been something like "Africa and American Energy Security: Partners in Prosperity"—Angola Day was straight out of the playbooks laid out for Turkmenistan: it had the imprimatur of a respected third party (the Wilson Center), a coalition of corporate allies, and a smattering of pliant academics and officials who seemed more than willing to pen a friendly op-ed if need be. The keynote speaker was Joaquim David, Angola's elegantly tailored industry minister, and as I watched him deliver his address, it was hard not to think of a Turkmen official on that same dais, giving voice to the same empty slogans and catchwords, speaking (as David did) of his government's commitment to sustainable development, environmental protection, and social justice—despite the fact that Dos Santos has done absolutely nothing to demonstrate these commitments. I was especially wistful during the coffee break, when I could see the real business of the conference being conducted. Here was Witney Schneidman, a former State Department official and member of the U.S.-Angola Chamber, approaching every Angolan official he saw with an unctuous ear-to-ear grin on his face; Hank Cohen, a former assistant secretary of state and former lobbyist for Angola, chatting up the diamond magnate Maurice Tempelsman; a Chevron executive and an official from the U.S. Agency for International Development, greeting each other like long-lost friends.

It was a vision of just how regimes like Angola and Azerbaijan, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, the serial abrogators of "human dignity," can make and keep their wealthy American friends. Someday soon, perhaps, the same will happen for Turkmenistan—God and lobbyists willing. ■

MALL

The architecture of ou

George W. Bush says, "History will judge what I'm about," but his legacy already can be seen throughout the capital, in the astounding 100 private office buildings that have been built or redeveloped in downtown Washington (seen here in a recent satellite image) since 2001. These new edifices stand as monuments to a radical outsourcing of the federal government—total dollars spent on contractors have doubled under Bush, with half of all contracts dispensed without competitive bidding; private employees working on federal contracts now outnumber actual federal employees. D.C. architecture has long been used to reflect our ideals of governance: during the New Deal, federal offices completed along the north side of the National Mall used classical motifs to harken back to democratic Athens and republican Rome; the Great Society public buildings to the Mall's south employed modernist designs to evoke the prudent planning of federal technocrats. Yet the private buildings of the Bush boom show that such quaint notions of government are now out of style.





Built into the preserved exteriors of several Gilded Age offices, one of which it takes its name from, the newly opened Atlantic Building emphasizes a continuity between past and present. The building is essentially the house that Medicare Part D built. Conceived of by Bush, lobbied for by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), and pushed through by then-Congressman Billy Tauzin, the 2003 Medicare law ensured that the government would buy wholesale quantities of prescription drugs at retail prices. Today, PhRMA is one of the Atlantic Building's chief tenants, and Tauzin reports to work there as PhRMA's president. With the number of lobbyists having doubled under Bush, fellow tenant Alston & Bird is among the many law/lobbying firms that have moved into larger offices. The Atlantic Building of the 1890s also housed corporate attorneys who worked to grease the wheels of government, making the current building—at six times the size of the original—a fitting shrine to both old-school influence peddling and its new, expanded form.



The west wing of Capital Gallery, this just-completed, prism-shaped private office block, stands in stark contrast to its neighbor, a complex of Johnson-era boxy public buildings. Numerous private contractors have offices in Capital Gallery, including the top federal contractor, Lockheed Martin. Because Lockheed derives the vast majority of its revenues from taxpayer dollars (nearly $20 billion in 2005 from the Pentagon alone), it operates more like a federal agency than a private company. By contrast, the Energy Department, headquartered a block away, has itself become more escrow account than federal agency, since it paid out 94 percent of its 2005 budget to contractors. With its reflective glass exteriors that afford tenants a clear view out but outsiders no view in, Capital Gallery accurately models the lack of transparency in the contracting process: unlike federal agencies, contractors are not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.

Map illustration © Brad Kroll Zaidi. Inset photographs © colelliphoto.com (top) and © Kevin We

ERICA

nment, *by Daniel Brook*

The 101 Constitution building sits here on the commercial property closest to the Capitol—a prestigious Mall location that would seem destined for an important government building. In fact, a great deal of government business that historically took place in public offices is now carried out in this private building. One tenant, the Federal Policy Group, specializes in writing tax legislation, something the Constitution expressly says should happen across the street, in the House of Representatives. Another occupant, Van Scoyoc Associates, secures earmarks for private- and public-sector clients. Among its top selling points, 101 Constitution promises prospective lessees "unparalleled access to leaders." Indeed, the opulent Charlie Palmer steak house on the building's ground floor is one of the city's most popular spots for political-action-committee fund-raisers.





The stately new headquarters of the Securities and Exchange Commission, built here next to Union Station, goes out of its way to look governmental. Large bald-eagle seals hang on the two stone pillars marking the building's entrance, and its atrium wall is made of see-through glass, a design feature commonly used to evoke the transparency of democratic government, such as in several recently built federal courthouses. Yet one in six SEC employees is a private contractor, and the complex itself, despite being home to a federal agency, is privately owned. (Rent: $3,800,000 a month.) Of the 4.4 million square feet of federally occupied office space added to the Washington area since 2000, 3.4 million are in private buildings. The new headquarters of the Department of Transportation is also a private building, another embodiment of this furtive blurring of public and private under Bush. Leslie Shepherd, the chief architect of the General Services Administration, the agency that oversees the government's real estate needs, says this is the point: "To John Q. Public, they *are* government buildings. It says 'Department of Transportation' on the front."

The existing public buildings of official Washington have not been razed or vacated, but the departments they house increasingly function only to funnel tax dollars to the private sector. The headquarters of the Interior Department (shown here), the first building in the capital authorized and constructed under Franklin Roosevelt, aimed to show through its style of "stripped classicism" that the ancient ideal of popular government was still relevant in the modern world. Yet under Bush, Interior has outsourced the management of public lands, hatched plans to replace park rangers with contract workers, and even closed off the Mall for an "NFL Kickoff" concert cosponsored by Pepsi. In the administration's most audacious privatization plan—outsourcing a war—Interior has issued contracts on behalf of the Pentagon, most notably for the private interrogators implicated in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Even as the outward signs of privatization cover more of the D.C. landscape, the edifices built under FDR and LBJ remain; the ideals of popular government these older buildings embody, however, have become a facade. ■

ook's last article for lagazine, *"Unnecessnce," appeared in the issue. His first book,* Selling Out to Stay Winner-Take-All *as published by Times ne.*

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–Annette Kobak, *NY Times Book Review*



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DETROIT ARCADIA

Exploring the post-American landscape

By Rebecca Solnit

Until recently there was a frieze ound the lobby of the Hotel ntchartrain in downtown Detroit, naively charming painting of a ested lakefront landscape th Indians peeping out m behind the trees. The tel was built on the site Fort Pontchartrain du troit, the old French gar- on that three hundred ars ago held a hundred or pioneer families inside its lls while several thou- nd Ottawas and Hurons d Potawatomis went out their business out- le, but the frieze evoked era before even that rude ructure was built in the sh woodlands of the place at was not yet Michigan the United States. craped clear by glaciers ring the last ice age, the ndscape the French in- aded was young, soggy, nd densely forested. The ver frontage that would become etroit was probably mostly sugar aple and beech forest, with black sh or mixed hardwood swamps, a few patches of conifers, and the occasional expanse of what naturalists like to call wet prairie—grasslands you might not want to walk on. The



Indians killed the trees by girdling them and planted corn in the clearings, but the wild rice they gathered and the fish and game they hunted were also important parts of their diet. One pioneer counted badger, bear, fisher, fox, mink, muskrat, porcupine, rabbit, raccoon, weasel, wildcat, wolf, and woodchuck among the local species, and cougar and deer could have been added to the list. The French would later recruit the Indians to trap beaver, which were plentiful in those once-riverine territories—*détroit* means "strait" or "narrows," but in its thirty-two-mile journey from Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie, the Detroit River also had several tributaries, including Parent's Creek, which was later named Bloody Run after some newly arrived English soldiers managed to lose a fight they picked with the local Ottawas.

Fort Pontchartrain was never meant to be the center of a broad European settlement. It was a trading post, a garrison, and a strategic site in the scramble between the British and the French to dominate the North American interior. Cadillac, the ambitious Frenchman who established the fort in 1701, invited members of several Indian nations to surround the fort in order to facilitate more frequent trading, but this led to clashes not just between nations but between races. Unknown Indians set fire to Fort Pontchartrain in 1703, and the Fox skirmished there in 1712. After the English took over in 1760, deteriorating relations with the local tribes culminated in the three-year-long, nearly successful Ottawa uprising known as Pontiac's Rebellion.

ebecca Solnit lives in San Francisco and is e author of several books, including A eld Guide to Getting Lost *and, most re- ntly,* Storming the Gates of Paradise. *er last article for* Harper's Magazine, *The Uses of Disaster," appeared in the ctober 2005 issue.*

otographs from Detroit by Misty Keasler

This is all ancient history, but it does foreshadow the racial conflicts that never went away in Detroit, though now white people constitute the majority who surround and resent the 83 percent black city. It's as if the fort had been turned inside out—and, in fact, in the 1940s a six-foot-tall concrete wall was built along Eight Mile Road, which traces Detroit's northern limits, to contain the growing African-American population. And this inversion exposes another paradox. North of Eight Mile, the mostly white suburbs seem conventional, and they may face the same doom as much of conventional suburban America if sprawl and auto-based civilization die off with oil shortages and economic decline. South of Eight Mile, though, Detroit is racing to a far less predictable future.

It is a remarkable city now, one in which the clock seems to be running backward as its buildings disappear and its population and economy decline. The second time I visited Detroit I tried to stay at the Pontchartrain, but the lobby was bisected by drywall, the mural seemed doomed, and the whole place was under some form of remodeling that resembled ruin, with puddles in the lobby and holes in the walls, few staff people, fewer guests, and strange grinding noises at odd hours. I checked out after one night because of the cold water coming out of the hot-water tap and the generally spooky feeling generated by trying to sleep in a 413-room high-rise hotel with almost no other guests. I was sad to see the frieze on its way out, but—still—as I have explored this city over the last few years, I have seen an oddly heartening new version of the landscape it portrays, a landscape that is not quite post-apocalyptic but that is strangely—and sometime even beautifully—post-American.

This continent has not seen a transformation like Detroit's since the last days of the Maya. The city, once the fourth largest in the country, is now so depopulated that some stretches resemble the outlying farmland and others are altogether wild.



Downtown still looks like a
town, and all of those hi
buildings still make an imp
skyline, but when you look c
some of them, you can se
growing out of the ledg
crevices, an invasive specie
China known variously as the
palm and the tree of heaven
wisdom has it that whenever
building goes up, an older o
simply be abandoned, and th
rule applies to the blocks
condos that have been droppe
and there among the ruins: wh
were built in the first place in
full of handsome old houses g
ruin has everything to do wi
momentary whims of the real
trade and nothing to do wi
long-term survival of cities.

The transformation of the re
tial neighborhoods is more dra
On so many streets in so
neighborhoods, you see a hou
little shabby but well built and
tiful. Then another house. Th
few houses are missing, so thor
ly missing that no trace of fou
tion remains. Grass grows lush
though nothing had ever distu
the pastoral verdure. Then the
house that's charred and shatte
then a beautiful house, with g
and dormers and a porch, the ki
house a lot of Americans fant
about owning. Then more gr
This irregular pattern occurs mil
ter mile, through much of Det
You could be traveling down
bash Street on the west side of t
or Pennsylvania or Fairview on
east side of town or around
about any part of the State F
neighborhood on the city's north
border. Between the half-era
neighborhoods are ruined factor
boarded-up warehouses, rows
storefronts bearing the traces
failed enterprise, and occasional
id blocks of new town houses t
look as though they had be
dropped in by helicopter. In t
bereft zones, solitary figures wan
slowly, as though in no hurry to
from one abandoned zone to t
next. Some areas have been stripp
entirely, and a weedy version of r
ture is returning. Just about a third
Detroit, some forty square miles, h

An abandoned fact

ed past decrepitude into vacan-
d prairie—an urban void nearly
ze of San Francisco.
vas tales of these ruins that orig-
drew me to the city a few years
My first visit began somberly
gh, as I contemplated the great
lassical edifice of the train sta-
designed by the same architects
completed the same year as
d Central station in Manhattan.
d Central thrives; this broken
ing stands alone just beyond the
silence of Michigan Avenue
nly half a mile from the aban-
d Tiger Stadium. Rings of cy-
e fence forbid exploration. The
rain left on January 5, 1988—
lay before Epiphany. The build-
nas been so thoroughly gutted
on sunny days the light seems to
e through the upper stories as
gh through a cheese grater; there
tle left but concrete and stone.
the windows are smashed out.
copper pipes and wires, I was
were torn out by the scavengers
harvest material from aban-
ed buildings around the city and
en their decay.

n another visit, I took a long
k down a sunken railroad spur
, in more prosperous times, had
n used to move goods from one
ory to another. A lot of effort
gone into making the long
nnel of brick and concrete about
nty feet below the gently undu-
ng surface of Detroit, and it had
n abandoned a long time. Lush
nery grew along the tracks and
he walls, which were like a mu-
n of spray-can art from the 1980s
1990s. The weeds and beer cans
strangely apposite graffiti decry-
the 1993 passage of the North
nerican Free Trade Agreement
ned to go on forever.

took many pictures on my visits
Detroit, but back home they just
ked like snapshots of abandoned
braska farmhouses or small towns
ther west on the Great Plains.
metimes a burned-out house
uld stand next to a carefully tend-
twin, a monument to random
e; sometimes the rectilinear na-
e of city planning was barely per-
tible, just the slightest traces of a
l fading into grassy fields accented



with the occasional fire hydrant. One day after a brief thunderstorm, when the rain had cleared away and chunky white clouds dotted the sky, I wandered into a neighborhood, or rather a former neighborhood, of at least a dozen square blocks where trees of heaven waved their branches in the balmy air. Approximately one tattered charred house still stood per block. I could hear the buzzing of crickets or cicadas, and I felt as if I had traveled a thousand years into the future.

To say that much of Detroit is ruins is, of course, to say that some of it isn't. There are stretches of Detroit that look like anywhere in the U.S.A.—blocks of town houses and new condos, a flush of gentility spreading around the Detroit Institute of Arts, a few older neighborhoods where everything is fine. If Detroit has become a fortress of urban poverty surrounded by suburban affluence, the city's waterfront downtown has become something of a fortress within a fortress, with a convention center, a new ballpark, a new headquarters for General Motors, and a handful of casinos that were supposed to be the city's economic salvation when they were built a decade ago. But that garrison will likely fend off time no better than Fort Detroit or the Hotel Pontchartrain.

Detroit is wildly outdated, but it is not very old. It was a medium-size city that boomed in the first quarter of the twentieth century, became the "arsenal of democracy" in the second, spent the third in increasingly less gentle decline, and by the last quarter was a byword for urban decay, having made a complete arc in a single century. In 1900, Detroit had a quarter of a million people. By midcentury the population had reached nearly 2 million. In recent years, though, it has fallen below 900,000. Detroit is a cautionary tale about one-industry towns: it shrank the way the old boomtowns of the gold and silver rushes did, as though it had been mining automobiles and the veins ran dry, but most

nbandoned house in the western part of Detroit

of those mining towns were meant to be ephemeral. People thought Detroit would go on forever.

Coleman Young, Detroit's first African-American mayor, reigned from 1974 to 1993, the years that the change became irreversible and impossible to ignore, and in his autobiography he sounds like he is still in shock:

> It's mind-boggling to think that at mid-century Detroit was a city of close to two million and nearly everything beyond was covered with corn and cow patties. Forty years later, damn near every last white person in the city had moved to the old fields and pastures—1.4 frigging million of them. Think about that. There were 1,600,000 whites in Detroit after the war, and 1,400,000 of them left. By 1990, the city was just over a million, nearly eighty percent of it was black, and the suburbs had surpassed Detroit not only in population but in wealth, in commerce—even in basketball, for God's sake.

The Detroit Pistons are now based in Auburn Hills. According to the 2000 census, another 112,357 whites left the city in the 1990s, and 10,000 more people a year continue to leave. Even three hundred bodies a year are exhumed from the cemeteries and moved because some of the people who were once Detroiters or the children of Detroiters don't think the city is good enough for their dead. Ford and General Motors, or what remains of them—most of the jobs were dispatched to other towns and nations long ago—are in trouble, too. Interestingly, in this city whose name is synonymous with the auto industry, more than a fifth of households have no cars.

"Detroit's Future Is Looking Brighter," said a headline in the *Detroit Free Press*, not long after another article outlined the catastrophes afflicting the whole state. In recent years, Michigan's household income has dropped more than that of any other state, and more and more of its citizens are slipping below the poverty line. David Littmann, a senior economist for the M[illegible] think tank the Mackinac C[enter] Public Policy, told the pa[per] the economy slows national[ly] going to sink much farther [than] to the other states. We've [already] begun. We're going to see M[ichigan] sink to levels that no [one] ever seen."

In another sense, the worst [is] in Detroit. In the 1980s and [early] the city was falling apart, sp[ectac]larly and violently. Back th[en] annual pre-Halloween arson [night] known as Devil's Night finis[hed] a lot of the abandoned build[ings] peaked in 1984 with 810 fires [in] last three days of October. S[ome] the arson, a daughter of De[troit] black bourgeoisie told me [it] constructive—crackhouses e[ven] burned down by the neighbo[rs]. own respectable aunt had t[o] one. Between 1978 and 199[0] city issued 9,000 building p[er]for new homes and 108,000 d[emo]tion permits, and quite a l[ot] structures were annihilated wi[th] official sanction.

Even Ford's old Highland [Park] headquarters, where the Model [T] born, is now just a shuttered se[ries] dusty warehouses with tape o[ver] windows and cyclone fences a[round] the cracked pavement. Once u[pon a] time, the plant was one of the [won]ders of the world—on a single d[ay] 1925 it cranked out 9,000 cars. According to a sign I saw under a[n] next to the empty buildings. D[own] once made most of the cars on e[arth] now the entire United States n[ot] not even one in ten. The new M[odel] T Ford Plaza next door struck [my] traveling companion—who, lik[e] many white people born in De[troit] after the war, had mostly been r[aised] elsewhere—as auspicious. But [the] mall was fronted by a mostly em[pty] parking lot and anchored by a Pay[less] ShoeSource, which to my mind [did] not portend an es[pe]cially bright future.

When I came back, a year a[fter] my first tour, I stopped at the Detr[oit] Institute of Arts to see the Di[ego] Rivera mural commissioned in 19[32] by Henry Ford's son, Edsel. The m[u]seum is a vast Beaux-Arts wa[rehouse]



The old Ford headquarters in Highland P[ark]

—"the fifth-largest fine arts
ım in the United States," ac-
ıg to its promotional litera-
-and the fresco covered all four
of the museum's central court-
Rivera is said to have consid-
: his finest work.
an odd masterpiece, a celebra-
of the River Rouge auto plant,
ı had succeeded the Highland
actory as Ford's industrial head-
:rs, painted by a Communist for
ın of one of the richest capital-
n the world. The north and
walls are devoted to nearly life-
:enes in which the plant's gray
belts, racks, and workbenches
and swarm like some vast in-
al apparatus. The workers with-
ight be subsidiary organs or
: be lunch, as the whole churns
:rete a stream of black Fords.
vera created this vision when
ity was reveling in the new-
l supremacy of its megafacto-
ut Detroit had already reached
ex. Indeed, the River Rouge
—then the largest factory com-
in the world, employing more
100,000 workers on a site two
half times the size of New York
s Central Park—was itself built
ıburban Dearborn. In 1932,
gh, capitalists and Communists
shared a belief that the most
able form of human organiza-
—indeed, the inevitable form—
not just industrial but *this* kind
dustrial: a Fordist system of "ra-
ıl" labor, of centralized produc-
in blue-collar cities, of eternal
erity in a stern gray land. Even
young Soviet Union looked up
enry Ford.
ıt Detroit was building the ma-
e that would help destroy not just
:ity but urban industrialism across
:continent. Rivera painted, in a
diary all-gray panel in the lower
: corner of the south wall, a line of
ped working men and women ex-
; the factory into what appears to
n endless parking lot full of Ford
It may not have looked that way
932, but a lot of the gray workers
: going to buy those gray cars and
e right out of the gray city. The
hating Ford said that he wanted
y family in the world to have a
, and he priced them so that more
and more families could. He also fantasized about a post-urban world in which workers would also farm, seasonally or part-time, but he did less to realize that vision. Private automobile ownership was a double blow against the density that is crucial to cities and urbanism and against the Fordist model of concentrated large-scale manufacture. Ford was sabotaging Detroit and then Fordism almost from the beginning; the city had blown up rapidly and would spend the next several decades simply disintegrating.

Detroit was always a rough town. When Rivera painted his fresco, the Depression had hit Detroit as hard as or harder than anywhere, and the unemployed were famished and desperate, desperate enough to march on the Ford Motor Company in the spring of 1932. It's hard to say whether ferocity or desperation made the marchers fight their way through police with tear-gas guns and firemen with hoses going full bore the last stretch of the way to the River Rouge plant. Harry Bennett, the thug who ran Ford more or less the way Stalin was running the Soviet Union, arrived, and though he was immediately knocked out by a flying rock, the police began firing on the crowd, injuring dozens and killing five. The battle of the Hunger March or the huge public funeral afterward would've made a good mural.

No, it wasn't cars alone that ruined Detroit. It was the whole improbable equation of the city in the first place, the "inherent contradictions." The city was done in by deindustrialization, decentralization, the post–World War II spread of highways and freeways, government incentives to homeowners, and disinvestment in cities that aided and abetted large-scale white flight into the burgeoning suburbs of those years. Chunks of downtown Detroit were sacrificed early, in the postwar years, so that broad arterial freeways—the Edsel Freeway, the Chrysler Freeway—could bring commuters in from beyond city limits.



el of Diego Rivera's mural at The Detroit Institute of Arts

All of this was happening everywhere else too, of course. The manufacturing belt became the rust belt. Cleveland, Toledo, Buffalo, and other cities clustered around the Great Lakes were hit hard, and the shrinking stretched down to St. Louis and across to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Newark. Now that it has entered a second gilded age, no one seems to remember that New York was a stone's throw from a crumbling disaster forty or fifty years ago. The old textile district south of Houston Street had emptied out so completely that in 1962 the City Club of New York published a report on it and other former commercial areas titled "The Wastelands of New York City." San Francisco went the same way. It was a blue-collar port city until the waterfront dried up and the longshoremen faded away.

Then came the renaissance, but only for those cities reborn into more dematerialized economies. Vacant lots were filled in, old warehouses were turned into lofts or offices or replaced, downtowns became upscale chain outlets, janitors and cops became people who commuted in from downscale suburbs, and the children of that white flight came back to cities that were not exactly cities in the old sense. The new American cities trade in information, entertainment, tourism, software, finance. They are abstract. Even the souvenirs in these new economies often come from a sweatshop in China. The United States can be mapped as two zones now, a high-pressure zone of economic boom times and escalating real estate prices, and a low-pressure zone, where housing might be the only thing that's easy to come by.

This pattern will change, though. The forces that produced Detroit—the combination of bitter racism and single-industry failure—are anomalous, but the general recipe of deindustrialization, depopulation, and resource depletion will likely touch almost all the regions of the global north in the next century or two. Dresden was rebuilt, and so was Hiroshima, and so were the cities destroyed by natural forces—San Francisco and Mexico City and Tangshan—but Detroit will never be rebuilt as it was. It will be the first of many cities to become altogether something else.



The Detroit Institute of Arts is one of those flourishing parts of Detroit; it is expanding its 1927 building, and when I said goodbye to the Rivera mural and stepped outside into the autumn sunshine, workmen were installing slabs of marble on the building's new facade. I noticed an apparently homeless dog sleeping below the unfolding, and as I walked past, two plump white women teetered up hastily, all attention focused on the dog. "Do you have a cell phone?" one topped by a froth of yellow shrilled. "Call the Humane Society." I suggested that the dog was breathing fine and therefore was probably okay, and she looked at me as though I were a total idiot. "This is downtown *Detroit*," she said, in a tone that made it clear the dog was in imminent peril from unspeakable forces, and that perhaps she was, I was, we all were.

I had been exploring an architectural-salvage shop near Rosa Parks Boulevard earlier that day, and when I asked the potbellied and weathered white man working there for his thoughts on the city, the tirade that followed was similarly vehement. Detroit, he insisted, had been wonderful—people used to dress up to go downtown, it had been the Paris of the Midwest!—and then it all went to hell. *Those people* destroyed it. My traveling companion suggested that maybe larger forces of deindustrialization might have had something to do with what happened to the city, but the man blankly rejected this analysis and continued on a tirade about "them" that wasn't very careful about not being racist.

On the Web you can find a Stormfront White Nationalist Community, that is even more comfortable with this version of what happened to the city, and even less interested in macroeconomic forces like deindustrialization and globalization: "A high non-White population, combined with annual arson attacks, bankruptcy, crime, and decay, have combined to make Detroit—once the USA's leading automotive industrial center—into a ruin comparable with those

Abandoned storefronts and houses near Michigan Central Station

cient civilizations—with the being identical: the replacement White population who built the ith a new non-White popula- It could have been different. "In civilized environs, these facili- ght have easily been transformed manufacturing and assembly cen- any number of industrial enter- " writes the anonymous author. ew months before the diatribe salvage yard, I'd met a long- l counterculture guy who also e he was from Detroit, by which e so many others I've met, meant burbs of Detroit. When I asked bout the actual city, though, his lenched like a fist. He recited rrible things *they* would do to you ventured into the city, that would tear you apart on the s. He spoke not with the voice of ess but with the authority of tra- handed down from an unknown refutable source. The city was fernal realm, the burning lands, agon's lair at the center of a vast rotective suburban sprawl.

e most prominent piece of pub- t in Detroit is the giant black- bronze arm and fist that serve as nument to heavyweight boxing pion Joe Louis, who grew up . If it were vertical it would look Black Power fist, but it's slung cables like some medieval bat- g ram waiting to be dragged up e city walls.

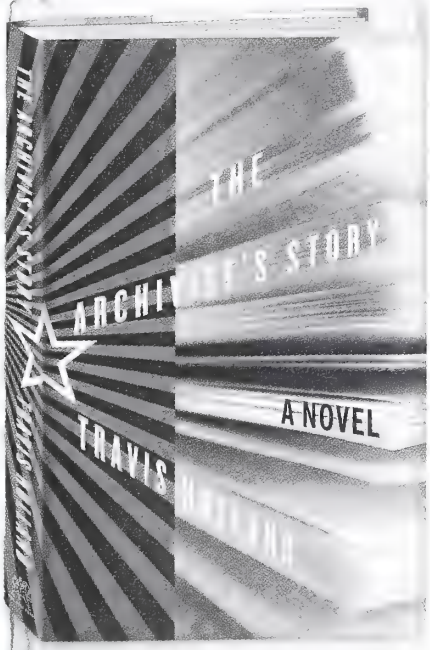
industrialization dealt Detroit a r punch, but the knockout may been white flight—at least eco- cally. Socially, it was a little more plex. One African-American an who grew up there told me that people seemed to think they were at loss to the city they abandoned, we were glad to see them go and d bye-bye." She lived in Ann Ar- -the departure of the black middle being yet another wrinkle in the l narrative—but she was thinking oving back, she said. If she had raising them in a city where they dn't be a minority had real appeal.

he fall of the paradise that was oit is often pinned on the riots ly 1967, what some there still re- o as the Detroit Uprising. But De- had a long history of race riots— e were vicious white-on-black riots in 1833, 1863, 1925, and 1943. And the idyll itself was unraveling long before 1967. Local 600 of the United Auto Workers broke with the union mainstream in 1951, sixteen years before the riots, to sue Ford over decentralization efforts already under way. They realized that their jobs were literally going south, to states and nations where labor wasn't so organized and wages weren't so high, back in the prehistoric era of "globalization."

The popular story wasn't about the caprices of capital, though; it was about the barbarism of blacks. In 1900, Detroit had an African-American population of 4,111. Then came the great migration, when masses of southern blacks traded Jim Crow for the industrialized promised land of the North. Conditions might have been better here than in the South, but Detroit was still a segregated city with a violently racist police department and a lot of white people ready to work hard to keep black people out of their neighborhoods. They failed in this attempt at segregation, and then they left. This is what created the blackest city in the United States, and figures from Joe Louis and Malcolm X to Rosa Parks and the bold left-wing Congressman John Conyers—who has represented much of the city since 1964—have made Detroit a center of activism and independent leadership for African Americans. It's a black city, but it's surrounded.

Surrounded, but inside that stockade of racial divide and urban decay are visionaries, and their visions are tender, hopeful, and green. Grace Lee Boggs, at ninety-one, has been politically active in the city for more than half a century. Born in Providence to Chinese immigrant parents, she got a Ph.D. in philosophy from Bryn Mawr in 1940 and was a classical Marxist when she married the labor organizer Jimmy Boggs, in 1953. That an Asian woman married to a black man could become a powerful force was just another wrinkle in the racial politics of Detroit. (They were together until Jimmy's death, in 1993.) Indeed, her thinking evolved along with the radical politics of the city itself. During the 1960s, the Boggses were dismissive of Martin Luther King Jr. and ardent about Black

"Magnificent ...
a historical novel of subtle power and tremendous grace."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred Review



Pavel Dubrov catalogs the seized manuscripts of writers interned in Lubyanka prison so that their words can be used as evidence against them, and then destroyed.

Until an unsigned story confiscated from the political prisoner Isaac Babel leads to a reckless decision: to save the last stories of the author he reveres, no matter the cost.

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—ELIZABETH KOSTOVA, author of *The Historian*

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Power, but as Grace acknowledged when we sat down together in her big shady house in the central city, "The Black Power movement, which was very powerful here, concentrated *only* on power and had no concept of the challenges that would face a black-powered administration." When Coleman Young took over city hall, she said, he could start fixing racism in the police department and the fire department, "but when it came time to do something about Henry Ford and General Motors, he was helpless. We thought that all we had to do was transform the system, that all the problems were on the other side."

As the years went by, the Boggses began to focus less on putting new people into existing power structures and more on redefining or dismantling the structures altogether. When she and Jimmy crusaded against Young's plans to rebuild the city around casinos, they realized they had to come up with real alternatives, and they began to think about what a local, sustainable economy would look like. They had already begun to realize that Detroit's lack of participation in the mainstream offered an opportunity to do everything differently—that instead of retreating back to a better relationship to capitalism, to industry, to the mainstream, the city could move forward, turn its liabilities into assets, and create an economy entirely apart from the transnational webs of corporations and petroleum. Jimmy Boggs described his alternative vision in a 1988 speech at the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit. "We have to get rid of the myth that there is something sacred about large-scale production for the national and international market," he said. "We have to begin thinking of creating small enterprises which produce food, goods, and services for the local market, that is, for our communities and for our city. . . . In order to create these new enterprises, we need a view of our city which takes into consideration both the natural resources of our area and the existing and potential skills and talents of Detroiters."



A subdivision in the eastern part of Det

That was the vision, and it
just starting to become a
"Now a lot of what you see i
lots," Grace told me. "Most
see only disaster and the en
world. On the other hand, a
particular see the *potential*, t
bility of bringing the count
into the city, which is what w
need." After all, the city is
open space and—with an oth
employment rate in the mid-
people with time on their
The land is fertile, too, and
sionaries are there.

In traversing Detroit, I saw
signs that a greening was well
way, a sort of urban husbandry
city's already occurring return
ture. I heard the story of o
woman who had been the
African-American person
block and is now, with her gra
very nearly the last person of a
on that block. Having a city gr
around you is not an uncom
American experience, but havi
countryside return is an eerie
She made the best of it, though
city sold her the surrounding l
next to nothing, and she now
much of her own food on them.

I also saw the lush three-acre
Works Garden, launched by Cap
monks in 1999 and now growi
ganic produce for a local soup kit
I saw a 4-H garden in a fairly ra
east-side neighborhood, and am
utter abandonment of the west s
saw the handsome tiled buildin
the Catherine Ferguson Academ
Young Women, a school for tee
mothers that opens on to a wor
farm, complete with apple orch
horses, ducks, long rows of caulifl
and broccoli, and a red barn the
built themselves. I met Ashley At
son, the young project manager for
Greening of Detroit, and heard ab
the hundred community gardens t
support, and the thousands more f
gardens that are not part of any
work. The food they produce, Atkin
told me, provides food security for m
Detroiters. "Urban farming, dollar
dollar, is the most effective cha
agent you can ever have in a comm
nity," she said. Everywhere I went
saw the rich soil of Detroit and t
hard work of the gardeners bringi

n abundant harvest any organ-
er would envy.
yone talks about green cities
ut the concrete results in afflu-
es mostly involve curbside com-
g and tacking solar panels onto
os while residents continue to
to shop, to eat organic pears
n from Argentina, to be part of
g machine of consumption and
e change. The free-range chick-
d Priuses are great, but they alone
adequate tools for creating a tru-
erent society and ecology. The
at least the sustainable one, the
which we will survive, isn't go-
be invented by people who are
y surrendering selective bits and
of environmentally unsound
ge. It's going to be made by those
ad all that taken away from them
er had it in the first place.
er the Panic of 1893, Detroit's
ing Republican mayor encour-
is hungry citizens to plant veg-
s in the city's vacant lots and
down in history as Potato Patch
ee. Something similar happened
ba when the Soviet Union col-
d and the island lost its subsi-
oil and thereby its mechanized
lture; through garden-scale semi-
ic agriculture, Cubans clawed
way back to food security and
etter food in the bargain. No-
wants to live through a depres-
and it is unfair, or at least deeply
, that black people in Detroit
eing forced to undertake an ex-
ient in utopian post-urbanism
ppears to be uncomfortably sim-
o the sharecropping past their
its and grandparents sought to
e. There is no moral reason why
should do and be better than the
f us—but there is a practical one.
have to. Detroit is where change
st urgent and therefore most vi-
The rest of us will get there lat-
hen necessity drives us too, and
at time Detroit may be the shin-
xample we can look to, the post-
strial green city that was once the steel-gray capital of Fordist manufacturing.

Detroit is still beautiful, both in
cately decay and in its growing
ral abundance. Indeed, one of the
t sights I saw on my walks around the city combined the two. It was a sudden flash on an already bright autumn day—a pair of wild pheasants, bursting from a lush row of vegetables and flying over a cyclone fence toward a burned-out building across the street. It was an improbable flight in many ways. Those pheasants, after all, were no more native to Detroit than are the trees of heaven growing in the skyscrapers downtown. And yet it is here, where European settlement began in the region, that we may be seeing the first signs of an unsettling of the very premises of colonial expansion, an unsettling that may bring a complex new human and natural ecology into being.

This is the most extreme and long-term hope Detroit offers us: the hope that we can reclaim what we paved over and poisoned, that nature will not punish us, that it will welcome us home—not with the landscape that was here when we arrived, perhaps, but with land that is alive, lush, and varied all the same. "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!" was Shelley's pivotal command in his portrait of magnificent ruins, but Detroit is far from a "shattered visage." It is a harsh place of poverty, deprivation, and a fair amount of crime, but it is also a stronghold of possibility.

That Rivera mural, for instance. In



1932 the soil, the country, the wilderness, and agriculture represented the past; they should have appeared, if at all, below or behind the symbols of industry and urbanism, a prehistory from which the gleaming machine future emerged. But the big panels of workers inside the gray chasms of the River Rouge plant have above them huge nude figures—black, white, red, yellow, lounging on the bare earth. Rivera meant these figures to be emblematic of the North American races and meant their fistfuls of coal, sand, iron ore, and limestone to be the raw stuff of industrialism. To my eye, though, they look like deities waiting to reclaim the world, insistent on sensual contact with the land and confident of their triumph over and after the factory that lies below them like an inferno. ■

STATE OF EXCEPTION

Bush's war on the rule of law

By Scott Horton

At its finest moments the Republican Party has been a vocal and unsparing advocate for human rights. "Though force can protect in emergency," insisted Dwight D. Eisenhower, the party's great warrior-president, "only justice, fairness, consideration, and cooperation can finally lead men to the dawn of eternal peace." But under the current administration, those designated as enemies have no rights, neither under the laws of war nor under any notion of criminal justice. A radical rupture has occurred; American legal tradition has been swept aside and, with it, long-established precedents for dealing with adversaries in wartime—even those accused of heinous crimes. Nowhere is that more clear than in the treatment of the so-called habeas lawyers (so named because of their repeated attempts to enforce the rights of their clients through the writ of habeas corpus—the legal procedure that allows an imprisoned person to test the legality of his detention) who counsel the detainees at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The habeas lawyers have been tarred with ethnic slurs and accusations of homosexuality, accused of undermining national security, subjected to continual petty harassment. They have also had their livelihoods threatened through appeals to their paying clients. These events have been reported as separate incidents in the press, but this conduct results from a carefully orchestrated Bush Administration policy that goes under the rubric of "lawfare."

According to Major General Charles J. Dunlap Jr., now the Air Force's deputy judge advocate general, lawfare is the "strategy of using or misusing law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective." As the neoconservative lawyers David Rivkin and Lee Casey have put it, lawfare aims to "gain a moral advantage over your enemy in the court of world opinion, and potentially a legal advantage in national and international tribunals." The concept, which has been discussed in the Federalist Society and at *National Review Online*, became doctrine in the March 2005 *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*: "Our strength as a nation state will continue to be challenged by those who employ a strategy of the weak using international fora, judicial processes, and terrorism." Note the equation of "international fora, judicial processes, and terrorism." In other words, turning to courts for the enforcement of legal rights, appeals to international tribunals, and terrorism are seen as the elements of a single consistent enemy strategy. In the strange reasoning of the lawfare theorists, lawyers who defend the clients, or who present their claims domestic or international courts, mig as well be terrorists themselve Human-rights organizations that star in court to insist that the Geneva Co ventions apply to Guantánamo d tainees are thus also guilty of lawfare

This is a remarkable departure fro traditional legal and military doctrin The United States has long had a pre erence for using international courts avoid military confrontations whe ever possible. At the conclusion of t Civil War, for example, the Unite States was at the brink of hostiliti with Great Britain over her buildi and supplying of the *Alabama* and ot er Confederate warships. The U.S. a Great Britain agreed to take the dispu to binding arbitration. The result w an enormous amount of money awar ed to the United States in 1872; mor over, conflict with Britain was aver ed, and the former enemy eventual emerged as a vital U.S. ally. Theodo Roosevelt, no shrinking violet, med ated the Treaty of Portsmouth in 19 and helped bring the Russo-Japane War to a close; for his efforts he w awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Lawfare, as defined by Bush A ministration officials, is a terrorist ta tic. Yet to anyone trained in Englis and American jurisprudence, not t mention the thinking that has dom nated the Anglo-Saxon legal world

New York attorney Scott Horton, known for his work in human-rights law, writes the daily weblog No Comment for Harpers.org.

st since 1688, those who are ac-
ed of engaging in lawfare are simply
rcising well-established legal rights
l liberties. Indeed, the lawfare doc-
ne is the conceptual framework that
t reveals the degree to which the
sh Administration has effectively
declared war on the rule
of law itself.

From the beginnings of the "war on
ror," both the Department of De-
se under Donald Rumsfeld and the
partment of Justice under John
hcroft and later Alberto Gonzales
however, the U.S. government has actively subverted attempts to provide its prisoners with legal representation.[1]

This spring I interviewed ten habeas lawyers about their experiences visiting Guantánamo and found the descriptions depressingly similar. All noted a stark formality underneath which hostility bristled. Karen Greenberg, executive director of the Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law, agreed with this assessment. Greenberg went for a four-day visit to Guantánamo in early March. "Several times during the course of my tour," she told me, "habeas lawyers were mentioned with disdain and suspicion, as if they, alongside the detainees, were enemies to be reckoned with." Several of those I interviewed described tedious formalities, including frequent searches of files, notebooks, papers, and materials brought by counsel. Copies of court papers and pleadings are intercepted, with the claim that their transmission to the detainees is not permitted. Attorney-client confidentiality is respected grudgingly, if at all.

David H. Remes, of the Washington, D.C., law firm Covington & Burling, reported that confidential notes from client meetings had been opened. "Everything we learn from our clients is presumed to be classified information," said Remes. "We are therefore required at the end of each day to turn over to our military escorts, in sealed envelopes, our client interview notes. At the end of our visits, we may not take our notes with us; instead, the notes must be sent to a secure facility in Crystal City, Virginia, where they must be reviewed by a government privilege review team, which is supposedly walled off from the DOJ litigation team, before the notes can be made public." Habeas lawyers' client interview notes are supposed to be sealed with three security stickers to prevent tampering. Remes told me that on one of his visits to Guantánamo he clashed over client access with the officer overseeing the visit: "When I returned to Washington, the court security officer, who is responsible for the handling of our papers once they are in Washington, informed me that the envelope containing my notes had arrived with all three security stickers broken and the envelope flap opened.

"The government claimed that this was accidental—the result of jostling when our military escort took the envelope to the post office at the base. More likely, the military authorities opened the envelope to show that they could do so with impunity and that habeas counsel can have no ex-



ATTORNEY SARAH HAVENS HOLDS PHOTOGRAPHS OF HER CLIENT, GUANTÁNAMO DETAINEE ABDULAZIZ AL-SWIDI, AND CRADLES HIS NEWBORN NIECE IN HER ARMS

ok the position that detainees had
right to counsel. Guantánamo Bay
as selected to host a detention facil-
y largely because it was believed to be
eyond the jurisdiction of U.S. courts.
his strategy failed, at least initially,
d federal courts issued orders recog-
zing counsel for purposes of habeas
rpus petitions and directing that the
unsel be given access to their clients.
he Pentagon was forced to relent, and
efense lawyers were given grudging
cess to the detainees. At every stage,

[1] *Never more so than in the habeas-corpus-bashing Military Commissions Act of 2006—a piece of legislation that will stand in history alongside the Alien and Sedition Acts and the Fugitive Slave Act as a reminder of the kind of constitutional vandalism that Congress is capable of when it really tries.*

otographs © 2007 Margot Herster. Collection of Through the Walls/Margot Herster



FARRUKH, PICTURED FOR DETAINEE ABDULAZIZ A. , WHO'S MONITORED BY ATTORNEY FARAH HAVENS. THE NOTE READS, "DON'T DESPAIR. SOMEONE IN THE [illegible] IS TAKING CARE."

pectation that the government will respect the attorney-client privilege."

Several attorneys I spoke to remarked that their clients had been told that all their interviews with lawyers were spied upon and that there were no confidences between the habeas lawyers and their clients. "My client Jumah al Dossari," said Joshua Colangelo-Bryan of Dorsey & Whitney, "reported that interrogators told him that they knew what he told his attorneys." Some described how security guards opened notes of confidential attorney-client meetings and began to read them under the pretense of checking for contraband. Clive Stafford Smith, a prominent English human-rights lawyer with U.S. legal training and experience, has represented a number of detainees at Guantánamo. He described meeting with one of his clients in the spring of 2006: "My client suddenly and awkwardly said, 'The interrogators say that you have sex with men, and that you can't be trusted.'" Another client said that interrogators had told him that his lawyer was a "Jew and a Zionist and only interested in money, not in helping you." Stafford Smith described this as a calculated effort to undermine the attorney-client relationship: "In our visits to Guantánamo, we have only a few hours over a period of several days to meet with our clients. The point of these tactics is to frustrate our ability to communicate, forcing us to waste precious hours in efforts to reestablish trust."

Stafford Smith's account parallels that of Shearman & Sterling partner Tom Wilner. In a court filing in April 2005, Wilner states that two of his Kuwaiti clients told [illegible] that interrogators [illegible] warned them that he [illegible] Jewish. He quoted [illegible] terrogators: "How [illegible] you trust Jews? Thro[illegible] out history, Jews have [illegible] trayed Muslims. D[illegible] you think that [illegible] lawyers, who are J[illegible] will betray you?. . . I [illegible] ever believe that a [illegible] will help a Muslim u[illegible] he gets more out [illegible] than he gives. . . . W[illegible] will other Arabs [illegible] Muslims think of [illegible] Kuwaitis when t[illegible] know the only h[illegible] you can g[illegible] from Jews [illegible]

The governmen[illegible] strategy, which sta[illegible] in clear defiance of [illegible] Supreme Court de[illegible] sions in *Hamdan* [illegible] *Rasul*, has clearly b[illegible] effective. It aims to [illegible] stroy any relationship of trust betw[illegible] the detainees and their lawyers [illegible] way of bringing all court action to [illegible] end. Several habeas lawyers have [illegible] ported that their clients asked th[illegible] to stop acting on their behalf.

The Pentagon usually dismisses t[illegible] incidents attorneys complain of as [illegible] dividual instances of incivility or una[illegible] thorized statements. But these episo[illegible] fit an unmistakable pattern: they [illegible] sharply at odds with the formal, [illegible] strained habits of most military pris[illegible] and military lawyers, and they reflect t[illegible] ideological structure of the lawfare c[illegible] cept. Further evidence of the systema[illegible] character of the administration ca[illegible] paign can be found in public remarks [illegible] officials; indeed, there has been [illegible] shortage of government spokesperso[illegible]

An examination of the Department of Defense's redactions from testimonies at closed hearings reveals a consistency in what officials consider "classified" about these conversations: whenever detainees describe how they have been subjected to torture and other physical and mental abuse, the passages are stricken. The Pentagon apparently considers torture techniques to be highly classified national security information. Considering that all of these interrogation protocols have now been the subject of extensive reporting in the press as well as the subject of congressional hearings and that many of the underlying documents have been published, it is difficult to understand the logical basis for the government's claim of secrecy. A more likely explanation is a desire to avoid embarrassment from the disclosure of practices that much of the world views as criminal. Secrecy is being used to conceal criminality—not of the detainees but of the government.

Habeas lawyers have also been accused [illegible] complicity in or responsibility for the hung[illegible] strikes and suicide attempts by detainee[illegible] Colangelo-Bryan notes that after a detain[illegible] attempted suicide in October 2005, a mi[illegible] tary lawyer told him it had been suggest[illegible] that he had given the detainee an impleme[illegible] with which to cut himself. Stafford Smi[illegible] recounts being pulled aside on August [illegible] 2005, taken into a cell, and told by a mi[illegible] formed officer, "You're the one behind th[illegible] hunger strike."

ng to go on the record disparaging habeas lawyers, often in apparent aboration with the press. On Janu- 11, 2007, for example, Charles D. ally") Stimson, the deputy assistant etary of defense for detainee affairs, e an interview to Federal News Ra- a Washington, D.C., station that ets an audience of federal employ- "I think," said Stimson, "the news y that you're really going to start ng in the next couple of weeks is : As a result of a FOIA request ough a major news organization, ebody asked, 'Who are the lawyers nd this country representing de- ees down there?' and you know t, it's shocking." Stimson then pro- led to give the full names of a dozen he nation's most prominent law s, adding: "I think, quite honestly, n corporate CEOs see that those s are representing the very terrorists hit their bottom line back in 2001, se CEOs are going to make those firms choose between representing orists or representing reputable firms, I think that is going to have major y in the next few weeks. And we t to watch that play out."

The following morning the *Wall eet Journal* published an editorial by conservative Robert L. Pollock, a mber of the *Journal*'s editorial board. llock's piece also attacked the law s providing pro-bono representa- n to the Guantánamo detainees. o-bono attorneys are not compen- ed for their work; they provide de- se counsel as a form of public service signed to ensure that the indigent ve adequate and fair legal represen- ion.) Pollock quoted an unnamed nior U.S. official," who made the lowing comment: "Corporate CEOs ing this should ask firms to choose between lucrative retainers and representing terrorists."[4]

On November 10, 2006, the at- ney general of each of Australia's states and territories signed the Fremantle Declaration, embracing seven fundamental principles of justice, including the right to a fair trial, the guarantee of the right of habeas corpus, a prohibition of indefinite detention, and a ban on torture. Although the declaration contained no explicit reference to David M. Hicks, a former Australian cowboy and kangaroo skinner being detained at Guantánamo, the Fremantle Declaration was immediately understood as a condemnation of the conditions under which he was held, of the inadequacy of the legal proceedings the United States proposed to conduct, and of the Bush Administration's efforts to suspend the writ of habeas corpus.

Hicks's counsel was Major Michael D. Mori, one of the best-known of the uniformed defense lawyers. Recognizing that the Bush Administration had cut a number of deals with allies on the treatment or relocation of their nationals, Mori had brought Hicks's case to Australia and begun an active lobbying campaign on his client's behalf. Mori's work, unlike that of the pro-bono counsel, was part of his formal duty requirements. But similar attempts were made to impede his progress. Reportedly, a government office actively tried to block Mori's trips to Australia, and the chief military prosecutor for the tribunal at Guantánamo publicly denounced Mori while privately suggesting reasons Mori could be disciplined.

Nor was Mori's case an isolated incident. Lieutenant Commander Charles D. Swift was detailed to serve as defense counsel to Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a Guantánamo detainee who admits that he was Osama bin Laden's driver. Working with Georgetown law professor Neal Katyal, Swift challenged the legality of the military commission's process in which Hamdan was to be tried up to the Supreme Court, where he prevailed on all major issues. For his brilliant and highly effective advocacy, Swift was runner-up for *The National Law Journal*'s lawyer of the year award in 2005, and in 2006 he was named one of the one hundred most influential lawyers in America by the same publication the only Defense Department lawyer to be so recognized. He was rewarded by being passed over for promotion and is therefore now preparing to depart the service. Several other military lawyers told me they felt that a Guantánamo defense assignment was a "career stopper." "Either you roll over and show you're a worthless lawyer, or you give it all you've got and prepare to leave the service," said one.[5]

What makes the cases of the habeas lawyers so disturbing, what evokes the specter of tyranny, is that many of the legal issues involved were resolved a century before America gained its independence. It is as if hundreds of years of legal precedent suddenly vanished.

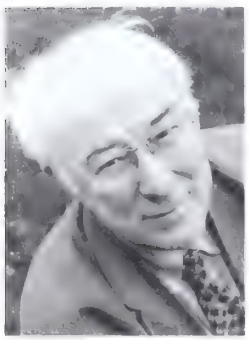
Although the English civil wars were fought over broad religious and political issues, when we read the masterful histories of Thomas Babington Macaulay and G. M. Trevelyan it seems that much of the fighting was actually over technical legal questions: Will habeas corpus be guaranteed? Will there be a right to a jury? Can the prosecution use secret evidence? Will the courtroom be open and the trial public? Will the accused have the right to know the evidence against him, to face his accuser? Can torture and other cruel practices be used to extract evidence? These issues echo, to an astonishing extent, the issues that the Guantánamo habeas lawyers are litigating today. The Roundheads who rose for God and Parliament defined the justice of their cause in similar terms.

Indeed, the entire history of seventeenth-century England can be seen as the triumph of demands for fair process and justice over the claims of royal prerogative. A. Trevelyan wrote, "At a time when the Continent was falling a prey to despots, the English under the Stuarts had achieved the transformation from monarchical tyranny to the rule of the constitutional will

f this was the beginning of a campaign to the habeas lawyers squarely in the pock- ook by driving away their corporate clien- e, it backfired. Former Reagan Adminis- tion solicitor general Charles Fried led a of prominent conservatives who lashed t at Stimson. Stimson was forced to apol ze for his comments and then to resign. e Pentagon claimed that Stimson's com- nts were not a reflection of official policy.

The regime the servicemen sought a protective order that would begin to restrict access to lawyers to a few hours. The motion was condemned by the president of the American Bar Association and the New York City Bar Association.

The Great Writers of Ireland



Seamus Heaney

Born in April 1939, Seamus Heaney grew up in Northern Ireland's countryside on a farm owned and operated by his father, a cattle-dealer. The eldest of nine children, Heaney left the family farm at the age of twelve for a Catholic boarding school and would go on to live in Belfast, Dublin, and Cambridge, Massachusetts., where he taught at Harvard for over a decade. But while he traveled far from his roots, the rural County Derry never strayed far from the poet's mind. Heaney described the transition from his bucolic childhood to a scholarly life as a departure from "the earth of farm labour to the heaven of education." He first drew national recognition for his poems while working as a young professor at Queen's University in Belfast during the mid-1960s. His early work drew often from nature and scenes of the Irish countryside, but the violence and polarization that engulfed the region for the next quarter-century also deeply influenced the tone of Heaney's work. He believed that poetry should be "true to the impact of external reality and ... sensitive to the inner laws of the poet's being." In collections such as the *Government of the Tongue* in 1988 and the *Redress of Poetry* in 1995, Heaney frequently considered poetry's moral responsibility. These concerns motivated his involvement with the theater company Field Day, which used its productions to bring attention to Ireland's political problems. In 1995, the poet was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Last January Heaney, who now lives in Dublin, won the T.S. Eliot Prize for Poetry for his most recent collection, *District and Circle*.

Tourism Ireland

Never perhaps in any century have such rapid advances been made towards freedom."

These advances came at great cost. Lawyers who advocated habeas, assailed the injustice of the Stuart courts, and denounced torture were cruelly treated when the power of the monarchy waxed. No figure merits more recognition in this regard than John Cooke, the Commonwealth's solicitor general. Cooke engineered procedural reforms designed to grant equal access to justice and to ensure that considerations of humanity and fairness governed the legal process, and he masterminded the defense for the regicides at their trial in 1660. But Cooke and a large number of other leaders of the legal-reform movement were tried and gruesomely executed in the kangaroo courts that were conducted following the Stuart Restoration.

After years of Stuart revenge against lawyers, it would take another generation to establish that justice demands a fair defense and that the actions of defense counsel should not be confused with the crimes of their clients. But the public remembered the cruelty of the Stuart monarchs. John Milton, for instance, memorialized the drawing and quartering of his contemporary John Cooke in his epic *Samson Agonistes* ("thir carkasses/To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd:/Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times").

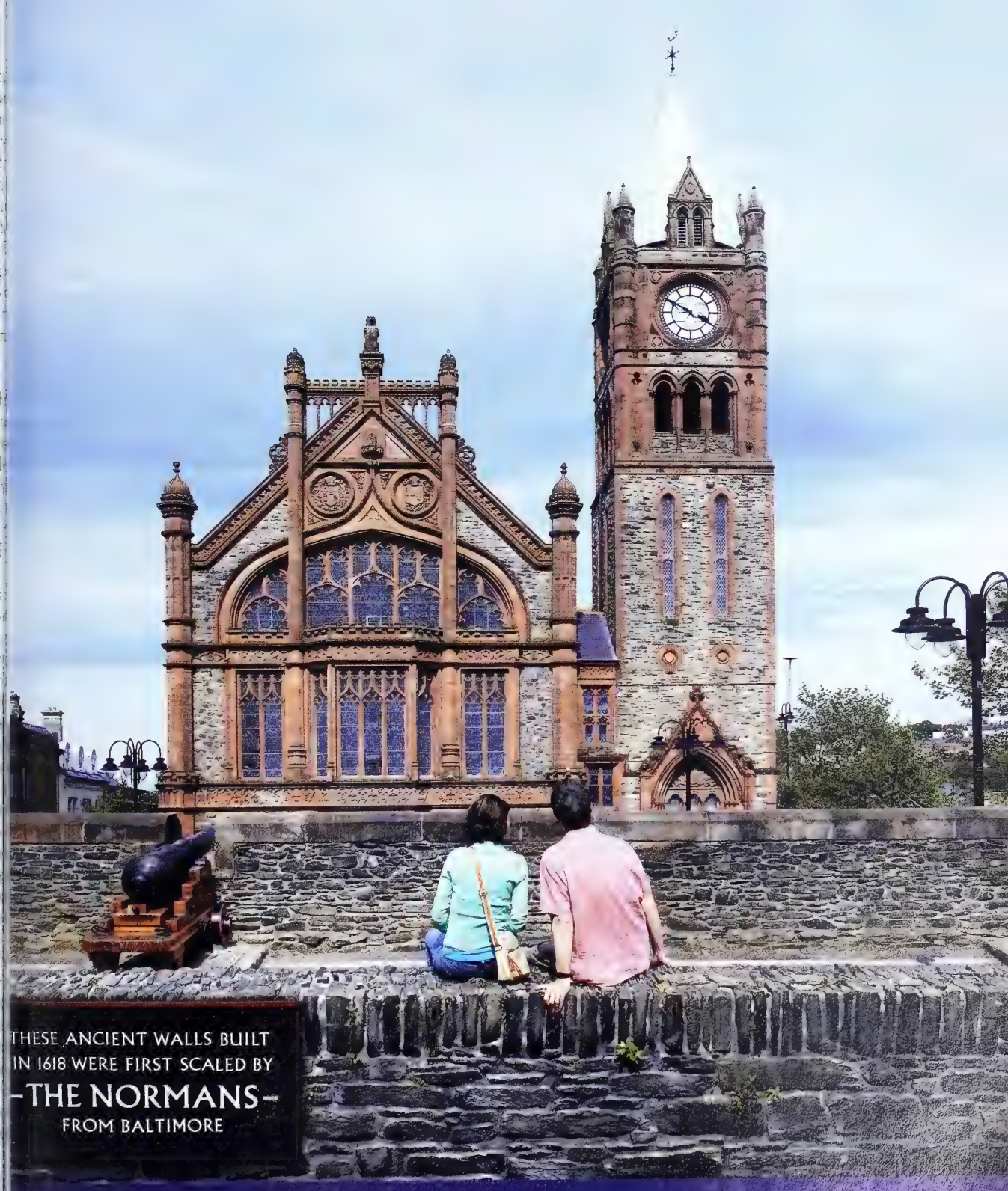
One hundred and fifty years later, at the divorce trial of Queen Caroline, the importance and independence of defense counsel was finally well appreciated. Henry Peter Brougham, who handled the queen consort's defense, threatened to make public information embarrassing to the Crown. Considering the identity of the king in question—George III's dissolute son—that wouldn't have been difficult, but presumably it related to his secret and illegal prior marriage. Defending himself, Brougham furnished the classic statement of the responsibility of a good defense counsel:

"An advocate, in the discharge of his duty, knows but one person in all the world, and that person is his client. To save that client [illegible] means and expedients, and [illegible] hazards and costs to other persons, and, among them, to himself, [illegible] first and only duty; and in performing this duty he must not regard [illegible] alarm, the torments, the destruction which he may bring upon others. Separating the duty of a patriot [illegible] that of an advocate, he must go [illegible] reckless of consequences, though it should be his unhappy [illegible] to involve his country in confusion."

America, the last redoubt [illegible] the Roundheads, predictably [illegible] an even more protective view [illegible] defense counsel and their role [illegible] unpopular causes. On March [illegible] 1770, British soldiers fired into [illegible] unruly Boston crowd that had [illegible] hurled snowballs at them. Five colonists were killed and [illegible] wounded by the gunfire in an incident that came to be known as the Boston Massacre and is invariably counted among the warning symbles of the American Revolution. The British soldiers and their officer were brought up on charges of murder, and the patriot John Adams, known for his criticism of the British Townshend Acts to [illegible] imports, was engaged to defend them. Adams argued that the soldiers were intimidated by the crowd and were acting only in their own defense—and won acquittal for seven of his clients; two others were convicted of the lesser charge of manslaughter. In the highly charged atmosphere of the trial Adams was risking his physical safety and his career as a politician.

"I . . . devoted myself to endless labour and Anxiety if not to infamy and to death," wrote Adams in his autobiography, "and that for nothing except, what indeed was and ought to be all in all, a sense of duty."

"The Part I took in Defence of Captn. Preston and the Soldiers," he wrote in his diary, "procured me Anxiety, and Obloquy enough. It was, however, one of the most gallant, generous, manly and disinterested Actions of my whole Life, and one of the best Pieces of Service ever rendered my Country."



e city walls of Derry. At up to twenty-six feet high, you
n walk these ancient walls, taking in the sights of this
storic city as you go. You'll also get a pretty good view
what to visit once you're back on the ground. From the
agnificent Guildhall to the impressive St Columb's Cathedral,
ere's a lot waiting to be discovered in the city of Derry.

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Your very own Ireland

John Adams was subsequently a leader of the Revolution, as well as the first vice president and the second president of the United States. In his view the interests of justice could not be separated from the interests of his country, and justice required that the British soldiers have a fair and vigorous defense.

Consider also the events of June 1942, when German submarines deposited a team of saboteurs on the shore of Long Island and a second team at Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. One of the saboteurs went straight to the FBI to disclose the plot, then helped track down the rest. President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed that the saboteurs be tried by military commission, and Colonel Kenneth C. Royall was assigned to defend the saboteurs. Royall handled the defense with vigor, ultimately appealing to the Supreme Court in *Ex parte Quirin*, contrary to the instructions of President Roosevelt, who had not envisioned such an appeals process. Royall's efforts in court failed, though the sentences of two of the would-be saboteurs were subsequently commuted. Considering the atmosphere in America in the first years of the war, it is hardly surprising that Royall was publicly assailed as the case was heard.

The position of the War Department, however, was consistent: Royall was performing an essential function and was doing it with the zeal and dedication that the defendants had a right to expect. Unlike the military lawyers who see an assignment to defend a Guantánamo detainee as the death of a career, Royall could expect to be rewarded for doing his job. He was promoted to brigadier general, and then, as the war entered its final year, he became undersecretary of war. Finally, in 1947, President Truman appointed Royall the nation's last secretary of war, thereby acknowledging his distinguished career, including his highly unpopular handling of the defense in *Quirin*.

Jackson also saw aggressive criminal prosecutions as an important tool in establishing the righteousness of the Allied cause in World War II, pushing ahead with a plan to convene international tribunals at the end of the war to fully expose the genocidal conduct of the Nazi regime. One of the most contentious issues in making arrangements for these tribunals was whether the defendants would be represented by counsel of their choosing and have the right to present a vigorous defense. Justice Robert H. Jackson, on leave from the Supreme Court to handle the arrangements and to act as chief prosecutor, carried the day by establishing that it was vital to the Allies not only that the tribunals do justice but that they be perceived as doing justice. This, he correctly noted, could occur only if defense counsel were involved and given fair space in which to conduct a defense. The trials that followed shocked the world. But defense counsel mustered some intelligent and effective arguments and secured acquittals in some cases and mild sentences in others. The trials would have a powerful impact in Germany, serving as a sort of exorcism. In the world that emerged from this conflict, the three defeated Axis powers became trusted allies of the United States. There is no doubt that the broad recognition of the quality of the justice dispensed at Nuremberg played an important role in that process.[6]

The lawfare doctrine introduced by the Bush Administration violates this tradition. It has no antecedent in American practice, and in the end it is possible to find a precedent only if we look outside the United States to German conservative political and jurisprudential thinking between the world wars. The most important German legal theorist of the period between the wars was Carl Schmitt. A conservative who longed for the restoration of the authoritarian style of late Wilhelm Germany, Schmitt was a convinced enemy of the liberal democratic principles embodied in the Weimar Constitution that was adopted at the close of World War I. For Schmitt, the notion of dispassionate and independent administration of justice was a dangerous liberal illusion. He sought to restructure the legal profession—ensuring that judges were not independent but essentially extensions of the executive, that prosecutors were fully politically subordinated, and that defense counsel were, in general, silenced. In the years that followed, Schmitt's ideas were put into practice, and a large number of the most prominent members of Weimar Germany's defense bar went into exile, many of them moving to the United States and Britain.

Carl Schmitt also laid the foundations for a new attitude toward warfare and the role of law in the conduct of war. In his early major work, *The Concept of the Political* (1927), Schmitt derided the weakness of liberalism and its effort at consensus building and instead embraced the legitimacy of a process of extreme demonization of political adversaries. Guaranteeing legal rights to an enemy was thus senseless and counterproductive. In its place, Schmitt advanced the notion of "total war" ("Total Enemy, Total War, Total State," 1937), suggesting that the neatly delineated warfare of prior ages, in which uniformed, professional armies met on a field of war, was in decline in favor of a new kind of all-encompassing warfare. Schmitt ridiculed the law of armed conflict, saying it reflected ideological principles rooted in nineteenth-century English liberalism. At the same time, he turned to the legal concept of piracy as a basis for treating adversaries as persons completely beyond the help of law and the courts, free to be dealt with just as the executive pleased without even being bothered by lawyers ("The Concept of Piracy," 1937).

Schmitt's thinking and analysis—the weakness of liberalism, the utility of "law-free" zones, the

[6] *It is interesting that the Nuremberg process was criticized by "Mr. Republican," Senator Robert Taft, he suggested that the punishments meted out to the Germans had been too severe and that the prosecutors had reached too deeply in the cases they brought.*

nization of adversaries, the sub-
ination of justice to politics—
n almost perfectly with the Bush
ministration's concept of law-
, and with many other legal tac-
s the administration has
adopted in the war on
terror and elsewhere.[7]

n twenty-five years of work as
uman-rights monitor, I have close-
bserved totalitarian and proto-
alitarian regimes around the
ld—from the former Soviet Union
l its offspring to China, Cuba,
eria, and Zimbabwe. One of the
lmarks of tyrannical regimes, of
atever political flavor, is their in-
se dislike of defense lawyers in gen-
l, and in particular defense lawyers
o do their work effectively and pro-
ionally. For a totalitarian regime,
idea of blind justice is laughable.
e criminal justice system exists to
ture and brand criminals, of course,
it is also understood as an essen-
instrument of political repression.
rannical regimes use the law to de-
y the reputation of enemies of the
te and to punish them.[8]
Obviously, our predicament is not
so dire as that of Weimar Germany.
the parallels are frightening. The
sh Administration's reach is long,
l its Schmittian concept of lawfare

*he current scandal surrounding the
hiering of a dozen or more U.S. attor-
s orchestrated by assistants of Attorney
neral Gonzales in consultation with Karl
ve and his staff also reflects a Schmittian
gram. In 1933–35, Schmitt laid out a
n for consolidation of control of the exec-
ve over the administration of justice, a
cess described by Justice Minister Franz
rtner as Gleichschaltung, or "synchro-
ation." A central feature of this plan was
close political subordination of prosecu-
s to the executive.*

*he single most vivid demonstration of
s tendency is found in the show trials
nducted during the Great Purge of the
30s under Joseph Stalin and his legal
reographer, Andrei Vishinsky. The
hinsky show trials served to define Sovi-
egal culture for decades. As an experi-
ed defense attorney explained to me in
bekistan shortly after the collapse of the
viet Union: "I always had a simple un-
standing of my role. It was to convince
client to plead guilty and throw himself
the mercy of the court. Only by this
h could he ever really hope to achieve a
der sentence."*

represents an all-out assault on the rule of law.

Clearly the habeas lawyers coming ashore at Guantánamo—men and women in uniform, volunteers from the nation's most august law firms—are not in league with Osama bin Laden to destroy America. They are only insisting on adherence to America's oldest legal traditions, to our Constitution and its vision, and to the law of nations that nurtured and permitted the emergence of our republic. Ultimately, the danger we face in a culture built on precedent is that the changes wrought by George W. Bush will become entrenched and will apply to an ever-broader array of presidential enemies. If so, it would prove Carl Schmitt's most famous saying: "Sovereign is he who controls the exception." By providing an exception to the application of the rule of law, our nation may have unleashed a radical new constitutional order. ■

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DEATH OF THE PUGILIST

Or, The Famous Battle of Jacob Burke & Blindman McGraw

By Daniel Mason

Who was Burke? His beginnings.

Born a caulbearer in the Bristol slums, in the quayside heap known only as "the Rat," Jacob Burke, who would battle the great McGraw on that fateful day in 1824, was a winter child of the stevedore Isaac Burke and the seamstress Anne Murphy. He of Bristol, son of James, son of Tom, son of Zebedee, lifters all. She of Dublin and the cursed Gemini of Poverty and Fertility. Jacob was the twelfth of eighteen children, the third of the eight who survived.

It was a typical quayside childhood, of odd jobs and shoe-shining and sporadic bouts of schooling: quinsy, croup, and the irresistible temptation of diving from the piers. In the summer he ran with the flocks of children terrorizing the streets with their play.

He grew up quickly. Thick-necked, thick-shouldered, steel-fisted, eight lipped, heavy on the brow, the boy knew neither a letter nor the taste sweet until his tenth year, when in the course of a single moony he learned to lip out the tune on the shingle at Mulley's Arms and stole an apple from a costermonger on the road to Bath. Two brothers, thinking they were bona fide Dick Turpins, had treaded into a life of brigandage, but by the grace of his mother's daily prayers and father's belt, Jacob [illegible] turned from the taste of apples and [illegible] to the straight and narrow of his bloodline, joining Burke [illegible] the docks.



A lifter's body is hammered, lifting [illegible] sleeping ships at noon cold from the sea air, until his back broadened and his forearms broke his cuffs.

The ascent of Burke, including: the lots. Also: his early career and its vicissitudes.

At age nineteen, Burke beca[illegible] known.

On the quay was a man named [illegible] Jones, and Sam Jones was [illegible] stevedore too, lifting [illegible] Burke from dark hou[illegible] dark hour. Sam Jones was [illegible] an old man of forty w[illegible] one morning his [illegible] punched a rotted boat [illegible] the dock and he went dow[illegible] beneath a load of flour [illegible] one hundred and [illegible] pounds of fish in an [illegible] slatted crate that snap[illegible] his neck against the ra[illegible] before he slumped, slip[illegible] limp into the sea.

Sam Jones had a mo[illegible] wages coming, but [illegible] Company didn't pay [illegible] widow, and on the d[illegible] the stevedores sat down [illegible] not a boat could m[illegible] Then the owners sent [illegible] their thugs, who fell o[illegible] men with clubs and [illegible] pokers, and from the m[illegible] exploded the Quay[illegible] Riots, of fame.

It was a newspaperman from L[illegible] don who first saw Burke thro[illegible] punch. When the riots were [illegible] (and Jones's wages still not p[illegible] the newspaperman found the [illegible] back at work, resigned, murmur[illegible] a sad, low lifter's song as he thr[illegible] ed the pier.

On that day (gray, preternatu[illegible]

ust cold, seagulls hopping on the -rail) Burke stood on the dock, a ty-pound bag of wheat thrown se-like over his shoulder. The spaperman talked a streak. Jacob, accustomed to long converses, 't set down the bag, said, *Yes sir*, he was taught to speak to suits elders, and occasionally reposi- ed the weight over his back. At last the fellow drew out a calling l. *Well? What do you think? Ever ht?* asked the man, and Burke asked : *There's a man's never fought?*

n the card was the name of a ware- se on the harbor, where over the wing week Burke sent three men he floor. They were hard affairs, ters showing up on the minute as were nothing but a shakebag cock- t. No seconds, no ropes, no purse. ie Fancy went, it was only to scout. the third night came a man, Cairn, made an offer.

v Muscular became known.

here are five fights that first year. fights and Jacob Burke wins four. y are hush matches, dueled in ware- ses or country inns or levees east of city. Broughton's rules. Bare knuck- Twenty-four-foot ring. Round ends n a man goes down. Thirty sec- ls of rest, and the fight doesn't end il a man can't get back to the tch. No gouging, no biting, no ws below the belt. No faking down in a rest.

Cairn is his second. Also in his cor- , holding his bottle, is an associate Cairn's, a Yankee who'd once been mpion in New Orleans. Yankee st have a Christian name, but he nges the subject when Jacob asks. has a crablike way of moving, of ng you, of rising to his tiptoes when is about to speak, and Jacob thinks se are habits from the ring.

They are good to Jacob Burke, treat n like a son. Give him breeches and ked shoes, read him the fighters' respondence in the *Weekly Dis- ch*, get him victuals when victuals dear. Take him to the pushing ool, where they put up the socket and tell the girls he will be Cham- n of All England. There, amidst crepe and taffeta, he is humiliated the men's attention, feels like he's k in the ring, half-thinks Cairn and Yankee will follow him and the girl to watch. When that winter his father is laid out with cough, they advance him money against his purses, and Jacob finds himself buying gifts for his mother and his brothers and his sisters. His winnings are small, five, ten pounds. He spends it all and borrows more.

Before each fight, Cairn takes him aside and tells him what scum the other is, makes it sound like he's some avenging angel, meting out justice to a line of murderers and thieves and virgin-defilers. But Jacob Burke doesn't much care. He likes the chance to hit and watch his man fall. A ha'penny Bristol rag, with a full page on the fistic, covers his fights but can't seem to settle on a moniker, calling him the Quayside Brawler, then Stevedore Burke, Bruise Burke, then "Muscular," which Cairn picks up for their promotions. It's elegant, thinks Jacob. He buys a copy of the rag and brings it home, shows his mother which word on the page says "Muscular." He writes it out for her in big letters on a piece of butcher paper, which she folds and tucks into the pocket where she keeps her lice comb. To prove the magnitude of his strength, he grabs two of his youngest brothers, one in each hand, and lifts them squealing high above his head.

He begins oiling his hair back in slick rows, which does little for his looks except emphasize the weight of his brow. He listens to tales of the professional fighters. He wants to be like Gully, so he buys a scarf for an ascot. Purse rises, fifteen and twenty. Buys a stovepipe of the first and wears it at a rake. Like Cairn wears his. Like Cairn, who in his day, he learns, was a bruiser too.

His days of cutting a swell are numbered. In his fourth fight, his match comes kicking and flapping at him like a bird out of a cage. He takes a thumb to the eye and has to spend a week taped up with brown paper and vinegar. Spikes a fever, but Cairn gets a surgeon to bleed him and he's cured.

In his fifth fight, Burke defeats Bristol's Beloved. It wasn't supposed to happen; the fight was an exhibition, a setup conceived to make the champion look good taking down a specimen like Muscular, but Muscular is triumphant.

How it came about that Burke fought Blindman.

This is how it came about that Burke fought the Blindman:

In Lincolnshire, Broken Head Gall lost to the Moor, and in Liverpool, Will Skeggs beat Tom Johnson, who had no less than the great Peter Crawley in his corner, the butcher's son known in his day as the "Young Rump Steak." But Skeggs wouldn't fight Broken Head, and at Moulsey Hurst, Tom Tate lost to "Le Petit." So Broken fought Tate, but the fight was a cross, the *Weekly Dispatch* breaking the story that both men had met a fortnight before to fix. Then they went to Ted Shannon the Vainglorious, but Vainglorious knew Blindman, and Vainglorious said that if he was going to get killed, he needed a bigger purse for his widow. This left the Fancy looking for a man, and this left Burke.

The match was scheduled for February, but no one would post a farthing on Burke. So they called again on Vainglorious, but Vainglorious was gone, convicted of thieving and transported. They found a miller in Melchior Brown, from Manchester, who'd been breaking gobs on the tavern circuit under the nickname Sparrow. But Brown went down in just four rounds, and the next pick, Frank Smith the Picturesque, refused to fight Blindman's murderous fists. So again they came looking for Burke. They decided Burke's mum's blood would get the Irish out, and Blindman would draw the Scots, and if there was a riot, then all the better. Besides, everyone knew the best fighters wore the Bristol yellow, and by then Burke had moved out of the quay, showing his mettle in a pair of battles at Egan's Abbey.

Who is Blindman?

This is Blindman: Methuselah of thirty-five, icon of Scottish nationalists, hero of boys' magazines, where he was drawn in monstrous proportions, sweeping Lilliputian armies down as if clearing a table for a game of cards. A dexterous hitter of steam-engine power. Won eighteen, lost two. Baptized Benjamin McGraw, he got his nickname in a fight in '14, in the forty-third round, with eyes so swollen by the punches that he couldn't see. Refused to have his lids lanced, saying he could

beat his boy blind, and then leveled him, hard, as soon as they hit the scratch. After the fight, they asked how he'd done it and he answered, *I hit where the breathing was*. He had a patron in the Earl of Balcarres, who was said to slum with McGraw in Glasgow's most notorious. He liked to tell how he'd even been asked to be Yeoman of the Guard, but with all the stories of cursing and rough living and all the girls he'd pollinated, the offer was rescinded. In '16 he'd knocked down the champion Simon Beale in two rounds, and Simon Beale never rose again. In the famous cartoon published in the *Gazette*, McGraw was drawn shaking his fists over a gravestone, on which was written:

HERE IN THE SHADE LIES SIMON BEALE
JAW OF IRON, FISTS OF STEEL
WON TWENTY-FOUR FIGHTS WITH NERVE AND ZEAL
AT TWENTY-FIVE SHOWED HIS ACHILLES HEEL
TOOK JUST TWO ROUNDS FOR FATE TO SEAL
THAT NO SOUL'S SPARED BY FORTUNE'S WHEEL.

Of course, there wasn't a man among the Fancy who didn't doubt Jacob Burke was going to get lathered. And Burke knew the rumors, but Cairn and the Yankee said he stood a chance, that Blindman was growing old, and Burke was improving daily in strength and science.

Truth was Burke didn't need to be told. And Cairn knew, for Cairn had been organizing fights for thirteen years, and knew there wasn't anything so proud as a twenty-three-year-old, except maybe a sixteen-year-old, but try to find a neck like Muscular's on a kid. Only problem with Burke, he told him, finger pressed against his pectorals, *only problem with you*, is that Burke was too good and polite and he needed a little more meanness in him. Burke spent a good deal of time wondering about this, how a hitter could be a good man, wondering if he was good only because he was on the bottom and he couldn't be anything else, that if conditions were different and he had something going, he wouldn't be so. Once in a pub he'd heard, *There's no such thing as a sin man only a sin world*, which he was told meant that the Devil was in everyone and it was a rare fellow who could keep him down. Then later, he started thinking that maybe he'd heard it wrong, and it should have been, *There's no such thing as a good man only a good world*, and he started repeating it enough that he couldn't remember if the basic situation was sin or good. Cairn said he was *too good*, but he knew inside that he hit because he liked the feeling of hitting the other fellow, which seemed at first like sin, but then he started thinking that if the other fellow was just like him, then the other fellow liked hitting too, and that meant he, Burke, was beating a sinner, and so he, Burke, was good, except when he looked at it another way, then the other fellow was also clobbering a fellow who liked hitting (him, Burke), this meant the other fellow was good, and Burke was a sinner for milling an upright man.

The reasoning went round and round like one of those impossible songs that never stopped, until Muscular decided that what he liked about the fight was that he didn't have to wonder about such questions, only hit, because if you didn't hit, you got hit. That was the answer!

The day approaches.

So Burke takes to training: docks in the day, dumbbells at dusk. Cairn has him running his dogs in the hills. Hits the bags of sand. Bans drink and the amorous.

The word spreads fast around Bristol. He hears a hush follow him where he walks. In the streets he's besieged by the shoe-shiners, who beg to see standing flips and then set on one another for the title of "Muscular." The girls lower their bonnets and lift their eyes when he rooster-swaggers past.

One night, on the docks, an old lifter called Booth approaches Burke as he makes his way home. Stepping in front of the boy, he grabs his forearm in a steel grip, says, *This is a fool thing*, and Jacob Burke says, *Yes sir*.

The posters go up, with sketches of the two men facing off as if they had posed together, shirtless, in ankle-boots and breeches, tied close with sashes. They say the fight will be held at Moulsey Hurst, southwest of London, but all know this is a sham to throw off the magistrates. The p[ublic] take to calling the fight Blindm[an's] Brag, as if it were not a fight [at] showcase for McGraw. As if [they] weren't even fighting.

One night, his mother is waiti[ng] him when he comes home. *The s[ons] you're going to get killed*, she says. *W[hat] says that?* asks Jacob. *They all say* she says. *I've been to the market. [They] say: Make sure they promise yo[u] purse, Annie, 'cause your boy isn't [re]ing home.*

Unspoken, but hidden in her w[ords] is his father, who is coughing hi[s] to bones and hasn't been down t[o] docks in months. But she doesn' Jacob should walk away. Had she, he would have squared his jaw proclaimed he had his honor to tect. It is because she says not more that the doubts begin to eel way in.

Except he knows he can't get even if he wants to. He owes C for the scarf, for the stovepipe, the Cairn says that with the purse fro fight with McGraw, he'll be pai and then some. He decides "then s means even more if he wagers on self. Then he will stop.

They find a patron.

Two weeks before the fight, C quarries a Patron in a Corinth named Cavendish; the rest of the p is put up by the Pugilistic Club.

Cavendish meets Burke and C at Ned Landon's public house. H dandy: curls, perfume, talking p and fast and high. Wants to be ca Cav, but Jacob calls him Mi Cavendish, and he smiles. He m his blunt during the Regency, flaunts it, burns a bill before Bur eyes. Recites a fight poem that he published in *Bell's Life*, full of let words Burke has trouble getting ears around. Cavendish tells a s about a fighter, laughing, says, *Tom had his eyes knocked from his h Just like that. Plop. Plop. Couldn't work and suicided. Drank prussic.* P He laughs. Burke hates him imm ately, feels his whole body tense w he hears him talk. He kn Cavendish is trying to look big making him look small, but he c think of fast words to answer. other man, and he would hit him

l he'd lose more than his eyes. He
:s to his trainer, and Cairn tilts
ıead, just a little, as if to say, *Easy,*
low the toad, Cavendish is putting up
nurse.
oaked, Cavendish begins to slur.
s a wagtail over and throws an arm
ınd her waist. Tells Jacob to re-
ve his shirt. Says, *Look at the sym-*
y, look at the strength. Says, *Your*
n's Irish, Burke? Calls him My *little*
Touches his arms and says, *Look,*
is pretty. Drinks his blue ruin un-
t runs down his chin. Says he was
oxer, but he holds his fists with his
mbs inside.

y travel to the scene of the fight, re Burke meets a man who imparts Philosophy.

The fight is set in Hertfordshire, in
ld south of St. Albans called Dead
obit Heath. In St. Albans, they
nd the night at a coaching inn.
rn and the Yankee drink until
y're reeling, but Muscular is too
vous to keep anything down. The
blican is an aficionado of the fistic,
walls are decorated with sketches
mezzotints of the great fighters,
Burke recognizes Broughton and
nter, and the Jews Mendoza and
ch Sam, and Gasman and Game
icken. He wants to be like the por-
ts, still and quiet and distant on a
ercolor patch all alone and glorious.
among the rabble that's crowding
tavern, Muscular is cornered by a
ier, a fat, spectacled man who seems
ıave some reading behind him. Says
was a priest, once, which explains
fine diction, though he won't say
y they stripped his soutane. *You'll be*
of the greats, he tells Jacob. *Just*
k at you. Maybe you'll lose tomor-
, but it doesn't matter. Just hold your
n, and soon you'll be Champion. He
s if Burke knows of the battle be-
en Achilles and Hector, but Burke
never heard of these two fighters.
e farrier shrugs it off. *You ever seen*
Graw? he asks. Burke hasn't,
tches only. *Goliath,* says the farrier.
e someone pressed two men into one.
sshapen like that too. You'll see. Cau-
wer ears. Ears? No! Cauliflower face.
He presses on. *You want to hear my*
losophy? How are you going to win?
ink, my boy. You want to win or you
nt to hurt him? Those are different
things. Pastor Browne's theory of the fight—you can tell the rest—is that anger only takes a man so far. That's what all you poor boys start with: anger, needing it like a horse needs a rider. But soon that gets in the way. You boys go out and think you are fighting a boxer, but really you're fighting the world. But a good fighter, you see, like Blindman, he knows that the man he's fighting is fighting first to hurt and next to win. And he'll use it. Use your hating to get you. That's the difference. Men who fight to hurt will get it in their time. Gladiator in arena consilium capit. *He'll finish you. Mill you to a jelly. Get your head up in chancery and then where will you find yourself?*

Burke doesn't have an answer. He stares at the man, who's got whiskers thick as string. The man's going on about anger, and Burke's tempted to say, *There's no such thing as a sin man only a sin world. I'm just hitting.* He doesn't want to talk anymore. But he won't leave, won't go to sleep either. A tavern chant swells. *Then let us be merry/while drinking our sherry . . .*

He has a sick feeling and thinks maybe he is scared.

They gather at Dead Rabbit Heath.

The fight is to take place another two leagues from the inn, on a field not far from the road, in a soft depression between a pair of hills.

Soon after sunrise, they take a coach. They pass crowds coming up the road, on horseback or foot. It is a cold morning, the light hesitant, the fields wet with dew. There are tents set up for peck and booze. The traffic's slow, thick with broughams and horses. It takes Burke a long time to realize that the crowd is there, in part, for him. They park their carriage at a small clearing halfway up the hill. Burke gets out, followed by Cairn and Yankee. Almost immediately he is set upon by the tag-rag, who jostle him for no reason but to try to get close. They sing, *Gotta get the Blindman, or the Blindman gets you.* Muscular wears his stovepipe low over his eyes, his seconds flank him, leading him up a long path through the wet grass, over a rise and then down toward the ring. Both men hold him by his elbow. He knows it's supposed to comfort him, but there is no comfort there. He thinks, Where do they flank men like this? and the answer is the gallows.

As they approach, there's a massive crowd already gathered at the ropes, and he can hear a hushing in the near. They've got two stands set up by the ring for the paying, but the crowd overflows up the hills. He looks for his opponent, but Blindman is nowhere to be seen. He wants Blindman to be there, as if Blindman's the only one who could know what he is feeling.

The ground is turned up like a pack of pigs came rooting through, but the ring is clean, neat, covered with sand, like nothing he's ever fought in. They've strung two lines of painted rope, the scratch is already chalked. He keeps his greatcoat on as Cairn goes and speaks to the judge. He feels the eyes of the crowd on him, tries to ignore them, looks down, and keeps clenching his hands again and again. Finally, he lifts his face and looks out. The hill is all men, far as the eye can reach. There's a pair of swells near him, ascots blooming, suits of bombazine, capes, and pearl buttons. *Hey, Muscle,* says one and then laughs. *I've got money on you, Muscle,* says the other. They're talking funny, and then he realizes they're mocking a brogue. He looks away.

Cairn comes back. *This's big, boy,* he says. *Ten thousand men, and not a stable free for a sleepy nag. Half the country wants to see our boy fell the Blindman.*

Cheers and jeers as his opponent approaches.

Late in the morning, McGraw arrives. Burke hears the murmurs thrumming through the crowds, then shouts going up, the hillside parting for a dark figure to come through, surrounded by an entourage. They are far off, descending the opposite slope. For an instant it is as if he is watching a shadow at sundown, the dark hulk lumbering over his seconds. A fight song materializes out of the noise, but he can't hear the words. Then suddenly, with McGraw halfway to the ring, something ugly must have been said, for the goliath lunges into the crowd. Then tumult, the black suits turning over as if they were dominoes. Burke can't tell if McGraw is swinging: it's all men coming up and falling back and shouting

Curling like some giant sea animal [illegible] But his seconds must have gotten hold of him, for he's pulled back, and the crowd ripples and is still. Murmurs now: McGraw is out of control, *He's an animal, they shouldn't let him fight*, but Burke knows his man did it for show, though he doesn't know if the show is for him or for the crowd that's come.

There are no more incidents. As McGraw gets closer, a quiet descends. At the edge of the ring, McGraw hands his greatcoat and hat to his second and steps inside. From his corner, Burke watches Blindman strip to his colors.

Jacob Burke has prepared himself for a giant, but he doesn't think he has ever seen such a human as this. McGraw must be eighteen stone. Six foot six at least, but the illusion of height is increased by the size of his chest and belly, which set his head back like some faraway peak. Arms as thick as Muscular's hams. Fists slung low. Skin pale blotched red. To call his ears "cauliflower" would be a compliment. Tuber is more like it, thinks Burke. Raw tuber that could break a knuckle. His nose is a gray-yellow color that makes it look like a dead man's nose. There is so much of him that it is difficult for Burke to see where the man's muscles begin: he looks like someone has taken a massive sculpture of a strong man and kept throwing clay on it in lumps, until the clay ran out. Burke doesn't even know where he is going to land his fists. It seems like certain rules, like rules against grabbing the throat, don't matter when it comes to Blindman, for Burke is uncertain where the neck ends and the head begins. He feels as if he were told to lift an awkward stone without a place to set his hands.

He knows now that he has been seduced by the promotion posters, which show the men facing off, as if they were two men fighting. This isn't two men fighting. He thinks of the games of speculation he played as a child: *If a lion fought a bear, if a turtle fought a buck, if a shark fought a giant fox. If an eagle fought a man of fire. Who would win? Who would kill whom?*

If Muscular Burke fought the monster McGraw.

It is then that Jacob realizes he has been set up to lose, that Cairn and the Yankee could never have expected him to stand a chance against Blindman.

His pulse skitters, mad like a water bead in a hot pan.

He looks back out at the crowds. Now they stretch all the way to the crest of the hillside. The sound of their chanting is deafening. But he hears only *Blindman*, they are there to watch Blindman win or Blindman lose. Curse and praise but only Blindman's name. The crowd doesn't even seem to acknowledge Burke. Thinks Jacob: Who cheers the fox, when you've come to watch the hound?

The fight begins.

The Padders are at the ropes. There are six of them, a quintet of London coalmen and an ostler who is retired from the fistic. Their jackets are off, their cuffs rolled, fighting to keep the crowds back. Muscular realizes that while he has been lost in thought, his arms loose at his sides, his seconds have stripped him to his breeches.

He stands in a daze. He realizes he's staring into the crowd, looking for someone he knows, another lifter from the docks or—thinking frantic now—a brother, or even his mother, when Cairn whispers something in his ear. He has almost forgotten his second, but now Cairn is behind him, his hands on Burke's shoulders, massaging the massive deltoids of which he is so proud. Jacob shivers him off. Is he in on this? he wonders. How much is he being paid to have me get killed? He shakes his head as if there's poison in his ear.

Behind him, he hears Cairn's voice. *Show 'em, Muscular.* He coaxes Burke's arms into the air, and Burke flexes. *That's right, Muscular*, says Cairn. *Show the old man.*

What are the odds? whispers Jacob through his teeth. *What am I at?*

Cairn rubs his shoulders. *Don't worry, boy. You do the milling and I'll do the betting and we'll both go home rich men.* He laughs, but Jacob doesn't join him. No matter how hard he tries to throw his anger back toward the giant in the ring, he feels only betrayal, fury at his handlers for what is about to happen. The thought that Cairn and Yankee want him to lose vanishes, but what remains is somehow worse: [illegible] he is inconsequential. The idea [illegible] they could have cared for him [illegible] more than a trainer cares for a dancing bear seems now like an absurd fallacy. He was a fool to believe. He should sit, lay it down, get back to "the lad" to the quayside, to home.

They are called to the scratch. The judge joins the Padders in the outer ring. Burke sees Cavendish in the front row, toppered in a white stovepipe that is immaculately and impossibly clean. Beside him [illegible] jostling bettors, the flit-fluttering fingers of a tic-tac man.

The two fighters shake. McGraw's paws are like the rest of him, gargantuan, and while Jacob has a grip that can shatter a bottle, he cannot even get purchase on the Scotsman's hand.

Time is kept by a Lord from Eton. The judge launches his cant, praising strength and speed and stamina, *battle of brawn, a beautiful combat, most severe contest for the benefit of honorary Gentlemen*. The crowd erupts.

May the best man win, says the judge.

Fists up.

Fists up and in the crouch, Burke can't hear the bell for all the shouting. Before him, McGraw holds his pose, shoulders squared, his face a mask, waiting for the boy to come. Burke wants to strike, but he doesn't move, can't see a line through the giant's arms. Blindman makes a rolling motion and the crowd roars. *Muscle muscle*, comes a taunt, but out of the corner of his eye, Burke sees the two swells laughing, and beside them Cavendish doing nothing to fight off a smile. Off the scratch he strikes Blindman's jaw. McGraw doesn't budge. Again Burke strikes, and Blindman stops it with his fist. His forearm barely gives. Blindman makes a face of mock surprise, brushes his arm as if brushing off a fly. Flourishes his fists. It's a show for the crowd, and they reward it with laughter. Burke rushes again, left to Blindman's jaw, feeling at the same time as it a brick has come down against his head.

Muscular down.

Cairn takes him back in the corner, sits him, whispers, *Tire him, Muscular, feet, Muscular, quick on the pins*

e like *Mendoza*, but Burke pushes
away, is back to the scratch before
Lord says thirty. Throws the in-
t Blindman gets up from his cor-
Foul! he hears, but before they
pull him back, he's down again,
ware of what happened. He tastes
this time, hears the judge call,
blood, and feels his cheek is wet.
rs numbers. Can't distinguish the
d's shouting from the roaring in
ar.
ack to the scratch and Muscular
n.
ack to the scratch. Blindman
ges. Muscular turns, plants a fist
McGraw's neck and the giant
bles. The hillside roars like ar-
ry fire. Then McGraw is up, his
shifting and shimmering, and
ce advances. He can't think now;
an only move.

fight continues.

he rounds seem to roll through
. Hook to Blindman's ear. Burke to
mouth. One-two. One-two. Blood,
h, and Muscular down. Jab to nose
Blindman down. Back to the
tch and Muscular pounds to the
ding bag, to the ear, to the ear, and
ear seems to crumple, break like a
ato beneath a heel. Blindman
n. Back to the scratch and Blind-
rushes. Breadbasket, breadbasket,
scular down. Topper in the ear and
scular down. Pirouette, turn, and
dman rushes. Muscular back,
hes a heel and both men down.
k to the scratch. Fast in the eye,
scular down. Again in the peeper,
scular down. Blindman muzzled
Muscular down. Blindman coughs,
s out a grinder. Chop and chop and
scular down. Back to the scratch
Muscular down. Blindman Blind-
n, Muscular down.
yelids swollen, tasting blood on his
gue, his knuckles wet with gore,
ke sits in the corner, letting Cairn's
ds caress his chest, Yankee sponge
face. He feels as if his men aren't
re. He's being touched by bird's
gs. He wants at McGraw, needs to
It hurts to breathe, he doesn't
w how much lung he's got in him,
something in him says that he's
en the worst. That Blindman's not
ng to hit any harder than he's hit
that Burke's still got it, still could
heave a load. He murmurs a lifters' song: *Still lift the barrel still lift the barrel still lift the barrel, Hey!/Twelve kittens in the kitchen and another on the way*. His lips, swollen, blubber. He rinses his mouth with Old Tom, rises before the thirty, and is at the scratch before Blindman stands.

By now the crowd is thundering, pressing up against the rope, throwing punches at the Padders, curses flying. Again Burke rushes. McGraw catches his wrist this time, turns with the force and throws him, coming down with his knee in Burke's gut. Muscular's mouth fills with bile, pants go wet. He hears hissing and a cry of *foul*, but McGraw, snorting through his broken nose, doesn't care, he cradles Burke's head, whispers something rasped into his ear, kicks Muscular in the flanks as he's standing up. Again, *Foul!* but this is coming from the crowds, closer, and Burke sees a man breach the outer ring, hurling ugly curses at the Scot, followed by another and another, and Burke, up on his knees, thinks, *Here we go*, and he isn't even standing when the punches start flying.

Pandemonium in the ring: the two fighters join forces to restore order.

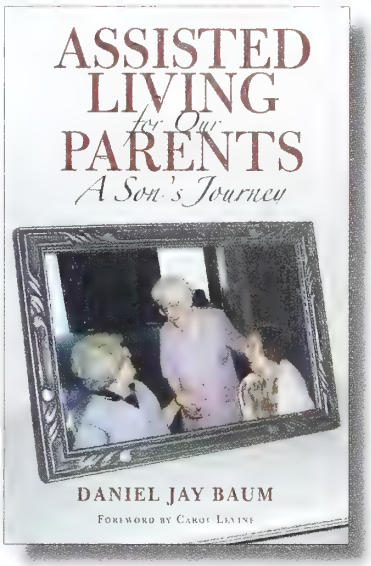
A gasman hits a liveryman hits a brewer hits a baker. Two swells pound each other as if to send each to his maker. An ostler lands a muzzler while his best man lands a quaker.

The Padders overwhelmed, the ropes broken, the crowd implodes into the ring. They don't seem to be after the pugilists but one another, though Muscular, spinning, can't seem to make heads or tails of what's happening. There's a mob come down cursing the Scot. There are canes swinging and stones thrown and someone heaving a rope, and the air's filled with curses, all kinds of animal and things that are going to be done and a liberal use of the Monosyllable.

Then Muscular and Blindman have joined the Padders, pounding to clear the ring, because both are hungry for the fight. Blindman is red-faced and breathing heavy. Rested, Muscular feels the strength in him returning.

By the time the riot is cleared, a

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dozen men have been carried off. Then the ropes are restaked, the colors returned. A quiet settles, but the judge is still shouting, threatening to end the fight unless order is completely restored.

But what has become of Muscular's eyes?

Time has played Blindman's ally: by now, Muscular can barely see, both of his eyes are weeping, swollen shut, crusting over. With the stage reclaimed and the Padders back at the ropes, the boxers repair to their seconds. In the corner, Cairn runs his thumbs over Muscular's lids. *You're out,* he says. *You're out or I cut them,* and Jacob just nods. Cairn pushes his head back, grabs the lancet, grabs his face, and the relief is immediate. His face streams with the claret, his cheeks feel as if he is crying.

Back to the scratch, and McGraw is fighting dirty, but the judge lets it fly. He's angry, thinks Burke, he knows it shouldn't have gone on this long. It was supposed to be easy, done. Face contorted, McGraw rushes, gets a hand on Muscular's neck, drives him into the rope. Muscular down. Cairn calls *Foul!* but Burke's back to the scratch.

Now it's Burke who leads. Forward now, and Blindman back. Fists up and McGraw circles, spits, coughs, scratches the ground. Blindman back, Burke forward, watching, waiting, watching, and then he sees it, sees his channel in. Not now, but two moves from now, like a game of checkers. Feels the warmth in his arms, feels joys, thinks, *This is glorious*. Feints high and McGraw goes high and then Jacob Burke is inside. Left to the jaw, left, and Blindman ducks. Straight into Burke's right and rising.

Jacob Burke knows then that the fight is over. *Hears* it, something slacken. Something soft, something broken in the jaw or in the face, something creaking in the temple. He's worked shipbreaking at times, and there's a feeling when a sledgehammer comes against a beam and nothing breaks, but you know the next time you swing it's going to give. The fight's over. Blindman is standing, but Burke has only to wait and Blindman will fall. An expression comes over Blindman's face, a puzzled expression like he's hearing a song he's never heard before.

At which point Burke has a very complicated thought.

Jacob Burke's thought takes the form of a memory.

In his childhood on the docks, like all boys, Jacob and his friends spent days in games of earnest battle, clashing sticks and throwing stones long into the dark, chasing and fighting and raising hell. They played by the universal rules of cruelty and chivalry and thrill, thrill to strike and throw and be thrown at, and throwing and chasing one day Jacob and three friends had cornered an enemy knight and were taunting him before delivering the *coup de grace*, which in such a situation, with such easy prey, typically consisted of touching him with the stone or tossing it lightly, as the boy was trapped against a wall and had no way to escape. But that afternoon the boy, who was a bit younger than the rest, went scared on them and started to cry, and, surrounding him, the others began to laugh and throw, and then the boy was crying louder, which only made the others laugh louder and throw harder, and then the boy was slobbering for his mother, and they all went grabbing more stones and throwing, and Burke reached down and felt his fist close around a stone he knew was too big for that game, but the crying had removed from him any restraint, and, laughing, he took hard aim at the head of the boy and he threw.

The end.

Watching from the crowds, amidst the cheers and curses, there's not a soul that day at Dead Rabbit Heath that knows what Jacob Burke knows, that the fight is already over. For Blindman's standing and Blindman's fists are still up, and if he's slack in the lip no one can see from what Muscular Jacob Burke has done to his face. They'll know, in breaths they'll know and for years they'll talk about it, but in this half-second between Muscular's knowing and the crowd's knowing, it's as if Muscular has been left alone with a knowledge and an omnipotence only God should have.

There is a moment when a lifter takes a load and heaves it ont[o] shoulder, when the massive we[ight] the sack or the crate or the barrel [at] top of its heave, becomes br[ief] weightless, and the lifter, no m[atter] how tired he may be, poised betw[een] his action and the consequences [of] action, feels both an incredible l[ight]ness and the power of the weigl[ht] the same time. It is as if he is mast[er] the weight, not struggling belo[w] and Jacob Burke has learned ove[r] years to seek this joy, cling to this[,] knows secretly that in the miser[y] everything else, there is one mom[ent] when he is king.

Maybe he thinks this or mayb[e] feels it in the movement of his arm[s] now there is no difference betw[een] thinking and feeling and hitting.

Blindman's fists are down and M[c]cular comes in on his man. He is l[ook]ing for the break, the hole, the [o]pe searching again for that seam, hitt[ing] hitting, that half-second gone, [and] now there's no turning back, hitt[ing] knowing that when he'd told him[self] he hit so he wouldn't be hit he [was] lying, because beneath it, the rea[son] he hit was that there was joy in h[it]ing, real joy in the simplicity and [the] freedom and the astounding num[ber] of answers in a single movemen[t] his arms. Later he'll have pity, [but] not now, now there is no pity, not [be]cause he is cruel but because ther[e's] no more Ben McGraw. For Muscu[lar] is alone, mind clear of all but such [joy] and beauty as he moves in, strik[ing] his man, searching, knowing ther[e's] only one way that he wants this [to] end, only one ecstatic way for it [to] end, only one, and hitting he thin[ks] *Blindman I'm hitting Blindman I'm hit[ting] Cairn I am hitting Cairn I'm hit[ting] Cav I'm killing Cairn I'm hitting C[airn] I'm hitting Blindman I'm hitting C[airn]* and then feeling the soft thinks, *[soft] in the break* thinks *in the crown* thin[ks] *in the line* thinks *into McGraw*

thinks *there is a line into McGr[aw] into the soft into McGraw into [the] crown of Ben McGraw into the tem[ple] of McGraw the broken temple [of] McGraw*

The broken temple of McGraw.

thinks *there is no such thing as a f[ree] man only a slow world*

thinks *break break*

Blindman down.

EW BOOKS

John Leonard



he boy whose mother used to call him "my little Peer Gynt" turns eighty this year. "Only ," says Günter Grass, "is the trav- beginning to tire: looking back is hat keeps him awake." PEELING ONION (Harcourt, $26), his au- ography, is wakeful, twitchy, sus- ous, shambling, and yet also—if re still permitted to use this word compliment—sincere. Grass may be as elegant as Nabokov (*Speak, nory*) or as lyrical as García quez (*Living to Tell the Tale*), but loesn't miss a laceration. If *Peeling Onion* is less thrilling than Au- ine's or Rousseau's *Confessions*, also less complacent. Those aden-Freudians consulting it just loat are cheating themselves of a substance, but such tin drums are ty of heart and full of envy and re- ment, hopping and crawling with



ils, rats, crabs, toads, and flounder. Yes, he admits to having been fted, at age seventeen, into the affen SS tank corps, after having unteered, at age fifteen, for sub- rines—wanting glory, a uniform, l to get away from home. Yes, as has told us many times before, he ned the Hitler Youth—"in fact, a ung Nazi. A believer till the end." d here he rubs salt in his wounds conscience: "Is it only children who, as in fairy tales, ask the right questions?" Young Grass didn't ask, "so that now, as I peel the onion, my silence pounds in my ears." Jewish shops were set on fire in Danzig, and though he didn't do it, "I was very much a curious spectator," as he'd "simply stood by and observed," "at most, surprised" at the pillage of a synagogue. Guilt "hibernates in dreams," he says, and "learns early to seek refuge in the shell of an ear, to think of itself as beyond the statute of limitations, as long since forgiven, as smaller than small, next to nothing." But these secret "erasures" of "disgrace" and "shame," these "eloquently avoided words," "slivers of thought," and "nits nesting in sackhair," are trapped in memory like insects fossilized in amber. Grass shouldn't have to tell us that intuitions of bad faith inspired the Danzig Trilogy in the first place; they are his psychodynamic. Once he stopped being seventeen, in an American POW camp, his urgent business as a writer was to wash damaged language out of the German mouth, to rinse it of the death-camp taste of bile. The silence he broke was his own.

But I have permitted the Waffen SS to eat up too much of my review space. *Peeling the Onion* is more encompassing. Proceeding from altar boy to first novelist, it is wonderfully and dreadfully evocative—of malt lozenges and tile stoves; of gold-tipped Egyptian cigarettes and clotted milk with pumpernickel crumbs; of "Führer, Folk, and Fatherland," "mussels and Weltschmerz," hunger, religion, sex, death, refugees, and Dresden's firestorm; of learning to cook in a prison camp, durance vile in a potash mine, and plaster death masks for a Berlin undertaker; of Heidegger, Sartre, *The Three Musketeers*, and the night that Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong showed up to hear Grass's student jazz band. But such is our prurient interest that we would rather smack our lips at turpitudes. Here's my suggestion. Go see Marcel Ophüls's *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Then ask yourself if you would collaborate with such evil. And if you think you wouldn't, then wonder further whether one of the ways you have learned how to behave honorably is from watching the likes of Marcel Ophuls and reading the likes of Günter Grass.

Nobody behaves entirely honorably in DR. LIVINGSTONE, I PRESUME?: MISSIONARIES, JOURNALISTS, EXPLORERS, AND EMPIRE (Harvard, $22.95). Clare Pet-

tograph of Dresden, 1945 © AP Images/Richard Peter Sen; Illustration of Hitler Youth from *Don't Trust Anyone upon Green Heath — A Picture Book for Young and Old*, 1936, by Elvira Bauer © AKG Images

the encounter between the roustabout newspaper reporter and the Victorian missionary in an African jungle in 1871 has to tell us about the politics of colonialism, the dawn of the West's celebrity culture, how such technologies as the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable transformed social relations, and whether Britain and America were really over their bad diplomatic patch since the Civil War, but her [illegible] look at the personal lives of both men is the best précis available this side of Tim Jeal's 1973 biography of Livingstone—and she writes with a scalpel.

We learn that the good doctor, an ardent opponent of slavery, neglected his wife and many children; he seemed more interested in exploration than converting Africans to Christianity, at which he was notably unsuccessful; he may have been responsible with bad planning and bad advice for the deathly disasters of more than one missionary expedition; and he enjoyed publicity almost as much as Henry Morton Stanley. About Stanley, who was actually Welsh rather than American, there are strong suggestions of a deviant and perhaps sadistic sexuality (servants [illegible] would be blackmailed), an ugly truth about his service to King Leopold of Belgium when Leopold was up to his [illegible] Congo, and indications that Stanley may have murdered [illegible] himself. But he seems not to have been quite the vicious racist he is often portrayed as being, and Mark Twain was a good buddy.



Still, as Pettitt deftly demonstrates, what emerges from all the Hollywood films, TV shows, children's books, games, cartoons, and songs that since 1872 have so gleefully employed this famous meeting is [illegible] covering and/or saving the world, glad to greet another civilized gent among so many grinning primitives—an [illegible]

formed in childhood and retained unchanged into adult life against any contradictory [illegible] already knew the whereabouts of the source of the Nile; that for those who already live there, discovering the [illegible]

Wilfrid Sheed tells us in his delightful THE HOUSE THAT GERSHWIN BUILT: WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM IRVING, COLE AND A FEW OF US ABOUT FIFTY (Random House, $25.95) is that American popular music from 1925 to 1950 was a very big deal indeed, something as vital, magical, and profound as movies, railroads, skyscrapers, and the Ford V-8. The shorthand is that when Jews got the blues, America all of a sudden started singing what Sheed calls "jazz songs." At the grand piano in his head, Sheed plays these melodies and the anecdotes that came with them, and improves everything—stage, screen, radio, and jukebox; George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington, Hoagy Carmichael, and Richard Rodgers; alcohol and manic-depression; bread and roses—with his own lyrical [illegible]

About the difficult Irving Berlin, for instance: "New York in the early [twentieth] century was not so much a melting [illegible] if Irving could seem abrasive in later years, it's worth remembering that he was rubbed raw himself at an impressionable age." When Johnny Mercer suddenly Tin Pan Alley seemed to [illegible] in railway yards and bus depots [illegible] About the Jerome Kern/Oscar Hammerstein [illegible] folk doin' a heap of livin'. Oscar had [illegible] his rich vein of calendar poetry." [illegible] lower the tone of any [illegible]

to service the famous throb of h[illegible] voice." Johnny Mercer, "a man of [illegible] than one Rosebud," "was simply [illegible]

Not since E. L. Doctorow in C[illegible] [illegible] to the Midrash Quartet, a rap group of Talmud[illegible] terpreters of such pop-standard[illegible] lar hymns as "Me and My Sha[illegible] "Dancing in the Dark," and "[illegible] Night Sweetheart," has a first[illegible] American novelist and critic [illegible] ducted such a love affair in p[illegible] with pre-Boomer pop culture [illegible] seems willing to forgive rock an[illegible] for what it did to the witty mu[illegible] still dreams on, but rap . . . well[illegible] can almost see his blood boil an[illegible] lip curl.

Speaking of blood, or maybe boilers, I should at least no[illegible] head at several notable new [illegible] teries made for summer reading: [illegible] tin Cruz Smith returns with a [illegible] dictably nifty new Arkady Renko case, STALIN'S GHOST (Simon & Schuster, $26.95), involving the [illegible] Russian nationalism, the old Mo[illegible] corruption, World War II atrocit[illegible] terror-in-Chechnya cover-up, wi[illegible] thinking, nightmare memory, bat[illegible] sons, and chess. . . . John Burdett's [illegible] Sonchai Jitpleecheep detective [illegible] el, BANGKOK HAUNTS (Knopf, $24.95), graduates from the usual [illegible] and the usual sadomasochism t[illegible] unusual snuff-movie DVD starrin[illegible] [illegible] Sonchai's former lovers, who re[illegible] es to let a little death get in the w[illegible] ghost sex and Buddhist revenge. [illegible] THE TIN ROOF BLOWDOWN (Simon & Schuster, $26) is James [illegible] Burke's best Dave Robicheaux n[illegible] since *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, which means that [illegible] Faulknerian. Recovering-alcoholic [illegible] lice detective Robicheaux goes [illegible] do justice in the violent aftermat[illegible] Katrina—"New Orleans was [illegible] [illegible] are behaving as badly as the c[illegible] who are already in cahoots with [illegible] Mafia, and you can't tell the race v[illegible] rors from the vigilantes. Beneath [illegible] surface of these dark waters, in sea[illegible] of the body of a junkie priest, [illegible] bicheaux finds golden lights like [illegible] ken Communion wafers.

FTER THE FALL

›n DeLillo without his towers

Jennifer Szalai

ıssed in this essay:

ıg *Man*, by Don DeLillo. Scribner. 256 pages. $26.



The two buildings that loomed at the corner of West and Liberty streets in New York City, ir 110 stories of tinted glass and ed steel, have occupied a conspicuous place in the novels of Don De-. The seventy-year-old writer published his first four novels in the 1970s, en the sterile abstractions of the d War were intruded upon by the ody news from Vietnam; the twin ers went up at the beginning of that decade, shimmering tablets erected like a desperate consecration of American might. In *Players*, DeLillo's 1977 novella about a slick professional couple titillated by everything—adultery, terrorism—except each other, the woman, Pammy, works for a firm called the Grief Management Council that is housed in the "tyrannic grandeur" of the World Trade Center: "To Pammy the towers didn't seem permanent. They remained concepts, no less transient for all their bulk than some routine distortion of light." Brita, a photographer in *Mao II* (1991), recalls a painting that showed "the World Trade Center at precisely the angle she saw it from her window and in the same dark spirit. . . . Two black latex slabs that consumed the available space." *Underworld* (1997), DeLillo's 800-page scouring of the American century, afforded the author another chance to bring in that "model of behemoth mass production," casting the World Trade Center as an idea in "poetic balance" with the landfill on Staten Island that goes by the name of Fresh Kills. And then there is *Underworld*'s cover, with its photograph by André Kertész, "New York, 1972," of the twin towers dissolving into fog as a bird tilts toward them, wings outstretched, its small skewed shape a quiet menace to the skyscraping march of parallel lines.

It makes a considerable amount of sense, then, that DeLillo would return to the towers after they lay in ruins, the angular monument to trade and technology razed by ten men sickened by the sheen of the new. In an essay published in the December 2001 issue of this magazine, DeLillo described the World Trade Center as "a justification, in a sense, for technology's irresistible will to realize in solid form whatever becomes theoretically allowable. Once defined, every limit must be reached." But it would take DeLillo six more years, during which he wrote a novella and a play, to bring the rubble of the towers into his fiction. *Falling Man*, his fourteenth novel (fifteenth if you count *Amazons*, a faux-memoir of a female NHL player that he wrote under the pseudonym Cleo Birdwell), begins and ends on September 11, 2001; most of the intervening chapters revolve around the lives of Keith and Lianne, a Manhattan couple who had separated a year and a half before the attacks and reconcile when Keith shows up at Lianne's door on that morning in September, stippled by glass and coated with ash, streaked with blood that is too much for his cuts and so must have come from somebody else.

Keith is carrying a briefcase that isn't his, and we follow him as he returns it to its owner, one Florence Givens, a few days later. Florence is "a light-skinned black woman, his age or close, and gentle-seeming, and on the heavy side," who worked one floor below Keith in the World Trade Center. The two of them begin a brief affair, one that spans a couple of weeks; their relationship is described in glimpses, interludes between other scenes in which Lianne, a freelance editor, hosts her support group for New Yorkers in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, or else talks to her mother, Nina, a retired professor of art who dismisses Keith as a man who is "built for weekends," or else comes across a performance by Falling Man, an artist who launches himself from various precipices in the city. Falling

ifer Szalai is a senior editor of Harper's gazine.

from the Witness series, by Todd Stone. Courtesy the artist

deemed unshowable in the months that followed September 11.

Despite the event that provides the occasion for the novel, *Falling Man* seems more a personal work than a political one. The grand themes that suffuse DeLillo's earlier fiction—the ecstatic consumerism that runs through *White Noise*, for example, or the amped-up Cold Warrior rhetoric in *End Zone*—are transmuted here into something more intimate, hewing closely to a few lives affected by the fallen towers. DeLillo has tried his hand at the more personal stuff before: *The Body Artist*, which was published in early 2001, and *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, a play from two years ago, both turn inward, meditating on relationships and grief rather than indulging the political obsessions for which DeLillo is known. Considering that DeLillo has often been criticized for the "coldness" of his characters and their dialogue, his decision to write a novel and a play that are wholly concerned with character and dialogue was surprising, though perhaps it was suggestive of a willingness to take risks.

Nevertheless, neither *The Body Artist* nor *Love-Lies-Bleeding* seemed [illegible] matter. *The Body Artist* was saddled with a rather bizarre plot, in which a woman grieving the suicide of her husband finds a man-child living upstairs in his underwear—a device that might be mistaken for comedy if the prose (elegant and subdued) and the premise (a violent, self-inflicted death) weren't so resolute in their unfunniness. In *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, a man killed by snakes [illegible] wives haggle over his fate; the intricate dilemmas [illegible] veyed with a remarkable sensitivity to [illegible] are hardened by hyperarticulate moments [illegible] shred of identity. His eyes are cold ash. [illegible] ter just happens to quote a line from Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil*?) that tug the audience's attention away from the [illegible] brain of the writer behind it.

Falling Man widens the lens, bringing some social context back into DeLillo's world. But the politics in this novel are given to us in fragments. [illegible] holocaust and *White Noise*'s "airborne toxic event"; what we are left with in *Falling Man* are political ideas that appear suddenly and perform before us rather than permeate the atmosphere. When Nina and her lover, Martin, debate the motives of the terrorists, they discuss whether the terrorists are moved by religion or by history:

> [illegible] nology, the armies, the agencies, [illegible]
>
> [illegible]
>
> [illegible]
>
> All the things that shape lives, millions of people, dispossessed, their lives, their [illegible]
>
> [illegible] eties. It's their own history, their memories. [illegible] choice, of necessity. They haven't ad[illegible]

Martin and Nina clearly have some clever things to say about the subject (much of which comes from DeLillo's *Harper's* essay about September 11), but their discussions seem curiously segregated from the rest of the novel: they are presenting their ideas rather [illegible] Even when we learn, later on, that Martin's attitudes might be informed by his own past as a young German radical, the revelation comes [illegible] time between Nina and Lianne.

[illegible] truthful in this, in the way DeLillo allows the narrative to meander [illegible] and the details of these characters' conversations and daily exis[illegible] DeLillo con[illegible] think about." Hammad's story punc[illegible] brain of the writer behind it.

which he clings to his ideas abo[illegible] lam and America, his fear of "e[illegible] crowded out by other cultures, [illegible] futures, the all-enfolding will o[illegible] tal markets and foreign policies [illegible] tones his scripted existence: "[illegible] were rules now and he was [illegible] turned to follow them. His li[illegible] structure. Things were clearl[illegible] fined. He was becoming one of [illegible] now, learning to look like the[illegible] think like them." The langua[illegible] these sentences, terse with cert[illegible] runs up against the rolling line[illegible] describe how Keith, sitting in [illegible] tral Park a few days after the at[illegible] no longer knows what to belie[illegible] sees a horse and rider as "some[illegible] that belonged to another lands[illegible] something inserted, a conjuring [illegible] resembled for the briefest se[illegible] some half-seen image only hal[illegible] lieved in the seeing, when the [illegible] ness wonders what has happen[illegible] the meaning of things, to tree, st[illegible] stone, wind, simple words lost i[illegible] falling ash."

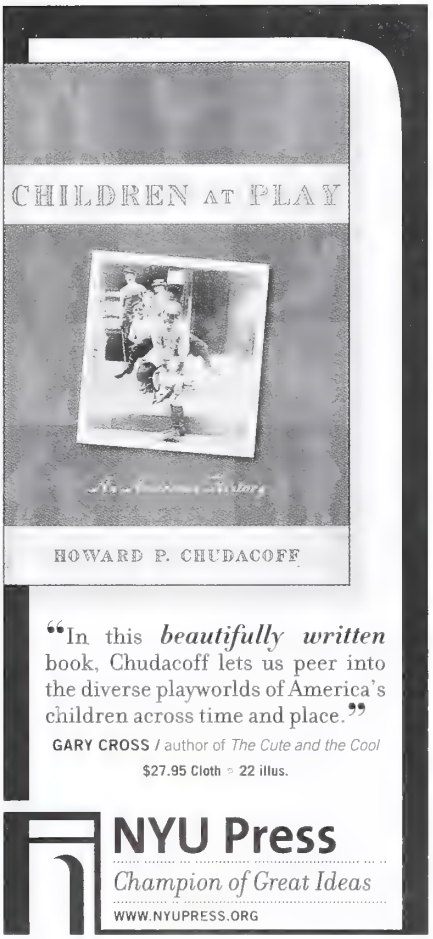
"I think my work comes out o[illegible] culture of the world around me," [illegible] Lillo said in a 1997 interview w[illegible] *The New Yorker*'s David Remnic[illegible] think that's where my langu[illegible] comes from. I think that's where [illegible] themes come from." *Falling Ma*[illegible] full of moments that testify to t[illegible] sentences and paragraphs in wh[illegible] DeLillo does channel the wo[illegible] around him, conveying the confus[illegible] and uncertainty that descended [illegible] New York City after the towers [illegible] The question of meaning and me[illegible] ry comes up with particular frequ[illegible] cy; when a member of Lianne's s[illegible] port group begins to forget where [illegible] lives, her mind succumbing to [illegible] tangles and plaques of Alzheime[illegible] her plight carries with it an echo [illegible] something larger: "The world was [illegible] ceding, the simplest recognitions. S[illegible] began to lose her sense of clarity, [illegible] distinctness. She was not lost [illegible] much as falling, growing fainte[illegible] Similarly, Lianne and her moth[illegible] turn toward two paintings by Giorg[illegible] Morandi that hang in Nina's w[illegible] muted still lifes of ordinary objec[illegible] that nevertheless "held a myste[illegible] [Lianne] could not name, or in the [illegible] regular edges of vases and jars. so[illegible] reconnoiter inward, human and o[illegible]

, away from the very light and
of the paintings." Lianne senses
thing in this unnameable space,
she decides to cede herself to its
ery: "Let the latent meanings
and bend in the wind, free from
oritative comment."

could go on. *Falling Man* rever-
perates with so much of DeLillo's
ntelligence, so many of his
oted sentences, that it resists the
bored indulgence of minor quib-
But there is a sense in which the
all effect of this novel lacks the
lity of its individual moments;
s dwindle rather than unfold,
acters are displayed rather than
eloped. Keith's affair with Flo-
e ends as it began—somewhat
plicably. Their first conversa-
, in which he tells her that he
her electronic toothbrush in the
fcase and she tells him what she
embers from September 11, har-
little of the tension one might
ect from two people attracted to
h other. The only indication
e given of Keith's interest in this
nan is, perhaps, in this exchange:

"I was at my screen and heard the
lane approach but only after I was
rown down. That's how fast," she said.
"Are you sure you heard the plane?"
"The impact sent me to the floor and
ıen I heard the plane. I think the sprin-
lers, I'm trying to recall the sprinklers.
know I was wet at some point, all
rough."
He understood that she hadn't meant
o say this. It sounded intimate, to be
et all through, and she had to pause a
ıoment.
He waited.
"My phone was ringing. I was at my
esk now, I don't know, just to sit, just
o steady myself, and I pick up the
hone. . . ."

e interjection of Keith's momen-
thought is doing a lot of the work
e. So far he's been drinking tea
l eating cookies, listening to her
him what happened in the World
ıde Center; when she recalls the
inklers going off, her comment, if
take it as something said out loud,
nds matter-of-fact, not "intimate"
ll. One wonders whether DeLillo
writer was moved by the shape of
sentence rather than the charac-



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SOLUTION TO THE JUNE PUZZLE

G	E	N	O	M	E	D	D	I	N	E	D
E	M	U	L	A	T	E	E	L	A	M	A
L	I	C	K	S	S	I	D	E	M	A	N
A	T	L	U	S	E	F	U	L	E	N	E
T	H	E	M	A	T	I	C	A	D	A	S
I	S	A	I	A	H	E	E	R	U	T	H
N	R	R	S	C	O	D	E	G	L	E	E
P	A	C	K	R	S	I	B	E	R	I	A
O	N	L	S	A	T	O	U	T	U	F	R
S	C	A	R	V	E	S	L	I	M	I	T
S	H	U	N	E	L	E	G	I	B	L	E
E	O	S	I	N	E	B	E	D	A	M	N

NOTES FOR "UPWARDLY MOBILE":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

One letter in each down answer was to be moved to a higher position, creating a new word.

ACROSS: 1. ge(no-m.)e; 6. di(n)ed; 10. emu-late; 11. l-AMA; 12. (f)licks; 13. *. 14. US-eful*; 16. them-a-tic; 18. a-D.A.'s; 19. l-s(A-l)ah(rev.); 21. two mngs.. 24. E-doc(rev.); 25. hidden; 26. cap(rev.)-k.; 28. (Pyrenee)s-Iberia; 31. sa(rev.)-tout; 33. s(nakehouse)-carves; 34. l(I'm)it; 35. *; 36. L-e.g.-(B)ible; 37. eosin*-E; 38. bed-amn

DOWN: 1. (r)elating; 2. mite (homophone); 3. uncle-a(nterio)r; 4. A.(ssa-rev)M., 5. Ed-l-fie-d; 6. e(Duce)d; 7. amen-d(eath); 8. man-a-tee; 9. Andes (hidden); 15. lager(rev.). 17. M-insk*; 20. hot-els(e); 22. earthen*; 23. a-n-c-h-or; 24. ca(ver[rev.])n. 26. P.(O)S.-E's; 27. cauls, homophone; 29. bug-le; 30. um-bra; 32. (o)f-lim(e).

ters' situation. Attraction has not ... been alluded to, and suddenly the word "wet" is supposed to be quivering with intimacy.

Certainly middle-aged men like Keith are not immune to such thoughts, but my skepticism has less to do with the plausibility of such situations in life than with their plausibility in the world we've been given—the world, that is, of DeLillo's novel, in which the moment is clearly supposed to have more portent than mere adolescent wordplay. The second time Keith and Florence meet, DeLillo gives us a better view of this woman through Keith's eyes: "There was an element in Florence that was always close to some emotional distress, a memory of bearing injury or sustaining loss, possibly lifelong, and the laughter was a kind of shedding, a physical deliverance from old woe, dead skin, if only for a moment." This description is beautifully rendered, but there is something inert about it too—as if Keith is describing an image he already knows rather than surrendering to a discovery. The connection between these characters happens, it takes place, it turns up; it doesn't emerge or reveal itself.

DeLillo is so scrupulous a writer that I suspect a deliberate strategy behind all of this, the attempt, perhaps, to create a novel analogous to one of those Morandi paintings, in which a constellation of objects radiates a quiet emotional intensity. Similar ambitions have been put forth by DeLillo before; he once described *Ratner's Star*, a somewhat maddening novel about a young math genius enlisted to decode a message from outer space, as his attempt "to produce a book that would be naked structure. . . . A piece of mathematics, in short." The problem with these kinds of projects is that language cannot lose its own skin, so to speak. Print may take on the qualities of a painting, but it cannot become one: a book, whether linear or not, is experienced through time. In a thoughtful piece of literary criticism about DeLillo's fifth novel, *The Names*, David Bosworth explains that fiction "is a narrative art. . . . Its pattern is not simultaneous but extended and rhythmic." He notices that the trouble with *The Names* reflects a "consistent weakness" in DeLillo's work up to that point. "His fiction, like his characters, is too often trapped in a kind of atomistic, moment-to-moment existence that strains even his considerable talent for improvisation."

Bosworth wrote these words in 1983, two years before DeLillo came out with *White Noise*, a burlesque of contemporary life that was forged by an energy and coherence scarcely present in his earlier work. DeLillo wrote *White Noise* after a sojourn in Greece, and he has described the writing of it as propelled by the strangeness of what he encountered upon his return: the television set that was at the center of the American household, emitting its daily news of impending disaster, warning of ominous weather patterns or toxic spills. DeLillo seemed to absorb these murmuring anxieties, so that his writing process became animated with a primitive fear:

> When I was working on *White Noise* I wrote very unconsciously. The novel seemed to make itself up, seemed to take no effort. I wrote this novel, and all the time I was writing it, I felt a hovering sense of death in the air. I don't know exactly why. Of course, it is a novel about this, but it is mostly a comic novel. I have never been affected quite that way by something I was writing. . . . And I don't think of writing novels in terms of fear so much as in terms of self-doubt, which can be a problem.

The story of Jack Gladney, a professor of "Hitler studies" at a small-town college, feeds on absurdity and dread; indeed, *White Noise* is buoyed by these elements of American culture rather than suffocated by them. It is as if DeLillo, upon his return to the United States, was seeing it for the first time—as if he, like his protagonist, was finding "in the commonplace . . . unexpected themes and intensities." He secures on banal realities in order to squeeze out miniature comedies of desire and expectation:

> The supermarket shelves have been rearranged. It happened one day without warning. There is agitation and panic in the aisles, dismay in the faces of older shoppers. They walk in a fragmented trance, stop and go, clusters of [illegible] dressed figures frozen in the aisles, [illegible] to figure out the pattern, discern the underlying logic, trying to remember [illegible] they'd seen the Cream of Wheat. [illegible] see no reason for it, find no sense [illegible] The scouring pads are with the [illegible] soup now, the condiments are scattered

Instead of so much more comment on American consumerism, where soullessness is usually presumed, DeLillo here is giving us something [illegible] the precise meaning of which is unexpectedly wrinkled by the predicament he's put these people in. There is a ludicrousness in the plight of these shoppers, grasping for significance in the aisles, but there's also a tragic sympathy that saves the scene from sliding into easy ridicule. Like the writer who created them and [illegible] story out of nothing, they're looking for order amid the chaos, finding it where they can.

The fear that DeLillo spoke of, the "hovering sense of death" that set his writing in motion, lends *White Noise* a genuine urgency. It reads as if the author, chased by the prospect of meaninglessness, was forced to elude it by writing his way out of the void. One detects in this novel something more at stake than the cerebral musings of his earlier books, something more compelling than the clever mechanics of a literary game. *White Noise* takes DeLillo's formidable intelligence and gives it narrative cohesion. Without the connective tissue, even the sturdiest skeleton of ideas cannot move.

DeLillo has said that *White Noise* was the first of his novels in which he found "a lot of female readers, and I don't think too many women had been reading my books before that." Indeed, to write about DeLillo is to come across the most pages that have been written about him, most of which seem to carry a byline that lists a university affiliation or, at the very least, a name like Robert or Adam or Tom or Richard—men's names, that is, the multitude of which might be taken as mere corroboration of the skewed demographic among literary critics if it did not bear such a resemblance to his popular readership. Could it be that also

e excerptable passages in DeLillo's
els, those bizarre facts, those con-
s like disembodied images, strange-
olated from one another, are what
e endeared him to academics and
nany male fans, excited by the
ndance of information to extract
to tally, to collect into crowded
? Could it be that the women who
White Noise found something
, something more dynamic than
clear yet mechanical genius for
ch DeLillo was known?
he mere mention of this elephant
subject may rankle those men and
nen who want to believe that
e's plenty of space in the room, but
se the issue out of curiosity rather
n idle provocation. I also recognize
there must be women who find
adventures of Bucky Wunderlick in
at Jones Street (1973) engrossing,
as there are men for whom not a
le DeLillo novel holds any appeal
tsoever. I did think it curious, how-
r, that no less than three women I
w responded to the mention of
illo's name with unsolicited ob-
rations on his winning ways with
other sex; "DeLillo's such a male
ter, isn't he?" was how one of them
it. Perhaps his allure is even more
spicuous when one looks at those
elists who claim him as an influ-
e: Jonathan Franzen, Bret Easton
s, and David Foster Wallace come
nediately to mind, whereas women
laring a similar allegiance are much
der to come by.

Libra, the novel that followed *White*
ise, is about as different from its
decessor as it is possible to get, yet
ra, too, reads as if the author were
owing a story as opposed to assem-
ng one from its constituent parts.
e novel is ostensibly about the con-
racies surrounding the JFK assassi-
ion, but it is DeLillo's interest in the
aracters—an interest that he says
s unprecedented for him—that gives
ra its force. The people in this book
y the tidy contours of American
thologies, the lives flattened like
ves between textbook pages. A
rteen-year-old Lee Harvey Oswald
es the subway "to the ends of the
y, two hundred miles of track":

> He saw chinamen, beggars, men who talked to God, men who lived on the trains, day and night, bruised, with matted hair, asleep in patient bundles on the wicker seats. He jumped the turnstiles once. He rode between cars, gripping the heavy chain. He felt the friction of the ride in his teeth. They went so fast sometimes. He liked the feeling they were on the edge. How do we know the motorman's not insane? It gave him a funny thrill. . . . People crowded in, every shape face in the book of faces. They pushed through the doors, they hung from the porcelain straps. He was riding just to ride. . . .
>
> Never again in his short life, never in the world, would he feel this inner power, rising to a shriek, this secret force of the soul in the tunnels of New York.

The staccato cuts between Oswald and the world around him convey a palpable loneliness, one that resides in the space between the compressed intensity of the lone figure and the hubbub of the crowd. The other characters in *Libra* are imagined with equal immediacy. DeLillo allows them to have experiences as opposed to simple behaviors. *Libra* is the work of a writer who ran up against the peculiar facts of history, the idiosyncrasies of actual lives led, and was surprised by what he found.

Published in 1988, *Libra* was the last book DeLillo wrote before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since then, he has written five novels, only one of which, *Underworld*, has approached the narrative power of *Libra* and *White Noise*. The other books, *Falling Man* included, share a kind of diffuseness, dissolving their resources instead of accumulating them. Perhaps these novels reflect the splintered realities of post-ideological times, of grand narratives exhausted. *Underworld*, though it came out in 1997, was still a book about the Cold War that preceded it: the novel begins with the final Giants-Dodgers game of 1951 and is haunted by the grisly fantasies inaugurated by the Bomb. DeLillo is very good at parsing the relationship between the individual and the system, mining it for conspiracies and plots, discrepancies and tensions. What happens, then, when the old system collapses? When violence is no longer hidden, kept secret, but promoted as spectacle, the strategic exhibitionism of terrorism and war?

In *Mao II*, DeLillo was already suggesting that the terrorist had usurped

"Provocative, dishy, substantive and fun."*

UNCOMMON ARRANGEMENTS

SEVEN PORTRAITS OF MARRIED LIFE IN LONDON LITERARY CIRCLES 1910 – 1939



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[illegible] consciousness—[illegible] the shock of terrorist violence, coming as it does from outside a culture who haven't been absorbed by our omnivorous culture, forces the public to pay attention. *Falling Man* seems to beat this out. The first and last scenes of the book, scenes from the attacks on September 11, are what manage to cut through the novel's haze, the blur of Keith and Lianne and Florence, of Martin and Nina and their wooden conversations. DeLillo's gift for describing visual detail and, when he allows himself, states of mind, are brought here into particular focus:

> [Keith] saw a chair bounce down the corridor in slow motion. He thought he saw the ceiling begin to ripple, lift and ripple. He put his arms over his head and sat knees up, face wedged between them. He was aware of vast movement and other things, smaller, unseen, objects drifting and skidding, and sounds that weren't one thing or another but only sound, a shift in the basic arrangement of parts and elements.

Here is a writer living through his character, a writer who isn't conceptualizing his scene into a frigid tableau. More about Keith is revealed in this passage than in the many pages devoted to him and his wife and his lover; Keith is shown pushing against the unfamiliar horror of such an experience, defining himself at the edges of awareness.

DeLillo is especially sensitive to the rhythms of the culture; when the culture changes, his writing changes. The towers were such a presence in his previous work, so emblematic of an America that presumed to know what America was, that *Falling Man* seems as authentic a response to their destruction as any, an extension of the author's own attempts to cast for truths that have receded into the smoke and ash. Writing about the terrorists, DeLillo notes that "plots reduce the world," and indeed they do. The artifice of genre novels comes to mind, the schematic page-turners of authors who would rather find their way through the logistics of a criminal plot than an interesting sentence. But a reduced world doesn't necessarily entail a small one. If anybody has shown himself capable of capturing the current moment without succumbing to it, it is the author of *White Noise*, of *Libra*, of *Underworld*. His new novel contains much, but it inscribes little. "Nothing is next," says Nina in *Falling Man*. "There's [illegible] next. This was next." One w[illegible] what this means for DeLillo, w[illegible] yet to impress upon us what h[illegible] after the fall.

THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF FEELINGS

Reading Leonard Michaels

By Wyatt Mason

Discussed in this essay:

The Collected Stories, by Leonard Michaels. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 4[illegible] pages. $26.

Sylvia, A Novel, by Leonard Michaels. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 129 page[illegible] $1[illegible] (paper).



During the summer of 2001, a New York editor asked me which contemporary American writer I most admired. I replied, "Leonard Michaels." After a pause, he posed another question, albeit one that already contained its answ[illegible] "Hasn't his star fallen?"

Initially struck by what saw as the coldness of the re[illegible] mark, I would have been [illegible]ed ish to maintain that the ed[illegible] itor had been anything [illegible] than correct. After all, he[illegible] Michaels's first three [illegible]ks appeared, they launched [illegible] reputation as one of his ge[illegible] eration's most gifted wr[illegible] His first book, *Going Ab[illegible]* (1969), a collection of sto[illegible] ries, was a finalist for the Na[illegible] tional Book Award; *I Would Have Saved Them if I Could* (1975), a second story col[illegible] lection, was named one of "th[illegible] six outstanding works of fic[illegible] tion that year by the *New York Times*; and *The Men's Club* (1981), Michaels's fir[illegible] novel, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circ[illegible] Award and became a Hollywood fi[illegible] But a publicist seeking to show a[illegible] comparable highlights from the e[illegible] two decades of Michaels's literary li[illegible] would be faced with quite a task. Al[illegible] though Michaels continued to pu[illegible]lish essays and stories, they came less re[illegible]gularly, tending to appear in journals w[illegible] limited audiences; although he co[illegible] tinued to publish books, no longer [illegible]

Wyatt Mason is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. His last review, "Ballad for Americans," appeared in the September 2006 issue.

Drawing by Anna S[illegible]

issued by a prestigious New York
ishing house but rather by a tiny
or-profit press. And of the books
iselves, they seemed simultane-
to slim in size and fatten with
rial previously in print, earning
es that were remarkable mostly
eir savagery. The falling trajectory
ichaels's star seemed inarguable
ed, an apparent exhaustion of re-
es as common in the arts as it is in
With most of his books out of print
e time he died of cancer, at sev-
in 2003, it was as though Michaels
been doubly erased.

ow, however, as Michaels's orig-
publisher has just begun reissuing
ut-of-print work while bringing
llected material to light, the in-
ce of such a foreclosure becomes
mfortably apparent. For if his
ic fate, which is to say his com-
ial one, could not be disputed, his
ate fate, which is to say his artis-
ne, cannot be denied: it turns
that Leonard Michaels complet-
is finest work late in life. To read
ugh *The Collected Stories*, a new
ibus volume, is to see that the
or's five decades of short fiction
e effortlessly for a place beside
work of America's paragons of the
y form.

he collection begins with the thir-
stories of *Going Places*, which
written during the 1960s. It isn't
cult to see why they brought at-
ion to their young author, for the
e of these stories vibrates with in-
tiveness. A woman has a voice
"flew around like pots and pans."
ther's hair is "thick, red, bulging
nd her ears like meat." A man is
ager to leave a hospital that he
es "into the dark as if pursued by
s." A woman walking home finds
oup of children "jammed togeth-
n the stoop; tiers of heads made
central head, and the wings rest-
long the banisters: a raggedy mon-
of boys studying her approach." A
kish college student taking an
erican girl on a date "picked her up
er dormitory, took her to a movie,
later, in his borrowed Chevrolet,
ve her into the countryside and
h heavy, crocodilean sentences
municated his agony amid the
n corn."

The resourcefulness of these metaphors offers a coherent vision of the world: Michaels connects the benign (children, a woman's hair, a voice) to the menacing (monsters, meat, pots and pans). In part, such connections are metaphysical: violence, they suggest, lurks in the commonest things. But such connections are strategic too. Long before the reader knows what will happen in a given story, Michaels's language lays a foundation for what unfolds. The boys on the stoop, for instance, are given as "a raggedy monster" to provide not merely a striking image but a telling one: acting as a single body, the monster will, by story's end, attack. And the Turk's sentences are "heavy, crocodilean" not only because they lumber but also because they contain words destined to sink, like hidden teeth, into the American girl.

Michaels's language is precisely tuned to the violent key in which these early stories play out. Again and again in *Going Places*, characters effectively drop to all fours and, like wild animals, tear one another to pieces. In "Crossbones," a young couple, Myron and Sarah, are said to be "ravenous for intimacy." Living together in their small apartment, they find that conversation only leads them to quarrel endlessly. Hurtful things are said. It is not long before "the simple air of their two-room apartment . . . seemed too thick to breathe, or to see through to one another." Such a condition is familiar; what Michaels makes of it, however, is not. One day, pressed for time, Sarah's father expected any moment for a visit, she busily irons:

> Sarah slammed and smeared the iron down the board as if increasingly sealed in the momentum of brute work, and then, standing behind her, lighting a cigarette, Myron was whispering as if to himself that she must hurry and she was turning from the board and in the same motion hurled the iron, lunging after it with nails and teeth before it exploded against the wall and Myron, instantly, hideously understood that the iron, had it struck him, had to burn his flesh and break his bones, flew to meet her with a scream and fists banging her mouth as they locked, winding, fusing to one convulsive beast reeling off walls, tables, and chairs, with ashtrays, books, lamps shooting away with pieces of themselves, and he punched out three of her teeth and strangled her until she dissolved in his hands.

Ordinary domestic contretemps explode into uncommon violence. Michaels is careful to root us in the real with lucid description ("slammed and smeared" gives a vivid picture of an iron's weight and motion) and prosaic detail ("lighting a cigarette") before the iron is hurled. The iron exploding against the wall could serve as a potent symbol of devastated domesticity in a more conventional writer's hands—think of the shattered inkwell that detonates at the end of Paula Fox's *Desperate Characters*—but Michaels lets the iron go, as it were, to give us "nails and teeth," "a scream and fists," an escalation that takes us to the point not of foiled domesticity but of failed humanity.

The trapped, the beaten, the forsaken, the lost: literature serves such communities as few other agencies do. Michaels's particular contribution, in his first book, was to erect a memorial not so much to citizens of these populations as to the intensity of their feelings—of their disconnection from others and from self, of, as Michaels would say in an essay thirty years later, "the way men and women seem unable to live with or without each other." This pure expression of intense feeling was both the collection's signal strength and its greatest weakness: the depth of Michaels's prose—so adept at transforming the writhing of his characters, their inarticulate agonies, into the metaphors of their author—outpaced the depth of his characters and, therefore, the emotional depth to which a reader could descend.

I Would Have Saved Them if I Could—the second section of *The Collected Stories*—addressed this shortfall. Written during the 1970s, its bustling variety of forms suggested an author in search of—and uncertain of—the best means to his storytelling ends. Thus the book includes a Barthelmic glimpse at the death of Trotsky and another at the life of Byron; a range of narrative collages, some essayistic, some reportorial. But the biggest change of approach was in Michaels's switch from writing mostly in the third person in *Going Places* to mostly in the

first collection, *I Would Have Saved Them if I Could*. The story "In the Fifties," for example, features a largely affectless first-person narrator who splices matter-of-fact vignettes in the manner of a newsreel ("I witnessed an abortion"; "I wrote literary essays in the turgid, tumescent manner of darkest Blackmur"; "I knew a professor of English who wrote impassioned sonnets in honor of Henry Ford") together with unsentimental reports of human suffering ("A lot of young, gifted people I knew in the fifties killed themselves. Only a few of them continue walking around"). Although the new directness of this voice, a stripping away of the metaphorical in favor of the literal, represented an explicit change in Michaels's method, "In the Fifties" was a performance no less carefully staged than the stories of *Going Places*: it gestured toward emotion more than it evoked it.

Nevertheless, another of the collection's first-person narrations suggested that Michaels was working toward stories that could be both stylistically direct and emotionally resonant. In the well-known story "Murderers," emotion is not pointed to but portrayed. Four boys ascend to a Manhattan rooftop, crossing "a ledge six inches wide" to reach a ladder that leads up to a water tank, "which caught the afternoon sun." The slanting roof of the tank offers a tempting view: a panorama of New York City, yes, but also a perspective that "could not be improved" on an apartment belonging to a young rabbi and his wife. "The blinds were up and curtains pulled," and through the windows the boys can watch the young couple dancing, naked, to big band music and then having sex:

> For a while I watched them. Then I gazed beyond into shimmering nullity, gray, blue, and green murmuring over rooftops and towers. I had watched them before. I could tantalize myself with this brief ocular perversion, the general cleansing nihil of a view. . . . I didn't even have to look at the rabbi and his wife. After all, how many times had we dissolved stickball games when the rabbi came home? How many times had we risked shameful discovery, scrambling up the ladder, exposed to their windows—not that they looked. We risked life itself to achieve this eminence.

Here is childhood as idyll, recalled by the narrator in maturity. The risk of discovery—the risk of life—is not yet real to these boys, for "how many times" had they made the climb unscathed, their attention delivering them effortlessly, safely, across the void? To achieve such "eminence"—the word's literal and figurative meanings ringing at the tail of Michaels's phrase like a bell—the narrator and his friends need only climb, sit, see. The ease with which such heights are attained, though, is soon lost. One boy slips, falls from the roof of the tank: "[his] ring hooked a nailhead and the ring and ring finger remained. The hand, the arm, the rest of him, were gone." Childhood disappears with him: the boys are caught by the young rabbi, sent to a camp in New Jersey where the counselors are "introspective men," veterans of World War II recently returned.

> Whatever you said to them they seemed to be thinking of something else, even when they answered. But step out of line and a plastic lanyard whistled burning notice across your ass.
>
> At night, lying in the bunkhouse, I listened to owls. I'd never before heard that sound, the sound of darkness, blooming, opening inside you like a mouth.

Whereas the characters in Michaels's first collection weren't able to articulate their rage, here the narrator, like many in *I Would Have Saved Them if I Could*, is granted the power to speak for himself. Whereas the counselors express themselves through violence rather than words ("burning notice across your ass"), the narrator, who relates this story as an adult, is able, with that distance, to reflect upon his past and give voice to his plight.

First-person narration, with the apparent ease of access it gives to a character's thoughts and feelings, is tricky precisely for that ease: one can talk at some length without saying very much. Michaels's first novel, *The Men's Club*, was a torrent of talk, full of monologues by seven men who gather one night in a Berkeley home to discuss their intimate lives. A very funny book and for Michaels his first commercial success, it is not without its limitations: the cast is pure[ly] media dell'arte—the lawyer, the [psy]chotherapist, the professor—[cha]racters who entertain but have [no] not faces.

As if in acknowledgment of [the] shortcoming, Michaels, a dozen [years] after the novel's original appearance, published *The Men's Club: An Expanded Edition* (which will be [pub]lished next year). Containing a [pre]face "written" by one of the [for]mer seven speakers, Harold Canterbury, it points to Michaels's dissatisfaction over his novel's want of a deeper engagement with character. "When Michaels published my words," Canterbury writes, "he stole my life [and] a kind of murder."

> The character Harold Canterbury—and I don't mean me—is like a [guest] on a TV talk show who tells you with all the sincerity of a dragstore Christmas card, that he had sex with a hamster, loaded up on Halcion and drunk, and set fire to his mom. That's nothing like me. . . . At the club meeting, I was distressed because my wife had left me. My mouth opened and the words flew into the night like a flock of bats.

Now when Canterbury opens his mouth, out flies a sound that a reader of the original version of *The Men's Club* would not have heard: a deeper voice, as if made by those owls in the dark from Michaels's earlier story. Canterbury, a lawyer and a Christian, recounts the loneliness he felt upon his wife's departure: "A person needs to be touched by someone other than himself." Through his church, Canterbury found a wife, a bride flown in from Japan. What could play out as comedy—mail-order bride, after all—becomes a moment of great tenderness. "Almost all my free time is now spent at home with Kiko, studying Japanese," he writes at the preface's close. "We sit together at the kitchen table and she helps me perfect the sounds."

> Her least glance in my direction is as intimate as a song. When she plays the koto, I listen for hours. . . . The koto has thirteen strings and it makes me think of Christ and his disciples. Each note is poignant and seems to express the ache of a human life. The notes are strangely spaced, like the distance between people who never quite reach one an-

er. You can't tap your foot to the t. Her songs come from an ancient ld. I find them hypnotic. They tell of sorrow and silence that is shared by ple in love.

his vision of a character's unseen emotional life, a vision that Michaels was able to to bear after many years of dis-, is instructive, for his final pe- of artistic production was led by varied and repeated at- ts to bring a greater perspective s work. All this during the very d when public, not to say criti- erspectives on him had grown asingly myopic.

on the appearance, in 1990, of aels's collection *Shuffle*, a mix of iographical fiction and essays, ole Broyard delivered a savage da-fé for the *New York Times* that the book as an occasion to im- the seriousness of everything aels had written to date. "It's a e of imagination, isn't it," Bro- claimed, "to write about the same all the time?" But it's a failure of ism, isn't it, to ignore that most writers are remembered for their cupations, for their compulsion to n, with mulish stubbornness, to ame field to see how it might be r plowed—as any familiarity with works of writers as varied as Jane en, Samuel Beckett, and Philip makes clear. And Broyard's blan- condemnation of Michaels was icularly unjust given that *Shuffle* ked an essential moment in haels's output: it contained lvia," the story toward which haels had, in some sense, been king all along.

waited thirty years before I wrote word about this," Michaels told nterviewer—"this" being his first riage, in the early 1960s, to a an named Sylvia Bloch. Although true that Michaels did not write it the marriage for many years, at t not in any literal sense, it seems he was always writing about the riage no matter what else he was king on. Just as "Crossbones," the y from *Going Places*, evoked the ge distress of a young couple "rav- us for intimacy," and Canterbury's from *The Men's Club* glimpsed the row and silence that is shared by people in love," "Sylvia" presented the ur-sorrow, the first distress. And if Michaels waited decades before he told it, once he began telling it, he stubbornly kept trying to get it right, publishing it in three different forms: first, as an essay for *Vanity Fair*; then, as an expanded autobiographical memoir, in *Shuffle*; and finally, enlarged once again in 1992, as a novel called *Sylvia*.

The facts do not change from version to version, but Michaels's fictional account tells them best. It is the story of a young man who, after five years of graduate studies in English, burns out and returns to New York "without a Ph.D. or any idea what I'd do, only a desire to write stories." One day, he walks into the apartment of a friend, who introduces her roommate:

> She stood barefoot in the kitchen dragging a hairbrush down through her long, black, wet Asian hair. Minutes ago, apparently, she had stepped out of the shower, which was a high metal stall in the kitchen, set on a platform beside the sink. A plastic curtain kept water from splashing onto the kitchen floor. She said hello but didn't look at me. Too much engaged, tipping her head right and left, tossing the heavy black weight of hair like a shining sash. The brush swept down and ripped free until, abruptly, she quit brushing, stepped into the living room, dropped onto the couch, leaned back against the brick wall, and went totally limp. Then, from behind long black bangs, her eyes moved, looked at me. The question of what to do with my life was resolved for the next four years.

These are years during which the young man tries to write stories, with little success, and tries to make his marriage work, with even less. For it slowly becomes apparent that Sylvia is mentally ill.

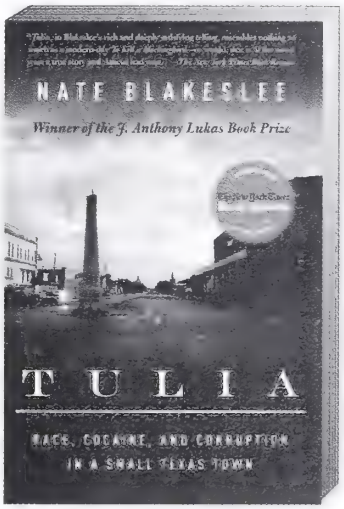
Although *Sylvia* is, by the standard of most novels, comparatively plotless and physically slight, the breadth of its capacity to present, with precision and care, the despair of two people makes it one of the more revealing reading experiences I know. In Michaels's past memorials to couples furious with feeling, the air was "too thick to breathe, or to see through"; here, the air is no less toxic but is described with such un-

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—a fractal emblem is to show how two people, briefly, often horrendously, shared their lives. And even though its title would suggest that the novel's central character is Sylvia, she remains, as she must, essentially unknowable. Michaels makes little attempt to explain her. Like the narrator, we experience Sylvia by her actions—her violent paranoias, her jealousies, her madness—all viewed from without, with compassion, to be sure, but absent the least understanding of why, or how, she has attained so precarious a hold on being. We also experience fear, the young man's fear of failing to comprehend his wife, and of losing a woman whom he does not yet know he has already lost.

At the far end of *The Collected Stories*, not likely to be discovered but by an intrepid few, are seven tales written by Michaels during the last seven years of his life. Had they been published as a separate volume, they would have amounted to a book no less physically substantial than any Michaels managed to publish earlier. The final stories differ, though, in significant ways from what precedes them. Whereas Michaels's earlier collections seemed to pride themselves on the diversity of their approaches to narrative and their range of characters, these final stories are content to unfold uniformly in third-person narration, all with straightforward linear progressions of event and consequence, centering on a single character whose point of view guides everything we see and hear. But just as the yawps of feelings in *Going Places* did not predict the more candid articulations of *I Would Have Saved Them if I Could*, and just as the comedy of *The Men's Club* did not hint at the pathos of its revision, nor can the madness and sorrow of *Sylvia* prepare a reader for the character one meets in "The Nachman Stories."

Raphael Nachman is a middle-[illegible] professor of mathematics, "[illegible] mathematicians." [illegible] at the Institute of Mathematics in Los Angeles, happy to [illegible] his office, with only pencil and paper. Thinking"—an activity Nachman finds no less essential to life than breathing. "Not to think would be like an astronaut separated from his rocketship, adrift in space with nowhere to go and no means of propulsion." If Michaels's earlier protagonists tended to reflect "the way men and women seem unable to live with or without each other," Nachman is a solitary being who lives contentedly alone: "He'd had girlfriends, but the idea of any passionate derangement had never appealed to him. He played the violin and he solved problems in mathematics. His need for ecstasy was abundantly satisfied. Nachman wasn't especially sensual. Two or three bites took care of hunger. The rest was nutrition."

These tendencies risk evoking a stock idea of The Mathematician—a creature so fundamentally cerebral that interests of the body (not to say those of the heart) would remain boringly in the background. Yet Michaels uses Nachman's dependable rationality to unpredictable ends: in the seven stories in which he figures, Nachman lands in situations that disrupt "motions natural to his mind"—that is to say, he is made to suffer the same intensity of feeling by which Michaels's other characters have been routinely beset. But whereas such conflicts were expressed externally in the earlier stories (fatal violence in "Murderers"; connubial violence in *Sylvia*), the conflicts of "The Nachman Stories" are all expressed internally, through Nachman's lucid intelligence. Michaels's seven final stories, then, are dramas of the rational under assault by the animal, misadventures that showcase Nachman's resistance to being summarily overcome by "the blur of feeling."

In the first story, "Nachman," the mathematician makes his first trip to Europe while serving as a visiting lecturer in Cracow, and he tours the city's Jewish ghetto. Sitting in a restaurant, staring at the "plain face" of his guide, he is taken aback by his sudden desire to kiss her, wondering, "Why was he thinking this way? In a city where his grandparents had been murdered, and the history of his family lost. Th[illegible] sponsibility of feelings was a [illegible] problem." That problem only [illegible] sifies when, in "The Penult[illegible] Conjecture," Nachman atte[illegible] conference to witness the so[illegible] of a famous proof—a proof he[illegible] self could have solved, he re[illegible] with regret, had he been more [illegible] tious. Reduced to an onlooker's [illegible] he sits quietly in the dark [illegible] hall: "The audience, submer[illegible] silence, was like a many-eyed [illegible] dile, the body suspended und[illegible] ter, inert." We've seen the croc[illegible] before, haven't we? Just as it di[illegible] story from three decades earlie[illegible] crocodile points to a predatory [illegible] ence lurking beneath the w[illegible] of our expectations, not to say [illegible] of Nachman, as he listens t[illegible] proof: "Wrong, thought Nach[illegible] The word beat tremendously i[illegible] heart, and the desire to speak [illegible] in his bowels against an unrele[illegible] force of polite repression." And[illegible] still, after he is twice humiliat[illegible] "Cryptology"—by a potential [illegible] ployer who flies him across [illegible] country and then doesn't sho[illegible] for the job interview; by a c[illegible] who invite him to dinner and t[illegible] within his hearing, speak disp[illegible] ingly about his character—N[illegible] man feels as though they "had t[illegible] something from him, torn a ho[illegible] his existence." Feeling hurt, fe[illegible] foolish, "Nachman walked mind[illegible] ly, block after block until, gradu[illegible] he stopped feeling devastated [illegible] in the cool nighttime air of the [illegible] recovered the good simplicity o[illegible] ing himself."

Nachman's awareness of "the [illegible] sponsibility of feelings"; his cap[illegible] to move from their devastation [illegible] to his better self; his imperativ[illegible] speak of such things lucidly, [illegible] voice at once skeptical and hum[illegible] these are the attributes that m[illegible] Nachman a fictional creation f[illegible] than those that preceded hi[illegible] Michaels's work. But Nachr[illegible] marks more than the high poin[illegible] the career of a writer whose st[illegible] said to have fallen. Although no [illegible] connects them, "The Nachman [illegible] ries" conspire to a novel of chara[illegible]

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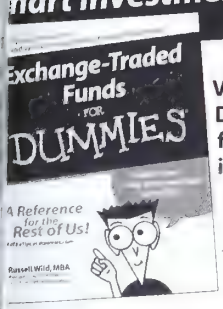
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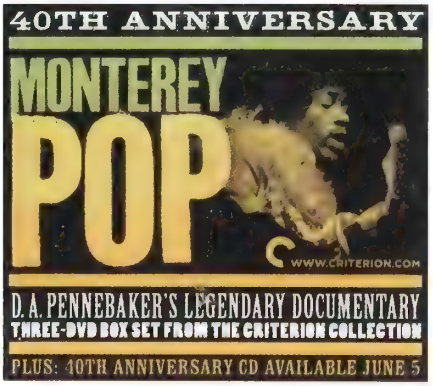
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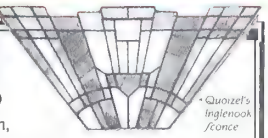
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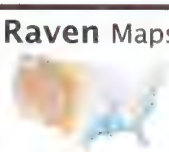
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REVIEWS

Continued from page 100

no less successful than [illegible] Nabokov's homage to the dera[illegible]ed intellectual, the proud little [illegible] set adrift in inimical waters, the [illegible] tary emigré bound to board [illegible] wrong train. For all of *Pnin*'s cl[illegible] the pleasures provided by Nab[illegible] novel arise from the author's u[illegible] ging capacity to dig new pits [illegible] which his hero can fall: poor P[illegible] everyone's fool and always the l[illegible] know it. Michaels's Nachm[illegible] bumbling, solitary, and ill ada[illegible] for adventure though he is [illegible] such illusions. "A fool," Nach[illegible] says of himself, "but mine o[illegible] Proud and resigned at the same [illegible] the declaration is as much N[illegible] man's as his creator's. Nachman [illegible] be the last man Michaels cre[illegible] but Nachman was also, in m[illegible] ways, the first.

July Index Sources

1,2 The Innocence Project (N.Y.C.); G. Daniel Lassiter, Ohio Unive[illegible] (Athens); **5–7** Foreign Press Center J[illegible] (Tokyo); **8,9** Colorado Departme[illegible] Corrections (Colorado Springs); **10** *Washington Post* (Washington); **12** Civic Economics (Chicago); **14** W[illegible] Mart Watch (Washington); **15** Ac[illegible] Group on Erosion, Technology, and C[illegible] centration (Ottawa); **16** Internati[illegible] Organization for Migration (Gene[illegible] **17** Federal State Statistics Serv[illegible] (Moscow); **18** Reporters sans fronti[illegible] (Paris); **19** U.S. Department of St[illegible] **20,21** Special Inspector General for [illegible] Reconstruction (Arlington, Va.); **22** T[illegible] Force 134, Multi-National Force–I[illegible] (Baghdad); **23** ABC News (N.Y.C[illegible] **24,25** U.S. Department of Defense; [illegible] Zogby International (Utica, N.Y.); [illegible] U.S. Department of Defense; **28** [illegible] LifeGem (Elk Grove Village, Ill.); [illegible] American Name Society (Bellev[illegible] Nebr.); **31** Louisiana Department [illegible] Health and Hospitals (Baton Rouge)/ M[illegible] sissippi Department of Health (Jackso[illegible] **32** West Virginia Department of Edu[illegible] tion (Charleston); **33** Zogby Internatio[illegible] (Utica, N.Y.); **34** Fan Fair Inc. (Phoer[illegible] Ariz.); **35** Timothy Baghurst, Univers[illegible] of Arkansas (Fayetteville); **36** Califor[illegible] Secretary of State (Sacramento); **37,** [illegible] GQ (N.Y.C.); **39,40** Masterfoods U[illegible] (Hackettstown, N.J.).

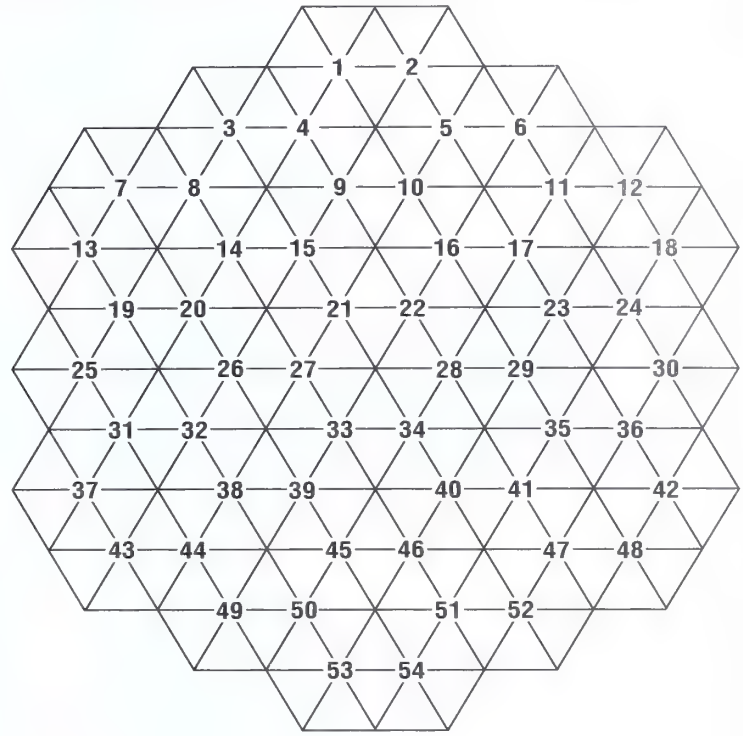
HEX SIGNS

By Richard Maltby Jr.

(with acknowledgments to Lascia of The Listener)

All clue answers are six letters long. Each clue number in the diagram is the center of a regular hexagon formed by six adjoining triangles. Answers are to be entered in the appropriate hexagon, starting in any triangle and traveling around in either direction. Unclued answers at 8, 11, 44, and 47 are related. The unchecked letters appearing in the thirty-six triangles whose sides form the border of the diagram may be arranged to spell AUGURERS VALUE SORCERY, SO FAKED A LANGUAGE.

Answers include one proper name; 22 is somewhat uncommon. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 93.



CLUES

1. Break in: site for a bust
2. Some Mormons going after wife would become metalworkers
3. Loud—annoyingly loud—taking in English that's clipped, perhaps
4. Back illegal decree
5. Swindle accomplished, gets led off
6. Endlessly talk about sports event
7. Show, in court hearing, cover-up
8. *See instructions*
9. Big pain like Scrooge left abandoned
10. Grew level in the past, so it's said
11. *See instructions*
12. Theorem or algorithm keeping one in a school
13. Put down game
14. In time, in New York, consuming ecstasy, speed: that's usually illegal
15. Midwest's first university has small uprising
16. A rat is clandestinely covering for heads of state
17. Hack a moving West American adder
18. Aspect of a sound set of issues
19. I'd shove but not fully, oddly leaning toward peace
20. One with energy shaking up Monday
21. 'S no simple problem, they say, but it's close!
22. Undersurface or backing, if found in piano
23. First Mate has lines verbalizing permit to leave
24. Enter scrap in anger—you get sucked into it
25. Bilious uniform?
26. Staggers puzzles after article
27. Needing a drink going around a curve? That's smart
28. Sun dress, shoe with half-lift inside
29. He-men's exercises making you catch up
30. Thread with abandon
31. Clarify as to penalty
32. Clowns around in ocean, coming back after end of quiz
33. Bring up giving doctor advantage
34. Non-P.C. word that is preceded by grunt on both sides
35. They'll move you after five, with name, rank, number *(two words)*
36. Workers, being restless, snored
37. Look for sustenance in enemy newspaper
38. Releases international deer?
39. Nude models, over morning, in retrospect, like a bed sometimes
40. Component of VCR is pyrotechnically well done
41. A victory in urban depression
42. Rings twisted around a loop—they're in vaults
43. Go over changes in musical feel
44. *See instructions*
45. Avoiding the old images when getting spruced up
46. Grenades' first upset? Upset! They're duds!
47. *See instructions*
48. Truck is hard to make disappear
49. One who hustles is the one who catches the fish
50. Veggie plate, almost uncooked, on the [illegible]
51. Destitute, disheartened, transposing some music
52. Mark, government agent, returns to top spot
53. A drape replaced in March
54. Went through gym class with rank clothing

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Hex Signs," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "Gremlins," are James Moeller, Phoenix, Arizona; Wanda Reese, Big Spring, Texas; and Clifton J. Williamson, Saratoga, California.



FINDINGS

A study of physical abnormalities among birds living near the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in Ukraine concluded that human birth defects in the region are probably caused by radiation rather than the stress of relocation, the explanation preferred by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Scientists suggested that mobile phones and other gadgetry might be responsible for the collapse of bee populations, which could result in massive worldwide food shortages. Experts warned that the recent biofuels trend could lead to increased food prices and deforestation, and the United States Department of Agriculture said that U.S. farmers might have a hard time meeting food demands because of the growing biofuels market. A study concluded that pollution from ethanol might kill more people than old-fashioned smog and could be especially hazardous for people with respiratory diseases. A new climate model predicted that summer temperatures in the eastern United States could rise by 10 degrees by 2080, and the head of a climate research group warned his colleagues that exaggerated warnings about the dangers of global warming may be counterproductive if they generate feelings of resignation and apathy in the face of a hopeless catastrophe.

German researchers studying the evolutionary aspects of sex found that 60 percent of thirty-year-old women desire frequent sex with their partners at the outset of a relationship; within four years, however, fewer than half do, and after twenty years only about 20 percent want regular sex. Ninety percent of the women studied (and a mere 25 percent of the men) seek "tenderness" from their mates. Women are more likely than men to ogle the genitals of a member of the opposite sex, a study found, though in general people are more attracted to faces than to bodies. Primates who engage in greater male-on-male competition devote more brain matter to aggression, whereas gentler species, in which males and females tend to mix socially, have bigger brains and higher-level thinking. People who have enjoyed oral sex with more than five people are 250 times more likely to develop throat cancer, and men who practice S&M score higher on tests of psychological well-being. Scientists found that exposure to dirt enhances one's mood and boosts the immune system. Kryptonite was discovered in Serbia.

A Californian physicist claimed that collisions with alien universes might be detectable as anomalies in the distribution of hot and cold spots in the cosmic background radiation. "There's always a chance we'll be hit by a lethal bubble," another physicist remarked, in reaction to the findings. "It would come without warning, and we'll evaporate in an instant." Scientists were still trying to figure out why Canada has less gravity than the United States. Tens of thousands of migratory birds (including bar-tailed godwits, eastern curlews, dunlins, and great knots) are in danger of starving now that South Korea has drained the Saemangeum wetlands, an estuarine tidal flat along the Yellow Sea. Scientists found that robins living in noisy cities prefer to sing at night, and that shifting one's eyes back and forth horizontally can enhance memory. iPods can cause pacemakers to malfunction. Injustice contributes to heart disease. Fruit flies have free will. ■

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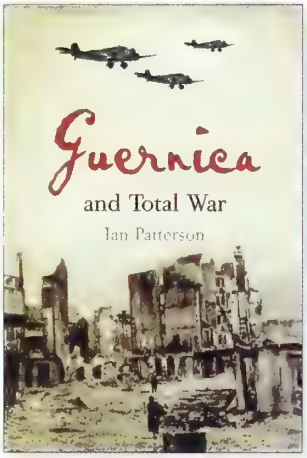
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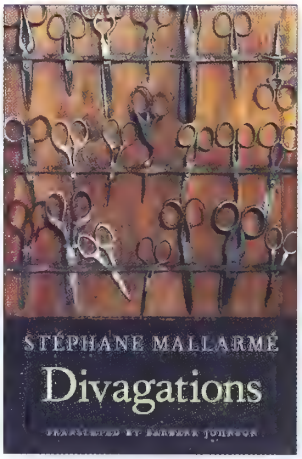
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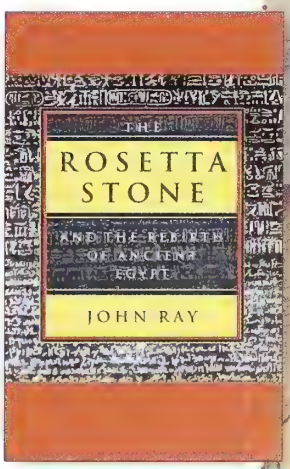
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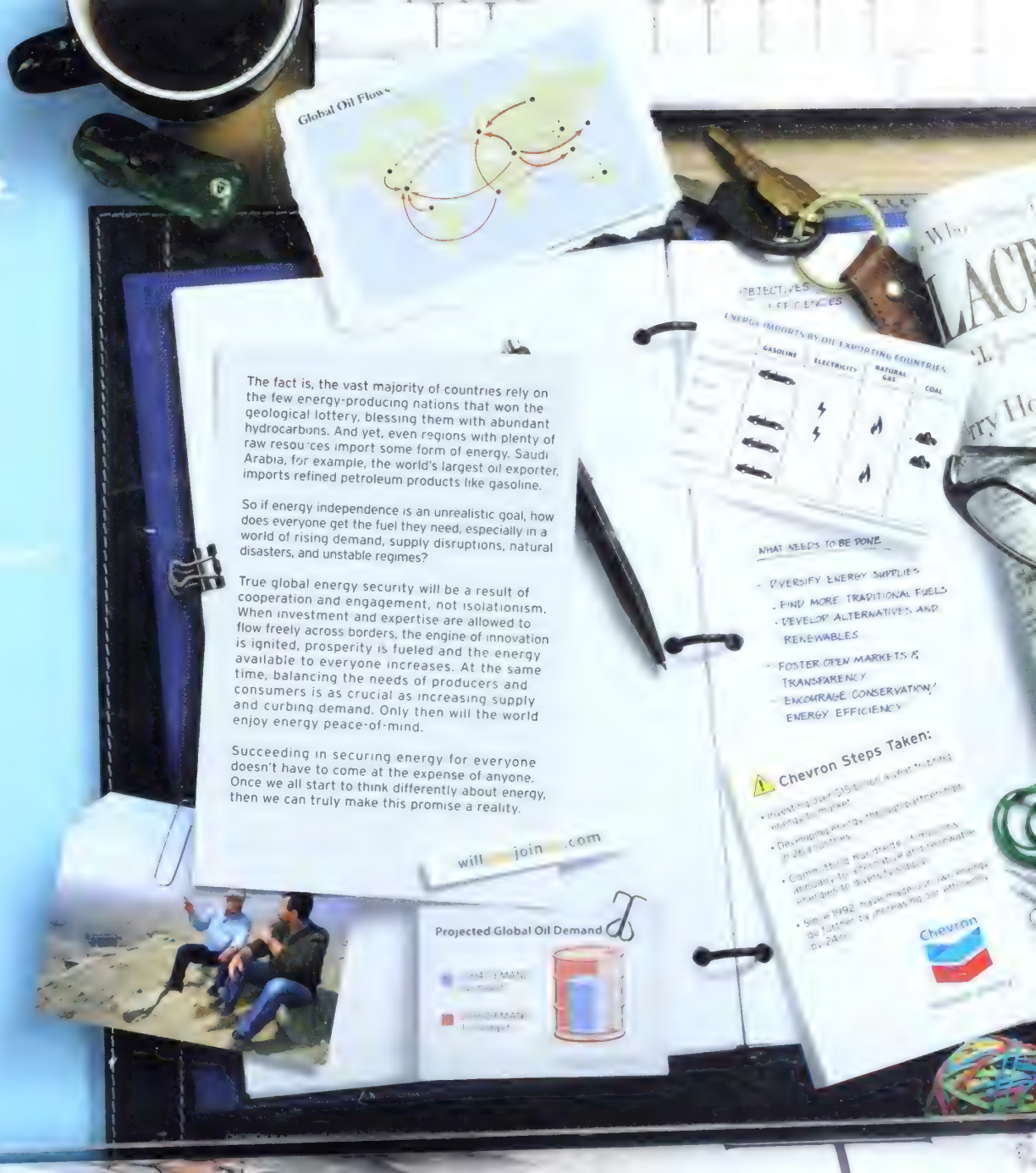
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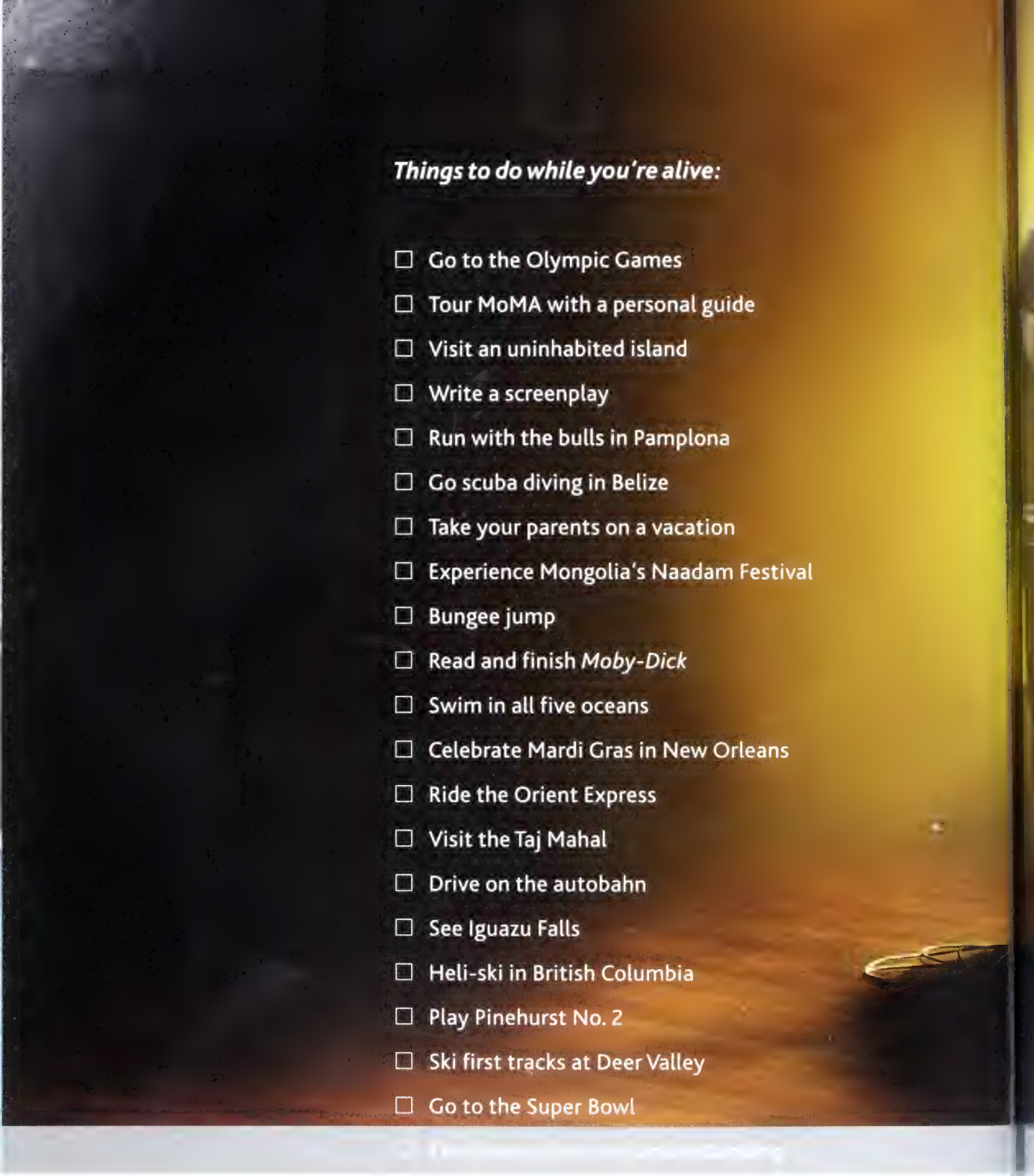
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LETTERS

Of Proust and Seuss

Perhaps it is merely a matter of mood—mine is unaccountably cheery of late—but I do not believe that things literary are as dreary as Cynthia Ozick ["Literary Entrails," Criticism, April] might have us understand. Ozick is certain, for example, that literary criticism is not happening. By this she means that one will not find, in the cultural air, the quantity and quality of conversation that she claims prevailed half a century earlier when her avatars—Trilling, Kazin, Howe, Wilson—were all reviewing regularly.

Born a half-century after Ozick, I have a different sense of what one might reasonably expect of literary culture: I expect very little in the particular, by which I do not mean that I expect less than I used to. "No teacher in grammar or high school ever so much as hinted that reading was a normal activity," wrote Guy Davenport in "On Reading." Books, it seems to me, were never the interest of the majority—any majority.

Like playing competitive tennis at a world-class level or composing polyphonic music in one's mind, reading a book is—to generalize James Wood's particular feeling about reading [illegible] Bellow—a special way of being a[illegible] I do not think, though, that pe[illegible] will be convinced to do it by more[illegible] better book criticism, any more th[illegible] believe, as Arthur Krystal sugges[illegible] his June letter, that writing's er[illegible] ing value to a society can be meas[illegible] seismically, in its "cultural resonan[illegible]

Reading resonates with individ[illegible] first and still, and always with a[illegible] nority. For to hear a story—descan[illegible] by a rhapsode; related around a ca[illegible] fire—requires only ears, whereas [illegible] read a book, whether by Proust [illegible] Dr. Seuss, demands work: most ev[illegible] one has the former, and most an[illegible] despairs of (or hasn't a taste for) [illegible] latter. As a delivery device for sto[illegible] the book is a recent innovation, [illegible] that allowed a Roman form of st[illegible] telling—the novel—to prolife[illegible] very richly. All that has happene[illegible] our "literary culture," it seems to [illegible] is that, lately, we have seen the ri[illegible] a better technological approxima[illegible] of the campfire—the passive, st[illegible] absorbing state we have long prefe[illegible]

Wyatt Mason
Cambridge, Mass.

Power to the Eco-People

In his June Notebook, "Clim[illegible] Class, and Claptrap," Garret Ke[illegible] fails to recognize that environm[illegible] talism is a social-justice movem[illegible] whose objectives, if achieved, w[illegible] do more to abolish inequity than [illegible] other before it. Environmentalis[illegible]

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ently the biggest threat to capi-
m and its need for unlimited
nomic growth and consumption.
e the 1960s, environmentalists
talked about the urgent need to
e polluters pay for their crimes
to curb unsustainable growth by
stributing wealth. In fact, redis-
ution of wealth is a necessary
lition for saving the earth. Com-
ng global warming will bring
ut the social and economic re-
is Keizer thinks the middle class
the rich are avoiding.

ia Salzman
Quogue, N.Y.

Jarret Keizer engages in the in-
asingly popular game whereby
people's outrage about some-
ng—say, the vile conditions at
lter Reed hospital—is deemed
worthy in the face of a greater
age—i.e., the vile conditions of
poor. This undermines any stab
eform, leading only to apathy.
er all, why help anyone if every-
will not be helped?

It does not seem likely that America's moneyed elite will soon realize their errors, but that has little to do with the concrete measures we can take to curb the serious problem of global warming, such as signing the Kyoto agreement and lessening carbon emissions. While Keizer stares stoically through his beloved sugar maple trees in his blue-collar New England night, angry at his previous night's dinner and most everything else, others press forward, seeking to change our suicidal environmental policies.

Rafael Cohen
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Liberty Under Siege

In his contribution to the June Forum, "Undoing Bush," David Cole writes, "For a short parlor game, challenge your friends to name a constitutional right that Bush has *not* sought to undermine. After the right to bear arms and the guarantee against the quartering of soldiers, the game will be over." Although it is true that the president has not tampered with the Third Amendment, he did undermine the closest thing to it: the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits military personnel or a federalized National Guard from acting in a law-enforcement capacity within the United States. The president slipped a provision into this year's defense budget that makes it easier for him to override local control of law enforcement and declare martial law. Along with the evisceration of habeas corpus, this may be the single most dangerous attack on civil liberties undertaken by the Bush Administration.

Ian Alterman
New York City

Chris Mooney argues in the June Forum that we might have profited greatly in the last six years had there been fewer constraints on federal stem-cell research funds. But what other opportunities have we missed by allowing politics to trump science? A 2005 National Academies report identified five areas in which the selection process for presidential science and technology



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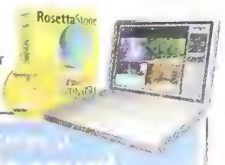
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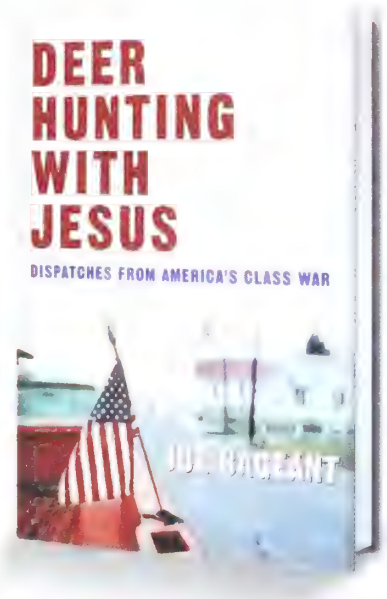
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appointees could be reformed in order to recruit and keep the best scientists and engineers as government advisers. None of those recommendations have been followed, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy continues to be marginalized. Without a commitment to separating ideology from sound science, advice from a second tier of experts will sound like testimonials to decisions that have already been made. We won't realize the high expectations Americans have for science until scientists have the independence to pursue avenues of research that hold the most promise and to share their findings candidly.

Mary Woolley
Alexandria, Va.

Although the Bush Administration's economic policy deserves much criticism, Dean Baker exaggerates Bush's impact on the value of currency and the size of the housing bubble. On the latter, Baker admits as much when he writes at length about Alan Greenspan. On the former, Baker notes that the overvalued dollar is a legacy of Clinton, and that the dollar has depreciated since 2002. Why, then, blame Bush? Instead, criticize Bush for increasing the national debt and government spending, and for his protectionist pandering to special-interest groups.

Baker also writes about the trade deficit in goods and services without mentioning the subsequent trade surplus in investments. If we import $500 billion of goods and services from a country and export $400 billion to it, what does the country do with its $100 billion surplus? Often it invests those dollars in American businesses and government. In fact, our country's investment surplus may well be a sign of economic health.

D. Eric Schansberg
Professor of Economics
University of Indiana Southeast
New Albany, Ind.

After reading "Undoing Bush," I realized that the Bush years have destroyed a different kind of intelligence than the one James Bamford describes. Bush is responsible for a general dumbing-down of our federal government. From the hiring of 150 graduates of Pat Robertson's Regent Uni[versity] Law School, to the lowering o[f] ment standards for new milit[ary] cruits, to the president's own b[ad] remarks, the Bush Administrati[on] motes mediocrity or, worse, pla[in] pidity. If intelligence and its [ap]plication can be restored to the public [ser]vice, perhaps we can indeed succeed [in] doing Bush."

Joseph DiBenedetto
Yonkers, N.Y.

Arcadia No More?

Behind my parents' house, th[ere] woods where as a kid I loved [to] plore the flora and fauna. The [re] pheasants and quail and bright [red] manders. All of those creatures [are] now. I had been thinking ab[out] loss of wildlife when I read [the] Hoagland's June essay, "Endgam[e]," reflections on our environmen[tal] ligence and destruction are poign[ant]. is a bitter truth that we do not yet the consequences of our loss.

Michael Teters
Plainfield, N.J.

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NOTEBOOK

The Big Enchilada

By Jonathan Kozol

Loyal defenders of our nation's blic schools have for decades ar- ıtly opposed the concept of "school uchers" and other privatizing ıemes that threaten to dismantle e democratic legacy of public edu- ion. In recent years, however, even privatizing forces have made massive oads into public schools, many of ose who profess to believe in public ucation have been lulled into a puz- ıg passivity and silence on this issue. t the voucher movement has not ne away, and the threat it represents democratic education is more dan- rous than ever.

Privatizing advocates tend to em- oy a familiar set of strategies in their mpaign to replace public education, ıich they deride as "Soviet" or "so- ılist" in nature, with a market sys- n in which public dollars no longer to public schools but are distributed ectly to parents, who in theory will free to spend the money at either a blic school or a private institution. ecognizing as they do that vouchers ve had little appeal to parents in burban areas, where public schools e highly funded and the kids gener- y do well, voucher advocates focus stead on winning over parents of poor ildren in the inner-city schools, ıom they promise to deliver from the ıtches of a failing "state monopoly." To that end, one of the primary ar- ments made on behalf of vouchers is at schools receiving them will be en to low-income children of all lev- of ability and will not favor the chil- dren of better-educated and more "savvy" parents. What is never explained is how exactly the forces of selection will be circumvented. Even in the public system as it stands, and even in nominally non-exclusive schools, *self-selectivity* manages to guarantee that children of the more effective parents are more likely to get into what are often called "the boutique schools" within any given neighborhood. In almost every case in which a limited number of such schools exist, it is the more aggressive and more knowledgeable parents who hear about them first and navigate the application process most successfully.

Advocates for vouchers nonetheless insist that any difficulties presented by self-selectivity will cease to be real problems once market mechanisms are in place. One of the most influential of these advocates, a skillful and politically sophisticated propagandist named John Chubb, dismisses any likelihood that parents who are overwhelmed by problems in their private lives may be incapable of making wise decisions—or, more important, that they may find it difficult to act on these decisions. "It is really hard for me to believe," Chubb once told the *New York Times*, that if vouchers were available to parents of poor children, "those people couldn't decide on what they prefer." He accused critics of voucher schemes of being condescending to the poor, of arguing, in essence, that poor parents are "too stupid" to select the schools they want their children to attend.

But Chubb, who is now a top executive at Edison Schools, one of the largest private education corporations, does not hesitate to contradict himself when speaking to a different kind of audience. One of the disadvantages of public schools, Chubb has said in a more candid statement he coauthored with another voucher advocate, Terry Moe, is that they "must take whoever walks in the door" and "do not have the luxury of being able to select" their students. By comparison, they note in the pages of a right-wing policy review unlikely to be seen by parents of poor children, under a voucher system a "constellation of... different schools serving different kinds of students differently would probably emerge." And in a book advancing private education markets, Chubb and Moe have made the additional argument that schools "must be free to admit as many or as few students as they want, based on whatever criteria they think relevant—intelligence, interest, motivation, behavior, special needs."

Obviously, the exercise of school choice under a market system would belong only in small part to the parents of the poor. The ultimate choices would be made by those who own or operate the schools. This is a rather different notion of school choice from the one most voucher advocates put forth in seeking popular support, but it is not the only example of a noticeable semantic shift they make in turning their attention from one audience to another. Frequently, for instance, advocates for vouchers point to Roman Catholic schools as the sort of private institutions that might flourish in a system based on market competition, whereas they rarely speak of profit-driven schools, run by private corporations, as potential beneficiaries of the system they propose. The idealistic mo-

nathan Kozol's new book, Letters to a ung Teacher, *will be published this nth by Crown.*

tives that are commonly identified with inner-city Catholic schools are seized upon in order to position the discussion on an elevated ground of seemingly unselfish and high-minded goals. Meanwhile, in writings narrowly directed at investors, all of these higher motives disappear, and other benefits to be derived from vouchers suddenly emerge. This is where the masks come off and all pretenses of altruism are replaced by practical considerations of a wholly different kind.

Some years ago, a friend who works on Wall Street handed me a stock-market prospectus in which a group of analysts at an investment-banking firm known as Montgomery Securities described the financial benefits to be derived from privatizing our public schools. "The education industry," according to these analysts, "represents, in our opinion, the final frontier of a number of sectors once under public control" that "have either voluntarily opened" or, they note in pointed terms, have "been forced" to open up to private enterprise. Indeed, they write, "the education industry represents the largest market opportunity" since health-care services were privatized during the 1970s. Referring to private education companies as "EMOs" ("Education Management Organizations"), they note that college education also offers some "attractive investment returns" for corporations, but then come back to what they see as the much greater profits to be gained by moving into public elementary and secondary schools. "The larger developing opportunity is in the K-12 EMO market, led by private elementary school providers," which, they emphasize, "are well positioned to exploit potential political reforms such as school vouchers." From the point of view of private profit, one of these analysts enthusiastically observes, "the K-12 market is the Big Enchilada."

Language as outright cynical as this is never heard in the benign and civic-minded arguments that voucher advocates present when speaking to poor parents, who are unlikely to respond with favor to the notion that vouchers could unlock a new "frontier" for profit-making companies with an appetite for big (or little) "enchiladas." The black and Hispanic kids with whom I've worked for forty years in Boston and New York have no reason to suspect that their little destinies, downgraded and diminished for so long by governmental penury, have now become the object of so large a corporate appetite.

Voucher programs, admittedly, have yet to be instituted on the widespread scale that privatizing interests hope for. Only a few urban systems, notably in Cleveland and Milwaukee—and, on a limited scale, in New Orleans and Washington, D.C.—have put into place explicitly labeled voucher plans, and these have produced very mixed results. Elsewhere, conservative political leaders, such as former Florida governor Jeb Bush, have tried and failed to institute voucher programs in their states. The consequent impression that the danger has now passed, however, is naive. In spite of setbacks in securing vouchers in the open and unvarnished form originally conceived by Chicago economist Milton Friedman, the ideological father of the movement, the private sector has nonetheless moved into the daily operation of our inner-city schools through a multitude of avenues of which the larger public is almost entirely unaware.

One of the early strategies employed by private corporations to soften resistance to their presence in our public schools was the creation of so-called business partnerships between the poorest inner-city schools and large companies. The financial side of the partnership usually turned out to be inconsequential. Kerr-McGee, the multinational petrochemical giant, gave one impoverished public school in Oklahoma City the trivial annual sum of $36 for each pupil. In return, one of the company's executives was appointed to direct a "governance committee" to oversee the school operations, and the school consented to be known not simply as a public elementary school but as an "Enterprise School."

Throughout the 1990s, many inner-city schools underwent the same accommodation to the goals and even to the lexicon of their benefactors in the private sector. "Academy of Enterprise" became a common e
adopted by such schools in ger
tion to their corporate patrons.
cipals I met in schools like these
tell me they wished no longer
known as "principals" but prefer
be known as "Building CEO
"Building Managers," in which
their teachers frequently would
scribed as "classroom managers.
sion statements heralding the ne
children to be trained to serve o
tion's interests in "the global m
place" were posted on the wa
many schools I visited. In pra
however, students were more oft
ing trained for careers at superm
checkout counters or for the bo
level "service jobs" at
ing homes.

These rather tentative partne
were only the beginning of a
that rapidly took on more serio
mensions. The next and more
tious stage in the introduction
private market and its values into
lic schools did not become po
until the voucher advocates mad
well-timed marketing decision
nounce the terminology of "vouc
and to forgo temporarily their effo
assume the outright ownersh
schools. They settled instead fo
management of schools that te
cally remained within the public
tor. Newly created corporations, v
characteristically adopted such a
mically impressive names as "N
Learning" or "Edison Schools," b
convincing officials in minority
tricts—first Miami, later Chicago,
Baltimore, Philadelphia, and
other cities—to contract with
to operate at first a few, then l
numbers, of their schools. At pre
forty-one Philadelphia public sc
are being run by Edison and an
profit-making firm, along with a h
ful of nonprofit private groups. Al
simultaneously, as states were
sured to test and measure chil
more relentlessly, to institute the
"goal-setting" mechanisms tha
used in private industry, the te
affiliates of some of our largest
book publishers, as well as the n
test-prep companies (The Princ
Review and Kaplan, for example)
gan to move into our public sch

rily in urban areas. By 2005, the ls were generating $2.8 billion a or the testing industry.

ɔoth these areas—testing services ıe management of schools—the achment of the private sector on education has been mightily as- by provisions that the Bush Ad- tration managed to insert into o Child Left Behind Act. Among ırious "sanctions" that this high- ıtroversial law imposes upon low- ·ming schools are two provisions ıave opened up these schools to ventions by private corporations scale that we have never before n the United States.

e first of these provisions stipulates f a school receiving federal funds · what is known as "Title I," the ı's largest program of assistance for ıcome students, fails to raise its ·ores by a fixed percentage with- ·ee years, it must then use a por- of its funds to purchase what the nment describes as "supplemen- rvices." These services must be ded outside of the normal school ıd, among other options, by a so- l third-party provider. Although "services" are defined somewhat guously, most low-income districts interpreted the term to mean that must force these schools to insti- est-preparation regimens geared ·itly toward raising scores on state s. Increasingly, too, schools have pressured into contracts with pri- corporations that provide these es. Meanwhile, the test-prep com- s are actively promoting their suc- n raising scores to principals who ı terror of the more alarming sec- tage of federal sanctions they will wise incur.

despite their expensive test-prep ams, low-performing schools fail mp up test scores fast enough to specific goals within five years, ol boards are obliged to shut down and dismiss their faculties rincipals. Such schools will then ther operated directly by the or reconstituted under an "alter- ·e governance arrangement." ɔugh the provider of such "gov- ıce" might be a nonprofit corpo- ı (one that operates a chain of private charter schools, for in- e), it is the profit-making firms, with their superb promotional machinery, that are best positioned to obtain these valuable contracts.

It is this prospect—and the even more appealing notion that companies that start by managing these schools might at some future point achieve the right, through changes in state laws, to own the schools as well—that helps explain why EMOs like Edison, which has yet to turn a profit, nonetheless attract vast sums of venture capital. The "big enchilada" represented by the corporate invasion of public schools, even if it takes place only in progressive stages, is sufficiently enticing to investors to keep the money flowing in anticipation of a time when private corporations will not merely nibble at the edges of the public system but will devour it altogether.

No Child Left Behind, with its draconian emphasis on high-stakes testing as the sole determinant of failure or success within a given school, was signed into law in 2002. The warning period for the first wave of low-performing schools is now coming to an end. Thousands of schools that exclusively serve black and Hispanic children have failed to meet their federally mandated goals.

All of these schools, under the stipulations of No Child Left Behind, will soon be ripe for picking by private corporations. Progressive citizens who say they believe in public education, as well as the erstwhile liberal Democratic leadership in the U.S. House and Senate, have failed to recognize and confront this looming crisis. Meanwhile, the richly funded and well-oiled juggernaut of privatization continues to move forward, carving out increasingly large pieces of the public system. If those of us who profess to value public schools and the principle of democratic access they uphold cannot find the courage or the motivation to fight in their defense, we may soon wake up to find that they have been replaced by wholly owned subsidiaries of McDonald's, Burger King, and Wal-Mart. Some $490 billion (4 percent of GNP) is spent on education yearly in the United States. It will be an act of social suicide if liberals blithely continue to dismiss the opportunities this vast amount of money represents for corporate predation. ■

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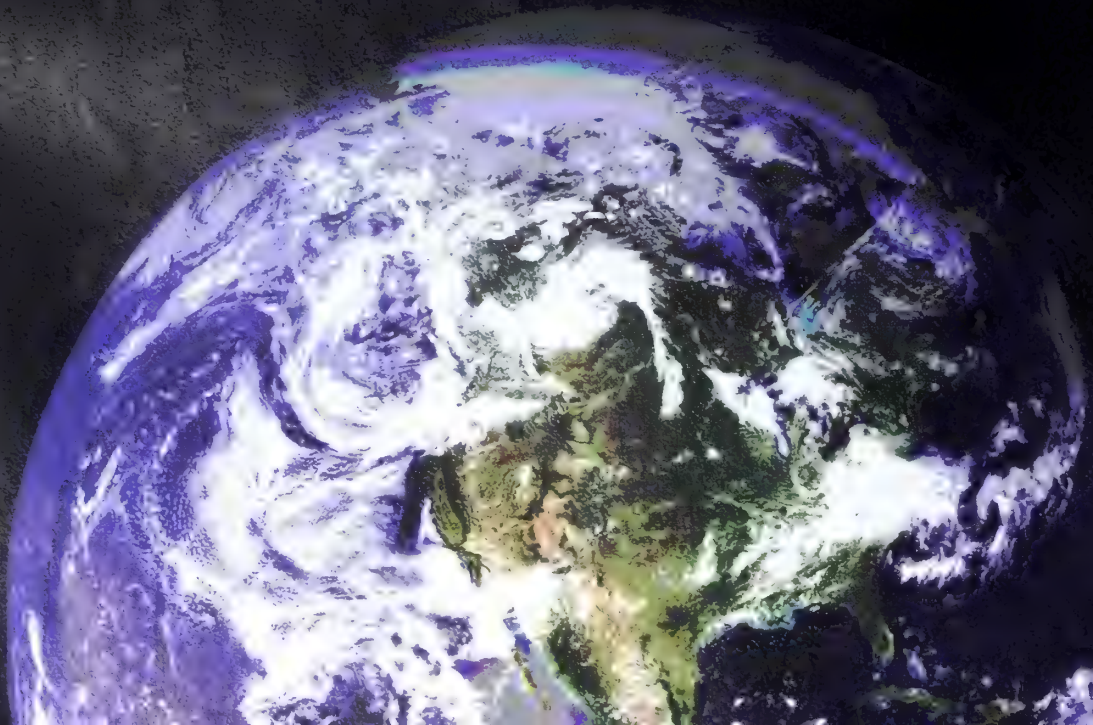
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HARPER'S INDEX

ber of Bush White House officials who are authorized to discuss pending criminal cases with the Justice Department : 711
Number of Clinton officials who were : 4
Number of Bush appointees who regulate industries they used to represent as lobbyists : 85
entage of federal inspectors general appointed by Bush and Clinton, respectively, who had prior audit experience : 36, 66
Percentage who held some political position prior to their appointment : 45, 22
nber of the five directors of a No Child Left Behind reading program who had financial ties to curricula they developed : 4
verage amount each of these directors has received from the publishers of reading materials sold to schools : $727,000
Number of states where middle school reading scores have improved since 2002, as measured by the states' tests : 33
Number of these states where reading scores showed any improvement on a thirty-eight-year-old national test : 8
Portion of states where the projected climate in 2100 will not be able to sustain their official tree or flower : 3/5
Percentage of British children aged seven to eleven who say they "worry about global warming" : 34
Percentage who believe their own parents are to blame for the problem : 15
Chances that a European industrial plant emitted less CO_2 last year than its new EU quota allowed : 19 in 20
ortion of Indian companies that maintain gas-run generators and stores of gasoline to use during power outages : 1/2
stimated amount of oil, in barrels, used to make the bottled-water containers sold in the U.S. last year : 16,000,000
Ratio of the amount of water used to make the containers to the amount of bottled water consumed : 2:1
Average number of liters of bottled water delivered to U.S. troops in Iraq each day : 1,400,000
umber of U.N. staffers in New York who still have full-time jobs monitoring Iraq for weapons of mass destruction : 34
Date on which the U.S. first proposed a Security Council resolution to disband the monitoring team : 6/8/07
centage of Marines stationed in Iraq who say they agree that "all non-combatants should be treated as insurgents" : 16
Percentage who say they "neither agree nor disagree" : 39
mber of the 525 donors who raised at least $100,000 for Bush in 2004 who have yet to support a 2008 candidate : 343
unt the political action committee of 2008 hopeful Fred Thompson has given to Republican causes since 2003 : $83,650
Amount the PAC has paid since then in consulting fees to Thompson's son : $196,260
Percentage of conservative voters who said in May that they favor amnesty for illegal immigrants : 55
Percentage who said they would be less likely to vote for a presidential candidate who favored such a plan : 66
Number of the forty-seven Mexican consulates in cities across America that have opened since 1980 : 42
Amount the consulates spent last year to repatriate the bodies of Mexicans who died here : $3,800,000
Minimum number of U.S. colleges that now offer on-campus sites for the ashes of alumni : 9
ortion of Americans who believe there are circumstances in which a medical patient should be allowed to die : 7/10
Portion who say they would consider ending their own lives if ill with a terminal disease : 1/3
nce that an inmate serving a life sentence in Italy signed a May letter asking to be sentenced to death : 1 in 4 (see page 22)
Number of prisons in England that provide personal trainers for unfit inmates : 25
Minimum price for a Disney World "VIP" tour, which includes a personal guide to negotiate the lines at rides : $750
Number of different nationalities represented among the staff at the headquarters of Coca-Cola : 58
Number of words spoken by Clarence Thomas during Supreme Court oral arguments since February 2006 : 132
Number by Samuel Alito, the Justice who spoke the second-fewest words : 14,404
Weight, in ounces, of all the information that passed through the Internet last year : 0.00004
Cost per minute last spring for callers to the Vienna public library to have literary erotica read to them : 49¢
Average number of minutes callers listened : 4

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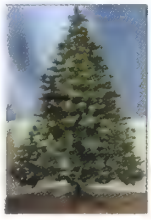


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READINGS

[Essay]

THE IDOLS OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

By Curtis White, from a two-part series published this spring in Orion. *White's "The Spirit of Disobedience" appeared in the April 2006 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Environmental destruction proceeds apace in spite of all the warnings, the good science, the 501(c)(3) organizations with their memberships in the millions, the poll results, and the martyrs perched high in the branches of sequoias or shot dead in the Amazon. This is so not because of a power that we must resist. It is because we are weak and fearful. Only a weak and fearful society could invest so much desperate energy in protecting activities that are the equivalent of suicide.

For instance, trading carbon-emission credits, and creating markets in greenhouse gases as a means of controlling global warming, is not a way of saying we're so confident in the strength of the free-market system that we can trust it to fix even the problems it creates. No, it's a way of saying that we are so frightened by the prospect of stepping outside the market system on which we depend for our national wealth, our jobs, and our sense of normalcy that we will let the logic of that system try to correct its own excesses even when we know we're just kidding ourselves. This delusional strategy is embedded in the Kyoto Protocol, which is little more than a complex scheme to create an international market in pollution. Even Kyoto, of which we speak longingly—"Oh, if only we would join it!"—is not an answer to our problem but a capitulation to it, so concerned is it to protect what it calls "economic growth and development." Kyoto is a form of whistling past the graveyard. And it is not just corporations who do this whistling; we all have our own little stake in the world capitalism has made, so we all do the whistling.

The problem for even the best-intentioned environmental activism is that it imagines it must confront a problem external to itself. Confront the bulldozers. Confront the chain saws. Fight the power. What the environmental movement does not acknowledge is that something in the very fabric of our daily life is deeply antinature as well as antihuman. It inhabits not just bad guy CEOs but nearly every working American, environmentalists included.

It is true that there are cruel and greedy CEOs, few in number, who are indifferent to everything except money, and so the North Atlantic gets stripped of cod and any number of other species taken incidentally in what is the factory trawler's wet version of a scorched-earth policy. Nevertheless, all that we perceive to be the destructiveness of corporate culture in relation to nature is not the consequence of its power, or of its capacity for dominating nature ("taming," as it was once put, as if nature were a lion act at the circus). Believing in powerful corporate evildoers as the source of our problems, we think in cartoons.

Besides, corporations are powerless to be anything other than what they are. Far from being perverse merchants of greed hell-bent on destruction, these entities are as bewildered as we are. Capitalism has a way of reasoning, a logos. Capitalism is in the position of the notorious scorpion who persuades the fox to ferry him across a river, arguing that he won't sting the fox because it wouldn't be in his interest to do so, since he'd drown, too. But when he stings the fox anyway, he can only say, "I did it because it is in my nature." In the same way, it's not as if businessmen perversely seek to destroy their own world. They have vacation homes in New England and enjoy walks in the forest. They simply have other priorities.

The idea that corporate villains are to blame for the sorry state of the natural world is what Francis Bacon called an "idol of the tribe." An idol is a truth based on insufficient evidence but maintained by constant affirmation within a tribe of believers. Idols do not fall easily or often. Tribes are capable of exerting will based on principles, but they are capable only with the greatest difficulty of willing the destruction of their own principles. It's as if they feel that it is better to stagger from frustration to frustration than to return honestly to the question, Does what we believe actually make sense? Fallen idols are always accompanied by tragic disillusionment, but this is in fact a good thing. If they don't fall, there is no hope for discovering the real problems and the best and truest responses to them. All environmentalists understand that the global crisis we are experiencing requires urgent action, but not everyone understands that if our activism is driven by idols we can exhaust ourselves with effort while having little effect on the crisis. Our efforts may instead sustain the crisis.

The belief that corporate power is the unique source of our problems is not the only idol we are subject to. There is an idol even in the language we use to account for our problems. Our dependence on the scientific language of "environment," "ecology," "diversity," "habitat," and "ecosystem" is a way of acknowledging the superiority of the kind of rationality that serves corporate capitalism. *You can pump this many tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere without disturbing the major climatic systems. This much contiguous habitat is necessary to sustain a population allowing for a viable gene pool for this species. We'll keep a list, a running tally of endangered species, and we'll monitor their numbers, and when that number hits a specified threshold we'll say they are "healthy," or we'll say they are "extinct."*

I am not speaking here of all the notorious problems associated with proving scientifically the significance of environmental destruction. My concern is with the wisdom of using as our primary weapon the rhetoric and logic of the entities we suspect of causing our problems in the first place. Perhaps we support legalistic responses to problems, with all their techno-scientific descriptors, out of a sense that this is the best we can do for the moment. But eventually we come to adopt this mind-set ourselves. Corporate executives are perfectly comfortable with it, and corporate philanthropists give their money to environmental organizations that speak its language. Unfortunately, it also turns environmentalists into quislings, collaborators, and virtuous practitioners of a cost-benefit logic figured in songbirds.

Because we have accepted this rationalist logos as the only legitimate means of debate, we are willing to think that what we need is a balance be-

[Poem]

EDEN

By Ina Rousseau, from the April issue of Poetry. *The poem first appeared in South Africa in 1954. Translated from the Afrikaans by J. M. Coetzee.*

Somewhere in Eden, after all this time,
does there still stand, abandoned, like
a ruined city, gates sealed with grisly nails,
the luckless garden?

Is sultry day still followed there
by sultry dusk, sultry night,
where on the branches sallow and purple
the fruit hangs rotting?

Is there still, underground,
spreading like lace among the rocks
a network of unexploited lodes,
onyx and gold?

Through the lush greenery
their wash echoing afar
do there still flow the four glassy streams
of which no mortal drinks?

Somewhere in Eden, after all this time,
does there still stand, like a city in ruins,
forsaken, doomed to slow decay,
the failed garden?



Leuchtenturm, Island, 1999," by Olaf Otto Becker, from the series *Under the Nordic Light*, is on view this spring at Luhring Augustine in Los Angeles.

tween the requirements of human economies and the "needs" of the natural world. It is as if we were negotiating a trade agreement with the animals and trees unlucky enough to share space with us. What do you need? we ask them. What are your minimum requirements? We need to know the minimum because we're not likely to leave you more than that. We're going to consume any "excess." Unless, of course, you taste good. There is always room for an animal that tastes good.

We use our most basic vocabulary, words like "ecosystem," with a complete lack of irony, as if we couldn't imagine that there might be something perilous in it. What if such language were actually the announcement of the defeat of what we claim to want? Would people and foundations be as willing to fund environmental groups if the name of the organization were not "ecosystem" but "respect for life" or "reverence for creation"? Such sentiments are, for many of us, compromised by associations with the Catholic Church and Evangelicalism, and they don't loosen the purse strings of philanthropy. "Let's keep a nice, clean scientific edge between us and religion," we protest. In this way, environmental science criticizes not only corporate destructiveness but also [illegible] more spiritual visions of nature.

Environmentalism [illegible] thing it can do for nature is to make it [illegible] it as if it were always moving to judgment [illegible] form a party with the feeling of [illegible] Good children of the Enlightenment, we [illegible] assuming human beings [illegible] and destroy [illegible] seem to think that [illegible] Why, we argue, [illegible]

the cure for cancer. By which we also mean that it could provide profitable products for the pharmaceutical industry and local economies. (God help the doomed indigenous culture once the West decides that it has an economy that needs assistance.) Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* may have distressing things to say about global warming, but subconsciously it is an extended apology for scientific rationality, the free market, and our corrupted democracy. Gore doesn't have to defend these things directly; he merely pretends that nothing else exists.

There would be nothing inappropriate or undesirable in understanding our relation to nature in spiritual terms or poetic terms or, with Emerson and Thoreau, in good old American transcendental terms, but there is no broadly shared language in which to do this. So we are forced to resort to what is in fact a lower common denominator—the languages of science and bureaucracy. These languages have legitimacy in our culture, a legitimacy they possess largely because of the thoroughness with which they discredited Christian religious discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But many babies went out with the bathwater of Christian dogma and superstition. One of those was morality. Even now, science can't say why we ought not to harm the environment except to say that we shouldn't be self-destructive. Even avowed Christians have been slow to recall this spiritualized relationship to the world. Only recently have American evangelicals begun thinking of the environment in terms of what they call "creation care." We don't have to be born again to agree that one of the most powerful arguments missing from the environmentalist's case is reverence for what simply is.

You cannot defeat something that you imagine to be an external threat to you when it is in fact internal to you, when its life is your life. The truth is, our idols are actually a great convenience. It is convenient to imagine a power beyond us because that means we don't have to examine our own lives. And it is convenient to hand the work of resistance over to scientists, our designated national problem solvers.

We cannot march forth, confront, and definitively defeat the corporations of the world, especially not with science (which, it should go without saying, corporations have plenty of). We can, however, look at ourselves and see all of the ways that we conspire against what we imagine to be our own most urgent interests. Perhaps the most powerful way we conspire against ourselves is the simple fact that we have jobs. We are willingly part of a world designed for the convenience of what Shakespeare called the "visible god": money. When I say we have jobs, I mean that we find in them our home, our sense of being grounded in the world, grounded in a vast social and economic order. It is a spectacularly complex, even breathtaking, order, and it has two enormous and related problems. First, it seems to be largely responsible for the destruction of the natural world. Second, it has the strong tendency to reduce the human beings inhabiting it to two functions, working and consuming. It tends to hollow us out. It creates a hole in our sense of ourselves and of this country, and it leaves us with few alternatives but to try to fill that hole with money and the things money buys. We are not free to dismiss money because we fear that we'd disappear, we'd be nothing at all without it.

Many people with environmental sympathies will agree with what I've just said and imagine that in fact they do what they can to resist work and consumption, to resist the world as arranged for the convenience of money. But here again I suspect we are kidding ourselves. Rather than taking the risk of challenging the roles money and work play in our lives by reordering our lives, the most prominent strategy of environmentalists seems to be to "give back" to nature through the bequests, the annuities, and the socially responsible mutual funds proliferating across the environmental movement. Such giving may make us feel better, but it will never be enough. Face it, we all have a bit of the robber baron turned philanthropist in us.

Even when we are trying to aid the environment, we are not willing as individuals to leave the system that we know in our heart of hearts is the cause of our problems. We are even further from knowing how to take the collective risk of leaving this system entirely and ordering our societies differently. We are not ready. Not yet, at least.

I am inevitably asked at this point in my argument just what exactly it is that I am proposing that people do. What would I put in capitalism's place? In reply, I am always tempted to quote Voltaire's response to the complaint that he had nothing to put in the place of the Christianity he criticized. "What!" he said. "A ferocious beast has sucked the blood of my family; I tell you to get rid of that beast, and you ask me, what shall we put in its place!" Unlike Voltaire, I would also suggest that what has the best chance of defeating the "beast" is spirit. In accepting science as our primary weapon against environmental destruction, we have also had to accept science's contempt for religion and the spiritual. This is the unfortunate legacy of sci-



ledeer, *wood inlay, by Alison Elizabeth Taylor, whose work was on display in April at Track 16 Gallery, in Santa Monica, California.*

ence's two-century-old confrontation with what it has always called "religious dogma and superstition." But this attitude is myopic; it is science at its most stupid. Environmentalism should stop depending on its alliance with science for its sense of itself. It should look to create a common language of care (a reverence for and a commitment to the astonishing fact of Being) through which it could begin to create alternative principles by which we might live. As Leo Tolstoy wrote in his famous essay "My Religion," faith is not about obedience to church dogma, and it is not about "submission to established authority." A people's religion is "the principle by which they live."

The establishment of those principles by which we might live would begin with three questions. First, what does it mean to be a human being? Second, what is my relation to other human beings? And third, what is my relation to Being as such, the ongoing miracle that there is something rather than nothing? If the answer to these questions is that the purpose of being human is "the pursuit of happiness" (understood as success, which is understood as the accumulation of money), and if our relation to others is a relation to mere things (with nothing to offer but their labor), and if our relation to the world is only to "resources" (which we should exploit for profit), then we should be very comfortable with the world we have. If it goes to perdition, at least we can say that we acted in good faith. But if, on the other hand, we answer that there should be a greater sense of self-worth in being a human, more justice in our relation to others, and more reverence for Being, then we must either live in bad faith with capitalism or begin describing a future whose fundamental values and whose daily activities are radically different from what we currently endure. The risk I propose is simply a return to our nobility.

We should refuse to be mere functions of a system that we cannot in good conscience defend. And we should insist on a recognition of the mystery, the miracle, and the *dignity* of things, from frogs to forests, simply because they *are*. Such a "religion" would entail a refusal to play through to the bloody end the social and economic roles into which we happen to have

been born. What lies beyond the environmental movement is not only the overcoming of capitalism but self-overcoming. We take some justifiable pride in the idea that we are environmentalists, but even that identity must be transcended. Does this mean that, for the time being, we stop working under the banner of environmentalism to oppose corporations when they are destructive? Of course not. But it is important to know that there is a problem more fundamental than a perverse "power" standing opposed to us. That deeper problem is our own integration into an order of work that makes us inhuman and thus tolerant of what is nothing less than demonic, the destruction of our own world. A return to the valuable human things of the beautiful and the useful will only be accomplished, if it is ever to be accomplished, by the humans among us.

[Conversation]

MEET THE AUTHOR!

From a 1986 interview with Austrian novelist and playwright Thomas Bernhard, first published in German last fall in Kultur & Gespenster *and in English in December in* signandsight. *Bernhard, whose early novel* Frost *was published by Knopf last year, died in 1989. Werner Wögerbauer teaches at the University of Nantes, in France. Translated by Nicholas Grindell.*

THOMAS BERNHARD: So, I'll just keep reading the paper—you don't mind, do you?

WERNER WÖGERBAUER: Well, no, by all means.

BERNHARD: You'll have to ask something, and then you'll get an answer.

WÖGERBAUER: Does the fate of your books interest you?

BERNHARD: No, not really. I'm hardly interested in my own fate and certainly not in that of my books.

WÖGERBAUER: Your characters and you yourself often say they don't care about anything.

BERNHARD: Not at all, you want to do something good, you take pleasure in what you do. Like a pianist—he has to start somewhere, too. He tries three notes, then he masters twenty, eventually he knows them all, and then he spends the rest of his life perfecting them. And what some do with notes, I do with words. Simple as that. I'm not really interested in anything else.

WÖGERBAUER: There is nothing but striving for perfection.

BERNHARD: Striving has always been nonsense. The world has a pull that drags you whether you like it or not.

WÖGERBAUER: But this quest for perfection does play a role in your books.

BERNHARD: That's the attraction of any art. That's all art is—getting better and better at playing your chosen instrument. No one can take that pleasure away from you or talk you out of it. If someone is a great pianist, you can clear out the room, fill it with dust, and then start throwing buckets of water at him, but he'll keep on playing. Even if the house falls down around him, he'll carry on playing.

WÖGERBAUER: So it has something to do with failure, then.

BERNHARD: Everything fails in the end, everything ends in the graveyard. The young people of today are running into the arms of death at age twelve, and they're dead at fourteen. There are solitary fighters who struggle on until eighty or ninety, then they die, too, but at least they had a longer life. Those who die early have less fun, and you can feel sorry for them. Because life also means a long life, with all of its awfulness.

WÖGERBAUER: What kind of intellectual aims do you—

BERNHARD: No one asks themselves that sort of thing. People don't have aims. Young people, up to twenty-three, they still fall for that. A person who has lived five decades has no aims, because there's no goal.

WÖGERBAUER: But when you describe yourself as a "destroyer of stories," that is a theoretical statement.

BERNHARD: Well, people say a lot of things in fifty years of life. If a reporter is sitting in a restaurant somewhere and he hears you say the beef's no good, then he'll always claim you're someone who doesn't like beef, for the rest of your life. You go for a walk in the woods, and someone takes a photo of you, then for the next eighty years you're always walking in the woods. There's nothing you can do about it.

WÖGERBAUER: You deliberately keep your distance from other living writers.

BERNHARD: No, not deliberately at all. It comes naturally. Where there's no interest, there can be no inclination.

WÖGERBAUER: Sometimes you hurl abuse at them too, like Elias Canetti or Peter Handke, for example.

BERNHARD: I don't hurl abuse at anyone at all. That's nonsense. Almost all writers are opportunists, and that's unpleasant. Why shouldn't that be said? One works with his illness and his death and wins prizes, and


TURNS KNOBS.
FLICKS SWITCHES.
SHAKES BOOTIES.
DOWNLOAD 25 FREE SONGS
REDEEM AT WWW.EMUSIC.COM/HARPERSOFFER
WORKS ON ANY MP3 PLAYER - INCLUDING THE IPOD.®
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the other runs round in the name of peace and is basically a nasty, stupid fellow, so what's the big deal? If you open a newspaper today, almost all you read about is Thomas Mann. He's been dead thirty years now, and again and again, endlessly, it's unbearable. Even though he was a petit-bourgeois writer, who only wrote for a petit-bourgeois readership. It's uninspired and stupid, some fiddle-playing professor who travels somewhere, or a family in Lübeck, how lovely. What rubbish Thomas Mann churned out about political matters, really. He was totally uptight and a typical German petit bourgeois. With a greedy wife. For me, that's the typical German writer combination. Always a woman in the background making sure these characters sit next to the head of state at every idiotic opening of a sculpture exhibition or a bridge. Is that where writers belong? These are the people who always make deals with those in power, who end up sitting at their elbows. They've never had any character. Under twenty-five, when no one needs more than an old pair of trousers, when you go barefoot and content yourself with a gulp of wine and some water, it's not so difficult to have character. But at forty they are all absorbed into political parties, totally paralyzed. The coffee they drink in the morning is paid for by the state. And the bed they sleep in, and the holidays they go on. Nothing of their own any more.

WÖGERBAUER: You sometimes give the impression of biting the hand that feeds you, for example when you describe Heidegger as a "weak-minded pre-Alpine thinker"—

BERNHARD: He didn't feed me. Why should he have fed me? But he's an impossible character, he has neither rhythm nor anything else. He lived off a few writers, he cannibalized them to the last. What would he have been without them? He was nothing, a philistine, gross, nothing new. He's a perfect example of someone who eats all the fruit other people have jarred and who gorges himself, thank God, which makes him sick, and he bursts.

WÖGERBAUER: Critics have sometimes described you as an anti-Enlightenment writer who despises humankind.

BERNHARD: Look at the people who write that. They haven't the first idea about what they describe and read. When it gets hot, they take off their jackets, sit around sweating with their fat bellies and braces, drinking bottle after bottle, fraternizing with all and sundry. They're a vile mob.

WÖGERBAUER: What, in your view, is a conversation?

BERNHARD: I don't usually have them. To me, people who want to have a conversation are suspect, because that raises particular expectations they're unable to satisfy. It all gets thrown in together, and then one person stirs this way, the other stirs that, and an unbearable stinking turd comes out the bottom. No matter who it is. There are collected conversations, hundreds of them, books full. Entire publishing houses live off them. Like something coming out of an anus, and then it gets squashed in between book covers. It's all just for the workers at the paper factory, so they have something to do, which might make some sense because they have a terrible life anyway and lose all their limbs—at fifty most of them have lost a leg or five fingers. Paper machines are cruel. At least it has some meaning, the family can get something extra. I live next to two paper factories, so I know how it is. In ten years you'll see how stupid it all was. This wasn't a conversation either.

[Illumination]

GO ASK ALVA

From an untitled prose poem by Thomas Alva Edison, found among his papers. Volume six of The Papers of Thomas A. Edison, *covering April 1881 through March 1883, will be published next month by The Johns Hopkins University Press. According to the editors of the volume, "The circumstances surrounding the creation of this document are entirely unknown."*

A Bowery angel smoking a palm tree stubbed his toe on a comet, and pimples came out on his toe nail as big as mountains. He swore so much that God made eight new planets out of the conversation & peopled and fauna'd & flora'd them eccentrically. The almighty has a vein of humor. He made these planets & peopled them to give amusements to beings on the rest of the celestial plantation. The men were 800 miles long & 1/4 inch thick. They slept on telegraph poles, and animals with bodies as big as a pea with 900 eyes each as big as a saucer lived on these long men by catching them by the feet and sucking them in like macaroni.



an, 1946 *(2006), by Lawrence Gipe, was exhibited in January at Alexander Gray Associates, in New York City.*

[Testimonials]

ALL THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S MEN

From 198 letters sent to Judge Reggie B. Walton after the March 6 conviction of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby Jr., former chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney, for perjury and obstruction of justice. On June 5, Walton sentenced Libby to thirty months in prison and fined him $250,000.

Like many, I think my first question upon meeting him was, "Scooter, what type of name is that?" I would not have imagined him to be the serious, intense, sober, intellectually minded individual that he is.

I am the head flight attendant on Air Force Two. Once, I overlooked Scooter's duffel bag, which was left behind in the overhead compartment. I personally delivered the bag to Mr. Libby at his residence. As I tried to apologize, Scooter stopped me and said, "Ron, don't worry about it. You have done it right a hundred times before, so this one incident is not a big deal. It happens."

He never forgot the "little people" he befriended. When a junior staffer in the White House became embroiled in a scary situation, failing to pass a polygraph test, Scooter, on his own time, helped our friend work through it. Why?

Because, as he noted to me, "It was the right thing to do."

We both greatly enjoyed playing football. Scooter was tough and a good tackler; he reminded me of Pat Fischer, the former Washington Redskins cornerback.

The only time I ever saw Scooter get upset was when a framed picture of his kids fell off his desk and broke. He let out a silent "damn" and asked his assistant if she could get it fixed, as it was his "favorite picture."

I was amused to see in the press various conspiratorial explanations advanced for the poetic nature of a letter Scooter wrote to Judith Miller. Clearly, our Washington press corps couldn't imagine a government official expressing himself with such originality and artistry. This is a mistake they could have avoided had they read Scooter's novel, *The Apprentice*, which garnered, along with low sales, critical praise.

We double-dated when we were single. I have read not only his prose but also the unpublished yet equally high-quality poetry this true Renaissance man has written.

As I watched the trial proceed, a brief passage from *The Apprentice* frequently came to mind: "For the storm had reached the point beyond the strength of men."

[Epistle]

PURGATORIO

From a May letter to Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, signed by 310 prisoners serving life sentences for murder, the only crime that carries a life sentence in Italy, which banned the death penalty for all crimes in 1994. Translated from the Italian by Stefania Heim.

Dear Mr. President of the Republic,

We are tired of dying a little bit each day. We have decided to die once and for all, and we ask that our penalties of life imprisonment be converted to penalties of death. To be not dead but not alive either—life imprisonment turns light into shadow, it kills you inside bit by bit: a death in small doses. It renders life useless, makes the future seem the same as the past. It crushes the present and takes away hope. To a life prisoner, only life remains. But life without a future is less than nothing. It is flat and everlasting. Life imprisonment is the invention of an Antichrist with a malice that transcends the imagination. It is a victory over death, stronger than death itself.

[Glossary]

ROUGH GUIDE

From a list of prison vocabulary compiled by Dr. Prison, a San Diego consultancy that prepares convicts to serve their sentences.

Ass out: a prisoner who has so disrespected corrections officers that they will not give him anything
Birds on the line: a warning that someone is listening to a conversation
Blanket party: throwing a blanket over a prisoner so he can't identify an attacker
Bling bling: a warning that officers are coming
Bonaroo: a prisoner's best clothes
Bone: the dominant partner in a relationship between prisoners
Boof: contraband concealed in the rectum
Booty check: rectal search
Brake fluid: mind-control medication such as liquid Thorazine
Buck Rogers time: a parole date so far in the future the prisoner cannot imagine release
Butched in: having to perform oral sex for favors
Cap: the amount of marijuana that fits into a ChapStick cap
Cat nap: a short sentence
Cheese eater: an informer
Chin check: to hit someone in the jaw to see if he will stand up for himself
Connette: a female prisoner
Cowboy: new officer; spelled backward it's a *yobwoc* ("young, obnoxious bastard we often con")
Diaper sniper: child molester
Doctorate in applied chemistry: lethal injection, also "stainless steel ride"
Dressed out: assaulted by a prisoner with urine, feces, or a liquid mixture of the two
Ducat to chapel: to set up a man for murder
Escape dust: fog
Family style: sodomy in the missionary position
Fence parole: escape
Gunner: a prisoner who masturbates while looking at a female corrections officer

High class: hepatitis C
Hot rail: when a group of prisoners stand guard around one prisoner and his significant other so the couple can have sexual relations
Jitterbug: a prisoner younger than twenty-one
Jump the broom: when one prisoner "marries" another
June bug: a prisoner who is considered a slave or footman for others
Kite: note or letter, often a direct order from one prisoner to assault another
Lettuce: prisoners who gang-rape
Life on the installment plan: serving a life sentence through a series of lesser sentences
Mafias: dark sunglasses
Peels: from "orange peels," an orange prison jumpsuit
Shark: a guard who makes a point of watching men showering
Shokram: to slice someone's throat by throwing a homemade weapon
Shower hawk: a prisoner who preys upon others in the shower
Sucker stroking: to get teary eyes because of missing one's girlfriend
Swag: sandwich made by kitchen workers to pay off debt
T-Jones: a prisoner's mother
Viking: to enjoy a particular bounty of goods while in prison; or, a slob who doesn't keep his cell clean
Yo-yo: a prisoner who is not sexually active with others

[Vocation]

WORKING GRRRLS

By Aphrodite Phoenix, from A Woman Whose Calling Is Men, *a multivolume memoir issued this month by Universal Publishers. The author is a former prostitute in Boston.*

The purpose of this mind-blowing book is to rebuke the patriarchal repression of all things sexually feminine. An earnest American primer for whoring cannot, at this moment in history, be composed without impassioned vindication. The pivotal sways of the millennium are sensitizing the Free World to the insane oppression of females that certain cultures inflict. What remains unchanged is the hatred of whores.

In all patriarchal religions, the combination of rigidity and zeal is the source of injurious jihad. We know far more than we want to about the murder that results from zeal gone mad. And yet most Americans don't find themselves hounded routinely as "holy war" targets. Prostitutes, though, do.

In America, no matter how vigorously we women break ties with patriarchal dominion, and no matter how thoroughly we subdue the religions from which the patriarchy stabs, and no matter how many millennia have passed since the founding of our woe, our sense of loss subtly lingers within us. It's a quiet but potent malignancy, the awareness of a shadowy brink, a nebulous rooting in sad dislocation. Our moody hormonal design is held responsible, but there's more to it than that. No matter how little of our *herstory* we know, most of us women sense, deep down, that somewhere, somehow, we got royally fucked over.

Women take it out on one another. And women ferociously take it out on men. And whores get the worst of it, from everyone. When contemporary women become manfully successful, as CEOs, surgeons, or airline pilots, everyone but the Taliban is likely to cheer them on. But when they professionally take off their clothes, reveal their clitorises and vulvas, and enable orgasms for money, there's a universal gasp of consternation.

Clearly, there are two kinds of prostitutes. There are whores who take great pride in their work, and there are whores who despise themselves for

[Doggerel]

SHE'S SO COLD

"Icon," by Jerry Hall, a model and the ex-wife of Rolling Stone Mick Jagger. The poem was included in an April 13 Independent *guest column in which Hall commented, "I am terrified because my poetry writing is very sporadic. I can't write it when I am happy. Luckily I have a deep well of sadness from my childhood and lots of disappointments in love to draw on."*

he is a hollow hyperbole
the crowd plays him like a flute
a mythical icon
a Dionysian fluke
the crowd lives out their fantasy
through his mirror door they see
an image of the person
they wish that they could be
he fucks their women
and fights their battles against mediocrity
but when he comes home to me
all that's left is v.d.

it. Whenever I consider that disparity, I find myself picturing all whores as one woman. She's naked, waist-deep in a warm pond. All around her is a lush, lovely June. Gushes of color spread over the greenery in wildflower-burgeoning meadows. Big summertime branches are billowing. Her face and torso are absorbing fresh air and sun, and her hands are free to splash herself whenever she needs to be cooled. The rest of her, however, trapped in the murky pond-bottom muck, knows no such pleasure.

That picture makes me face facts: there are whores who have a bad time. Those of us happily sunning ourselves must acknowledge that no whore will truly be emancipated until all whores are. Until the end of the disparity, whores will lack the unity needed to converge in large numbers and proudly "come out" wherever we are, which is everywhere. Sex work is not the sleazy arena where victim-identified women feel shame. Sex work is the showground, radiating with power, where insightful whore-feminists rebelliously disrobe.

Feminists are insurgents who fight sick male power, but when were they last taken seriously? Now they're just part of the problem. No group understands that more than whores. Whores will be part of the movement toward a truly egalitarian, sincerely pluralistic, far less judgmental American spirit. As whores begin to reclaim their role as the primordial priestesses and the culture begins to perceive it, their advancement will be one of a host of indications of feminine principles pervading the world and feminine principles healing Mother Earth. A prostitute is a comfort station, she's a relief, an oasis on men's battlefields—and a true whore knows to be proud of it.

[Discography]

MEMORY ALMOST FULL

From a February 26 sentencing memorandum by Judge Gregory R. Todd, in the case of Montana *v.* Andrew McCormack. *In 2006, McCormack was arrested for stealing beer. After entering a guilty plea, he received a sentence of probation, community service, and a fine.*

Mr. McCormack, to the question of "Give your recommendation as to what you think the Court should do in this case," you said, "Like the Beatles say, 'Let it be.'" If I were to overlook your actions and let it be, I would have to ignore that day in the life on April 21, 2006. Evidently, you said to yourself, "I feel fine," while drinking beer. Later, whether you wanted money or were just trying to act naturally, you became the fool on the hill. As Mr. Moonlight at 1:30 A.M., you did not think for yourself, but just focused on I, me, mine. Because you didn't ask for help, wait for something else, or listen to your conscience saying, "Honey, don't," the victim later that day was fixing a hole in the glass door you broke. After you stole the eighteen-pack of Old Milwaukee, you decided it was time to run for your life and carry that weight. But when the witness said, "Baby, it's you," the police responded, "I'll get you," and you had to admit, "You really got a hold on me." You were not able to get back home because of the chains they put on you. Although you hoped the police would say, "I don't want to spoil the party" and "We can work it out," you were in misery when they said you were a bad boy. When the police took you to jail, they said, "Hello, goodbye," and you became a nowhere man. Later, when you thought about what you did, you may have said, "I'll cry instead." Now you're saying, "Let it be," instead of, "I'm a loser." As a result of your hard day's night, you are looking at a ticket to ride that long and winding road. Hopefully, you can say when I'm sixty-four, "I should have known better."

[Criticism]

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

By Murat Aydemir, from the epilogue to Images of Bliss: Ejaculation, Masculinity, Meaning, *published in February by University of Minnesota Press. Aydemir is a professor of comparative literature and cultural analysis at the University of Amsterdam.*

The meanings of the verb and noun "(to) issue" may clarify the conditions and aspects that make ejaculation such a dense topic of consideration and such a relevant issue for cultural analysis. The word suggests a performativity that produces something into materiality. Masculinity must confront the issue of the externalized trace that the male body, the gender's presumed vehicle or form, discharges into visibility. "Issue" also suggests the public reception and usage of what is, authoritatively or officially, produced or emitted, put into circulation. The seminal trace escapes the privacy or autonomy that would contain it. Because the word connects the intimate and the public, the is-

sue of sperm is accorded cultural currency. Thus the masculinity that wants, or needs, to (re)claim the seminal trace as the sign for its unadulterated existence must come to terms with its wide availability, akin to issued coins and stamps. Another field of meanings puts under strain the connection between authoritative production and the reception of the issue. The issuing becomes "at issue": "in dispute," "under discussion," "in question." "Issue" thus condenses the production, reception, and contestation of the produced trace. So, one might ask, what are the issues that are at issue in the issue of sperm?

COLOR

What color is sperm? Aristotle ascribes to semen a pure and even-toned white, which distinguishes it from the bulky and impure menstrual blood that forms its counterpart in reproduction. Aristotle also observes a temporally inflected difference in the color of the seed. For a limited time only, it is thick, hot, shiny, and frothy. Afterward, the substance goes transparent, runny, cold, dull, and flat. The specificity of the color of semen, its immaculate whiteness, then, is ever haunted by this entropic changeability. Returning in the shape of the silvery and finely textured trace of semen that Proust describes, the hue of the seed is a milky, opalescent off-white. For Derrida, the color of sperm condenses an irregularly blotting, erasing whiteness, and a light-reflecting and -refracting multiplicity or "luster." This latter, pluralized whiteness returns in the baroque tone of white that is fractured into innumerable tiny convex mirrors, bouncing back the look that beholds it. Thus, the singularity of the form-giving spirit that lends the substance of sperm its white hue becomes overdetermined and dense: variable, contaminated, erasing, and multiplying.

SCALE

Aristotle compares the seed to the stars, and is yet able to make out minute pockets of air encapsulated in the liquid. Proust imagines an ejaculatory fountain that can totalize space and then quickly set as little crusty seedpods of paint. This incessant and sudden scale flipping between the very large and the very small may allude to the ambivalent place, both central and marginal, that sperm occupies in the economy of masculinity and meaning. Indecisively, semen is both hyperbolically augmented and belittled, rendered as apotheosis and as a negligible matter. Scaled up, the seminal Milky Way dwarfs the subject; scaled down, the marks, pockets, or traces of semen threaten his relevance and stature.

PLANE

In ejaculation, semen spurts upward. When it does, it nevertheless eventually drops down again, and then viscously, determinedly, clings to the surface on which it lands. The consideration of sperm simultaneously triggers both vertical and horizontal elaborations. The semen that Aristotle deems divine and compares to the stars may end up as a dried-up wad of saliva in the street. This horizontalization lowers and flattens vertically erected hierarchies.

TEMPORALITY

Through its careful narrativization, ejaculation can possibly deliver what Barthes calls "the solution of the riddle, the revelation of fate" that the suspense of the story promises. As the "significant discharge," the cum shot of porn presents a timely and discrete image that instantiates, binds, and quantifies meaning and identity. In both cases, ejaculation must serve as the climax that is able to put to rest the tension that prompts the narrative. Yet representations of orgasm and ejaculation are often thick with the doubts and alternatives that their intense temporality brings up. The pleasure of narrative suspense can be interrupted by a blissful untimeliness that suspends the story's progression to its ending, congealing and contracting its measured course. The motion of Proust's ejaculatory fountain modulates time by occurring momentarily, successively, and endlessly. Thus, the reification of ejaculation as narrative climax and the proliferation of alternative temporalities both betray and attempt to redeem a temporality that ultimately eludes them. Much like convulsive "hiccups" or "guffaws," ejaculations forgo any sense of an ending.

[Tale]

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH BEACH

By Frederic Tuten, published this spring in Conjunctions: 48. *Tuten is the author of several novels, including, most recently,* The Green Hour.

The beach, the sea, the blue umbrellas. A sail. Then another, like a long arm climbing the horizon. She stretched out on a blanket beside me in the dreadful hot sand. A sheet of gulls wheeling and diving, a form emerging from under the flat sea. Flat, feverless, an ocean too exhausted to make waves, an ocean that had seen too much travel. I was thinking this when she asked: "Is the body the house for the soul, or are body and soul one and inseparable?" She slipped off her

bikini top, exposing her breasts to the sky, to the gaze of the sea.

"Your body is my soul," I said. She laughed, in a friendly way, as if to assure me that in spite of what seemed my exaggeration, she was pleased.

"Poor you," she said finally, "stuck with a soul bound for decay."

"Nothing of you will decay," I said, "not as long as I'm alive." And in love, I wanted to add, for the truth of it. But certain truths are better left at home, under a pillow, nesting among the feathers.

The beach was filling up with little clusters of families staking their territories with umbrellas and chairs. Young couples, hungry to burn their bodies, marked their separate terrain, spreading mats and towels under the raw sun.

Out of nowhere, a young man in white cap, white jacket, and creamy white pants appeared, crooning the virtues of his homemade beverages, kept in a white box he shouldered. He was a white thing itself come from out of the blue.

"Where did you come from?" I asked, not having viewed him before he materialized in whiteness and smiles.

"Out there," he said, nodding to the ocean. "A cold beverage?" he asked. Cold. Cold like love gone cold, I was sure he added, but knew he had not.

"Maybe later," I said. "Try us again later when it gets really hot."

We should buy now, he said, because his was a special home-brewed drink—it had unique powers.

"Do you have any to make one young again?" I asked, feeling ancient, like a sea who has washed up on too many shores.

"Yes, and beautiful as well," he replied. "I have many sorts of flavors and specialties. This one, for example," he said, drawing a small bottle from his jacket pocket, "is to keep your woman faithful."

"Oh! Fidelity," she said. "I'm surprised it hasn't already exploded in your pocket."

"This one never explodes," he said. "The body explodes before this does." He had a wonderful grin, white like his hair.

"I don't require the fidelity drink," she said, looking at me.

"But I would like the youth-restorative flavor," I said. "Give me three if you have them."

"I'm all out," he said, rummaging through his box. "It's an all-time favorite."

"Come back when you have more," she said. "We'll be here all day. We'll wait here for years."

"Of course, I would do the same," he said, giving her a sweet, devouring look that made me jealous. I could see her blush, even through the blanching sunlight. Another smile, wider than the first, then he sauntered away, all the while singing the praises of his magical beverages.

"You only love me because you find me beautiful," she said, "and so when that's gone, I'm gone too. Right?"

"Of course not," I said, half lying.

"And if I were a real soulless bitch, you'd still love me because I was beautiful. Right?"

"Let's not go into metaphysics," I said as if I meant it.

Her long smooth legs, her strong feet, bronzed, like the rest of her, by the sun. Her beauty that I loved and wanted always to stay the same, through aging and death, at least through the next few years. I was superficial about wanting her to remain young forever—never more than her twenty-eight perfect years, never less than perfect.

Superficial in other ways as well, she would say—had said. We can find beauty everywhere, I once proclaimed, and in everything—even in the decay of roses and in the corpses of dead seagulls on the beach, in the scars on otherwise smooth flesh, but there is no beauty like the body of any creature in its perfect, healthy form. A perfect body shields all the blemishes and corruptions of the soul, makes them irrelevant to our regard, I once—late at night in bed, in an after-love drowse—had announced to her, to my regret.

A single-engine plane, trailed by a banner selling a fleet of desires, flew sleepily by, the propeller's old-fashioned hum bringing me back to my childhood on the beach, to my mother, bringing me to her tender smile under her wide yellow hat that defied the sun. Her breasts were full then and beautiful with the fullness of youth not yet overripened. The bodies we feast upon as children dominate the future landscape of our desire, imprinting forever all our dreams of beauty—and of unsightliness.

The sun was now on her thighs, spread discreetly, like temple gates in Arcadia. I had sketched her while she slept that morning, exhausting five large sheets of good paper before I realized—once again—how she always eluded me. I had turned her legs into the pillars of Hercules, her breasts into small bread loaves. The rest of her I had converted into a birch tree without branches.

Three teenagers sauntered by, loving themselves in a fidgety, insecure way, amazed by the newfound power of their bodies to unhinge reason and jolt planets from their orbits. They gave us a passing glance, and, seeing nothing but age, did not see us.

She rose on her elbows, trailing my field of vision, the two of us following them until they were no longer significant in our view.

"How long do you think I have?" she asked. "Staying passable, I mean."

"Aphrodite lives forever," I said.

"How long is that?" she asked.

"Five years for others, a hundred for me."

SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

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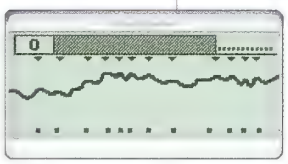
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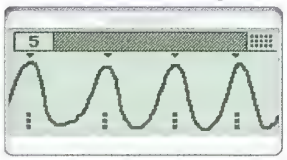
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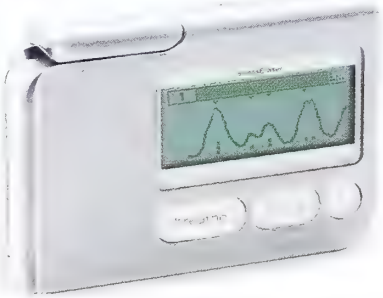
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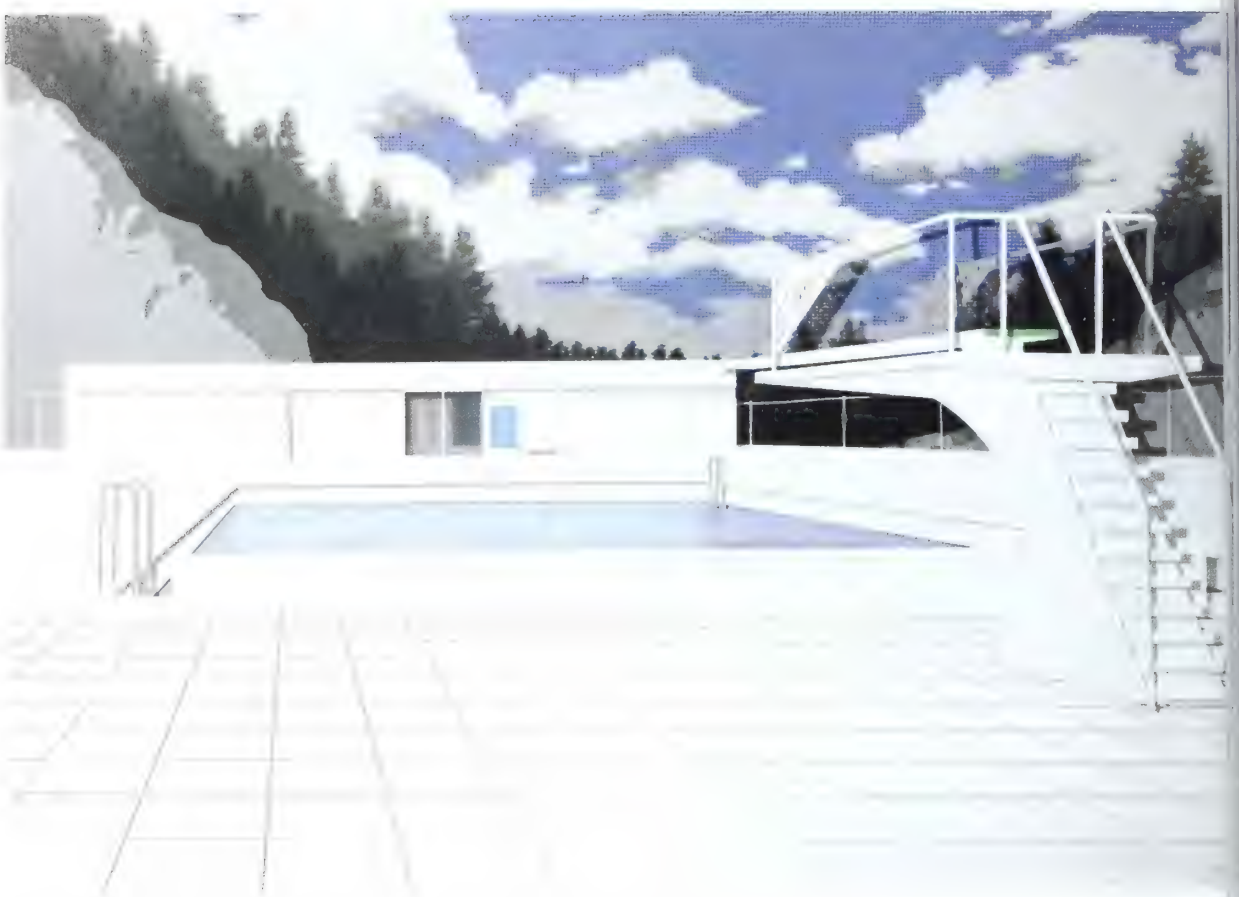
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AD-SE-175 Rev B



Bathing Place, *by Lucy Williams, was on view last year at McKee Gallery, in New York City.*

"Five years?" she said. "Five minutes, then. Five waves of the hand."

"Even when the young men stop looking," I said consolingly, "others will take their place, the older ones."

The vendor returned, promoting his drinks, walking back and forth, and every once in a while he would give her a long look, taking her in with evident, unaffected joy. How wonderful that one can give so much pleasure to another, without effort, merely by being, I thought. But not without feeling jealous that the young man's gaze, like a magnet, had drawn some part of her youth, her beauty, into himself, leaving less of her for me. The voyeur is always a thief. I'm a prince of such thieves.

"Sometimes when you were gone I thought of sleeping around. Although 'around' sounds too vast a territory for a girl to cover." She laughed. I did, too, but mirthlessly.

A few clouds appeared out of the blue, literally. Giant, swollen gray bags they were, like frisky blimps looking for a port. I would have loved to be with them—away from all jealousy—floating up there, sailing from harbor to harbor.

"Did you?" I asked, dreading her answer.

"What harm would it have done, after all? What would it have mattered once I'm in the grave?"

"I thought you intended to be cremated," I said, trying to lighten the clouds.

"What comfort to my ashes then?" she asked, shaking sand from her hair.

"'Ashes they shall become, but ashes in love.' Do you know that poem of Quevedo's?"

"You always quote it," she said. "I should know it by heart now. Is that how you love me, like an ash?"

"Always a glowing one," I said. "Glowing for you," I added for good measure, overflowing the cup. The three teenagers who had passed by earlier passed by again, but now they were middle-aged, with soft bellies and drooping chins, with children who had grown up and gone away, with husbands gone to younger women or gone to the grave. I could see that in them, their disappointments buried beneath their tans.

"I'm baked and I'm thirsty," she said, just as the vendor cast his handsome shadow over

us. A strange shadow, considering that the sun, in some tricky maneuver, had darkened its complexion.

"I'm brewing up a new batch of drinks," he said. "Come up to the canteen for a fresh cup or two."

"The good stuff?" I asked. "The stuff of dreams?"

He smiled, like a flash of lightning. He smiled at her.

When we arrived at the canteen, we saw a long line stretching back down to the shore. Hundreds of people, some holding their huge beach umbrellas over their heads, were waiting silently for the canteen doors to open. We had no desire to wait and were about to leave when he called out to us from the veranda.

"No, no, come here," he said, waving aside those at the top of the line to make way for us.

He sat us down at a wooden table under a thatched roof. He told us we would not have to wait long for his marvelous concoction to be ready, bringing us in the meanwhile a pitcher of ice water and a bowl of olives. That was a strange combination, I said, water and olives. It was his canteen, he said; he could bring us anything we wanted.

Voices rose from outside the veranda. The line had grown even longer, extending far down and along the shore, which had turned a squalid gray, like the gray sky and sea. There was grumbling in the line and some pressed themselves against the canteen walls as if to break them down. No one was young.

"Look," the vendor said, "look at the lovebirds." He held up a pair of golden metal nightingales by their metal tails. "I have music for every mood, even Puccini if you prefer the sweetness."

"Oh!" she said. "Mechanical birds to sing for every mood."

I hated the deflation in her voice. She was still young and not steadied for disappointments.

"They are not expensive," he said. "I could let you have them for a price." He smiled at me in a reassuring way as he would to her uncle, then at her. "For a kiss," he said.

"I'd rather have the drinks," she said in a polite way that carried other meanings.

"And the others waiting out there?" I asked.

"They have had their share many times," he said, "while you have had none." Suddenly, his voice was that of an older man and not that of the youth who earlier had paraded the beach hawking his wares. He looked older, his skin gone dry, his body stooped over our table.

"I don't think we want your drink," she said, turning away as she spoke. "Do we?"

"I don't know," I said lightly. "I wouldn't mind trying the youth restorative. What harm could it do?"

She gave me a long look, as if to say, Why waste time on this charlatan? Why give away a moment of life that is not a moment spent together, when every second in this world steals us away from each other? And finally and perhaps to the core of it all: Why let him flirt with me?

"What harm?" I repeated lamely, feeling, indeed, that in wanting, now more than ever, his magic drink, I had gone lame, at least in her eyes if not in mine.

"Stay," she said. "I'll take a walk along the beach and find you back at our umbrella."

The sky was darkening in an unfriendly way. I wanted to point that out to her, as if the weather were my concern, when what I really wanted to say was, Don't leave, don't take that walk without me, don't shut down your heart from me for even a second. But then I thought of how wonderful being young again would be and I said, "I won't be long."

I watched her leave—without a kiss—watched her walk away slowly, so that by the time he had brought me my drink, she was far away, growing smaller, a diminishing dot against the blustery sky.

I was back in my beach chair but no longer needed the umbrella, as the sun was walled in by the darkest clouds. I kept the umbrella open so that she might better see me in the distance and also because as the beach began to empty, slowly at first and then at a faster pace, the rain drizzled down from the clouds. It would take a half hour or so, he said, before I would feel the effects of the drink, and then maybe an hour or two longer before the results were visible.

Little hints of change at first, such as an improvement in my hearing and sight, or a feeling of tightness of the skin under my chin, which had begun its slide with gravity. And then if all went well, in a matter of a few more hours I would be returned to my optimum moment of health and youth, back to my golden age, give or take a year or two.

The sea was rising and gulls were screaming at the waves. The swimmers had long ago returned to shore. The sea was empty, the beach emptier. Not a chair, not an umbrella, not a person in sight. I looked and looked in the direction of where I had last seen her walk and saw nothing but darkening space in retreat. Then the rain began in earnest, drowning the sea and the beach and flooding the canteen, which had already locked its doors and fastened the shutters, looking long ago abandoned. I was the only soul on the beach, the only soul on earth. I should pick myself up, I thought, and leave the beach, but I could not, did not wish to move, or change my place for any place in the world, waiting, under an umbrella in a deluge, as I was, for the return of my youth.



From Allegory of Psychodemographics: 24 Branded Products My Family Uses on a Typical Summer Day, *by Laurie Hogin. Clockwise from top left:* I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, NPR, Starbucks Organic Fair Trade Decaf Coffee, *and* Palmolive Lavender Aromatherapy Dishwashing Liquid. *The complete series was on exhibit this winter at the Krannert Art Museum, in Champaign, Illinois.*

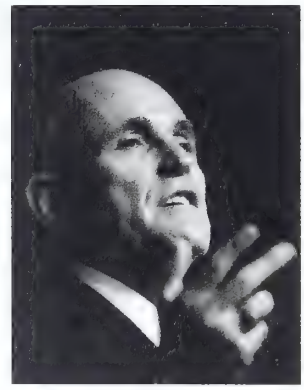
Artwork courtesy the artist and Peter Miller Gallery, Chicago

A FATE WORSE THAN BUSH

Rudolph Giuliani and the politics of personality

By Kevin Baker

Rudolph Giuliani has, by far, the most dubious known personal history of any major presidential candidate in American history, what with his three marriages and his open affairs and his almost total estrangement from his grown children, not to mention the startling frequency with which he finds excuses to dress in women's clothing. Many of his fellow Republicans despise him for his support of gay rights and abortion rights and immigrants, for the confiscatory gun laws he enforced while mayor of New York City, and for having a personality that is irreducibly *New York*. Richard Viguerie, the venerable right-wing mail-order guru, threatened to travel around the country campaigning against Giuliani were he to win the nomination. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention asserted that "the mayor's position on abortion couldn't be more repugnant to pro-lifers." Focus on the Family founder James Dobson said simply that he "cannot, and will not, vote for Rudy Giuliani in 2008. It is an irrevocable decision."



Giuliani clearly is a new kind of Republican. In this he is following a trail blazed by, of all people, Bill and Hillary Clinton. It is more than a coincidence, after all, that both the front-runners of the two major parties were elected to high public office in New York—and, for that matter, that the person most commonly named as a possible third-party candidate is Giuliani's successor as mayor, Michael Bloomberg. New York has always been where America happens first. As the nation's most populous city, as its financial and intellectual capital, and as a magnet for ambitious and creative immigrants from all points, domestic and foreign, it has set the course for most of the nation's history. Furious battles over just who is an American, and just what that means, have been waged in the city's streets for the past three hundred years. Historically, much of the nation's political energy has been expended trying to contain the money power situated on Wall Street.

Now, with its great financial markets, the city finds itself at the fulcrum of the globalized economy. New York—or at least Manhattan—first began the process of deindustrialization more than a century ago. Its economy today revolves around finance, real estate, and intellectual capital, and several of its districts are teeming with upscale, self-employed, white-collar individuals working out of their homes—that breed of post-industrial workers Bill Clinton's Labor Secretary Robert Reich labeled "symbolic analysts."

Yet the city's spectacular transformation over the past two decades also masks the moldering problems of the new economy. New York's demographics presage the demographics of Amer-

Kevin Baker's most recent novel, Strivers Row, *is the final installment in his "City of Fire" trilogy about New York City. His last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"Trivial Pursuit," appeared in the October 2006 issue.*

Photograph of Rudolph Giuliani at the Conservative Political Action Conference, March 2007 © G. Fabiano/Sipa Press

ica, as its middle class is squeezed down or out and the city separates into the spectacularly wealthy and the isolated poor. Nearly one in ten Manhattan households has assets of more than a million dollars, and an *average* Manhattan apartment costs $1.3 million. At the same time, the Bronx is the poorest urban county in America, and one quarter of all New York City families with children—some 1.5 million people—live below the poverty line. More of these families live in homeless shelters now than at any time in the past twenty-five years.



Hillary Clinton may have been a New York outsider when she ran for the Senate in 2000, but she nonetheless fit perfectly into the city's political landscape, in large part because she was instrumental in creating it. Manhattan was in many ways the culmination of all that she and her husband had been working toward for thirty years.

The Clintons' political evolution began during their thankless job running George McGovern's 1972 campaign for president in Texas. The campaign was an indictment of "the system" itself, a guerrilla insurgency waged against what were seen as the corrupt, hypocritical power brokers in both parties, all the Nixons and the Humph[rey]s, the Daleys and the Johnsons, with their f[ail]ed war and their failed cities and the explosive [ra]cial tensions they had failed to ameliorate. Alth[ough] the Clintons' candidate would go down to a c[rush]ing defeat, their revolution would prevail, [but] in ways that anyone had predicted. The old p[ower] er brokers would be swept away, along with [the] ditional liberal *and* conservative politics. Wh[at] the Clintons learned from h[is] and would learn and l[earn] again over the course of [the] many years in politics, was h[is] progressivism could be ad[vanced] vanced only in the mos[t in]cremental installments, an[d] only with the imprimat[ur] powerful corporate and fi[nan]cial elites. They would ad[opt] sort of "post-ideological" p[oli]tics—a politics that aband[ons] the old ideologies and cla[ims] none of its own.

The term "post-ideolo[gical] politics" once primarily ref[erred] to the technocratic best-[and] brightest approach of [the] Kennedy Administrat[ion], but in America today p[ost]-ideological politics gene[rally] progresses under the rubr[ic] of the Clintons' preferred, [pro]leading "third way," or "t[hird] gulation"—which is re[al]l[y] more the politics of the p[ost]ble as Bill and Hill came t[o un]derstand it. In programm[atic] terms, the new Democ[ratic] Party differs little from the [par]ties that now dominate [Eng]land and France and Germ[any] and Japan. All of these pa[rties] embrace globalization, [bal]anced budgets, and a broa[d so]cial tolerance. They still seek to maintain s[ome] semblance of their old social-welfare systems, [but] they have largely ceded economic primac[y to] their national banks, or the European Unio[n or] the global markets. Moreover—much like [New] York City—they have accepted the slow bu[rn] exorable submergence of all public space [into] the private sector and the widening gap betw[een] those citizens who are equipped to thrive in [the] global economy and those who are not.

Rudolph Giuliani was also a Democrat for [Geo]Govern in 1972. This may startle some to[day], but it is really not that surprising when one [con]siders that Giuliani managed to wrangle no [few]er than three separate exemptions from the di[vor]Much like Bill Clinton, he saw himself as a m[ov]

"Straight's New York," by James Fee. Courtesy the artist's [and] and Craig Krull Gallery, Santa Monica, Cal[if.]

of the new class, unwilling to risk his life in
unwinnable war perpetrated by a bankrupt
blishment. While running for mayor of one
ne most liberal cities in America as a Repub-
n, he had to position himself as another post-
logical politician, breaking dramatically with
failed politics of the past—a formulation that
ved to be perfect for *fin de siècle* New York.
he great drama of this election season, perhaps
great drama of American politics for years
ome, will be the attempt of this consum-
ely opportunistic and wily politician to bend
Republican Party to his will—to break with
failed politics of *its* past. The Republican Par-
iat Giuliani would build in its place would dif-
ittle—at least ideologically—from the new
nocratic Party that the Clintons built in their
image nearly two decades before.
et as we have learned once again in Iraq, the
s can never be separate from the means. There
important difference between the Democrats
Giuliani's twenty-first-century Republicans,
it revolves around the man himself. In the
politics, the candidate is everything. The
-ideological party distinguishes itself from its
ls not through any particular program or deep
al conviction so much as by the character
the charisma of its particular leader—its
kozy, or its Berlusconi, or its Clinton—and by
rand-selling strategies. Giuliani would like to
his own name to that list and he may well suc-
d, for the "brand" with which he is indelibly
ed in the American mind is "strength."

THE UNGOVERNABLE CITY

Giuliani drew a different lesson than the Clin-
s in his early political experiences. He watched
winning side in the 1972 election and inter-
zed a strategy that was honed by the likes of
orge Wallace, Barry Goldwater, Richard
on, and Ronald Reagan over the course of
rly two decades. That strategy can best be de-
bed as a sort of "anti-populism," a worldview
which the well-off are continually beset by
poor, the privileged by the disinherited, the
te by the black. The remarkable accomplish-
nt of Giuliani was how he was able to use this
rative of disorder to gain power in New York.
By 1993, the year of Giuliani's first successful
paign for mayor of New York, the city had
n in urban-crisis mode for a generation.
liani had already come close to beating
nocrat David Dinkins in 1989, mostly on
basis of the reputation Giuliani had gained
an extraordinarily aggressive U.S. Attorney
the Southern District of New York, one who
taken on drug dealers, mob bosses, crooked
iticians, and Wall Street swindlers alike—
won. Now circumstances made him a fa-
vorite to win the office that had barely eluded him four years before. Crime, drugs, homelessness, joblessness, filth, and incivility seemed to be intractable problems, and the common wisdom was that something about the urban condition itself was broken beyond repair. New York, in a description first popularized by the sociologist Nathan Glazer in a 1961 *Commentary* article, had become "ungovernable."

This conclusion was widely accepted by the local and national media, and reinforced by a cottage industry of books and movies. Film after film—from *The French Connection* to *The Panic in Needle Park* to *Midnight Cowboy*; from *The Warriors* to *Escape from New York* to *Little Murders*; from *Taxi Driver* to *Joe* to *Death Wish*—depicted New York as virtually a post-apocalyptic landscape, one in which vigilante violence was increasingly justifiable. Books such as William Buckley's snarky *Unmaking of a Mayor*; Ken Auletta's *The Streets Were Paved with Gold*; and Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* made a more serious case for the hopelessness of New York. The consensus of these volumes was that the fall had been brought about mainly by moral lassitude. Liberal politicians and other elites—so this narrative of disorder went—had "gone soft" on crime and poverty, probably out of a misguided sense of racial guilt. New York was spending well beyond its means, coddling the city's enormous population of welfare recipients, and creating a "culture of poverty" among blacks and Hispanics. Meanwhile the white working class staggered under the resulting tax burden. Society was falling apart as the police were prevented from maintaining law and order and intimidated liberals confined themselves, in Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous phrase, to "defining deviancy down."

THE GREAT DRAMA OF THIS ELECTION SEASON WILL BE GIULIANI'S ATTEMPT TO BEND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY TO HIS WILL

Alongside these seminal works were breathless media reports about the new "superpredators"—amoral teenagers run amok—and the pseudoscience of books like *The Bell Curve*, the infamous racial screed by Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, which claimed to offer scientific "proof" that blacks and Hispanics were innately, genetically less intelligent than whites and Asians. On its publication in 1994, *The Bell Curve* was defended even in such mainstream publications as *Newsweek* and *The New York Times Book Review*, wherein *Times* science reporter Malcolm Browne agreed that the authors made "a strong case" and worried that the time was approaching when American society had the "right—perhaps even the duty—to strength-

en our species' cognitive defenses against an increasingly dangerous global environment."

Most of this was hysteria. New York, like most great world cities, has *always* attracted a disproportionate number of poor, bumptious ethnic immigrants. They rioted on a regular basis throughout the nineteenth century, in numbers and with a ferocity that dwarfed later disturbances. The Civil War draft riots of 1863 remain to this day the deadliest civil disturbance in American history. The city was commonly known as "the Volcano," and it was widely considered a nest of iniquity, a raucous, dangerous, and uncivil place, always on the verge of exploding into anarchy.

The city has also been racked by many devastating economic downturns and depressions, including those of the 1830s, 1850s, 1870s, 1890s, 1910s, 1930s, and late 1980s. The Great Depression brought so much unemployment and poverty, such a breakdown in the social order, that the homeless were emboldened to build shacks for themselves (some out of brick) in the middle of Central Park's Great Lawn, then still under construction. The city's corrupt Tammany leaders largely ignored such scenes. They preferred to continue stealing money by the bushelful while periodically sending out the police to suppress demonstrations in brutal, bloody displays of force.

GIULIANI RAN A RUTHLESS MAYORAL CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO REAFFIRM NEW YORKERS' WORST FEARS ABOUT THEIR CITY

The years after World War II saw another seismic realignment of the city's economy, though few people recognized it at the time. Rampant deindustrialization meant that for the first time, relatively good-paying blue-collar jobs no longer were available to the new immigrants still pouring into the city, this time mostly from the rural South, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Combined with white flight, the underacknowledged phenomenon of black flight, ill-conceived urban housing policies, and consecutive plagues of heroin, guns, AIDS, and crack cocaine, this lack of low-skilled jobs created an urban crisis that infected every major city in the country, leaving many of them even worse off than New York.

It is undeniable that New York had many real problems that could not simply be wished away. Its Tammany ward heelers were too often replaced by fake liberals who continued the old corruption while spewing a lot of revolutionary doggerel. But there is also considerable evidence that most of the city's problems had started to abate well before Rudolph Giuliani took power in 1993. Dinkins, the city's first African-American mayor, signed into law a tax surcharge that put six thousand more police officers on the streets. He also hired a pair of dynamic new leaders, Ray Kelly as police commissioner and William Bratton as head of New York's transit police. During Dinkins's term the city's murder rate fell by 13.7 percent, robbery fell by 14.6 percent, burglary fell by 17.6 percent, and auto theft fell by 23.8 percent. The city's crime rate dropped in all seven FBI major-felony categories for the first time in nearly four decades.

Similarly, the notorious porn shops and massage houses along 42nd Street that Giuliani would later claim to have closed himself had in fact already been shuttered as the city began the transformation of Times Square into a Disney fantasia. Indeed, the last graffiti-covered subway car had been taken off the line in 1989, under Mayor Ed Koch. Even the "squeegee men"—homeless individuals who wiped the windshields of cars against the owners' wishes and then hassled them for money, and whom Giuliani would make the emblem of New York's perpetual disorder—had been removed from the streets by the time Giuliani took the oath of office on January 1, 1994.

Thus nearly every major accomplishment that Giuliani points to today either had already been achieved or was well on the way to being achieved by the time he became mayor. But all of these facts threatened—and still do threaten—the prevailing narrative that New York had become "ungovernable." To accept the notion that the city's decline was *not* a moral lesson—that its leaders was no worse and often better than it had been in the past; that it was hampered by recognizable economic and social problems, most of which had endured before and which were now being largely solved or ameliorated—would be to turn the 1993 campaign to the plane of definable reality, a place where Giuliani could not win.

THE RACE RACE

Giuliani countered the encouraging statistics with a ruthless campaign designed to reaffirm New Yorkers' worst fears about their city, what *The New York Times Magazine* would call "the race race." In part this effort was viciously and relentlessly personal, designed to challenge Dinkins's very legitimacy as mayor. Often the dirty work was done by surrogates, such as Giuliani crony Jackie Mason, the comedian, who publicly dismissed Dinkins as nothing but "a fancy *shvartze* with a mustache." The same *Times* article noted a more harrowing incident in the fall of 1992 in which Giuliani gave a profanity-laced speech that inflamed a mob of some 10,000 "raucous, beer-drinking, overwhelmingly white police officers" who had just finished a march on City Hall to protest a Dinkins-backed proposal for civilian oversight of police-misconduct cases.

ts. Many in the mob spewed racial epithets carried signs condemning Dinkins in gross- cial terms, including one that read, "Dump ashroom attendant!" Giuliani's complicity is disgraceful incident was dutifully con- ied by the media . . . which nonetheless val- d the same stereotypes. Hence Janice C. son's noting in *Time* magazine that "Dink- omes off as a courtly but unimaginative bu- crat with a taste for fussy clothes and fancy nonies." What right did this black man have ce clothes, civic ceremonies, or facial adorn- —or to be mayor at all?

eking to elide the steadily dropping crime sta- s, Giuliani resorted to more racial code, ging in a speech that Dinkins "might as well held a ceremony in which he turned the hborhoods over to the drug dealers. As far as oncerned, there is no future in surrender." very slogan of his 1993 campaign, "One dard, One City," implied that somehow k New Yorkers were getting away with thing under a black mayor. Sure, crime t be falling, but what really mattered to Yorkers was something called "quality of —a nebulous state of grace that was thwart- y all signs of disorder on the streets, from drug dealing to aggressive panhandling to llected trash, and of course those darn egee men.

Quality of life" provided Giuliani a more ced appeal to a group who were rapidly ming the racially divided city's most sought- swing voters. These were white liberals, generally caricatured in New York as "Up- West Side liberals." Open race-baiting se- d Giuliani's base only in what might be d the "red states" of New York, the outer ughs of Staten Island, Queens, and parts of klyn, where he had already captured large rities among white ethnics during his previ- un for mayor. Yet race-baiting remained re- nt to the relatively affluent, white social lib- who inhabited much of Manhattan and the dier sections of Brooklyn. Even though many ese voters had become more conservative the years—or had been replaced by younger, e conservative voters—they still would not tenance an openly racist appeal.

iuliani had already displayed a canny instinct ackaging himself to New York liberals. In his and a half years as U.S. Attorney he had in- d repeatedly that prosecuting white-collar inals was just as important as prosecuting t thugs, and he seemed to prove it through stunts as manacling together seventeen Wall et traders and executives arrested on drug ges and parading them through Foley Square wer Manhattan to the U.S. Courthouse, and resting Goldman, Sachs executives at their offices and marching them (one of them in handcuffs) past their stunned colleagues. No matter that four of his most publicized Wall Street convictions were overturned on appeal; his reputation as a truly impartial scourge of the corrupt had been fully established.

In his second run for mayor, Giuliani's "quality of life" appeal brilliantly bundled together any number of the quotidian irritations of living in a large and turbulent metropolis. And with the use of select code words—such as the "surrender" of the streets or "One Standard, One City"—Giuliani was able to subtly link these frustrations to a racial root cause. In this, Giuliani was aided by Dinkins's maladroit handling of a number of searing racial incidents, including the boycott of a Korean-American grocery in Brooklyn, an anti-Semitic race riot in Crown Heights, and the ongoing hate-mongering of black racial



extremists such as Alton Maddox, Vernon Mason, and Sonny Carson. Giuliani used such incidents to create a sort of siege mentality, in which whites, already harassed at every turn by squeegee men, trash storms, and peddlers, were on the verge of losing control of the city entirely—maybe were even at the precipice of some sort of apocalyptic racial massacre.

This narrative was echoed by various white, media, and political elites—many of them ostensible liberals. Michael Tomasky, writing a post-election analysis in *The Nation* (*The Nation*!), would insist, "Above all, there must be a single standard for civil behavior." Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in an April 1993 speech—one that echoed Giuliani's campaign in its title, "No Surrender"—asked an audience that included Dinkins himself to contemplate "what in New York City is better today than it was fifty years ago." His answer was that *nothing* was

graph of a demonstration against police violence and Mayor Giuliani after the
of Amadou Diallo, February 1999 © Andrew Lichtenstein/Corbis Sygma

better. He [illegible] but somehow [illegible] had been [illegible] that it was nonetheless racked by a major race [illegible] columnist [illegible] others, as "a profile in candor for articulating America's unspoken obsession with race," and, in the following week's column, insisted that not only was our [illegible] but, too, was the level of violent crime itself, "no matter what the statistics say."

[illegible] Giuliani's campaign. A poll taken the same year indicated that some 58 percent of New Yorkers reported [illegible] than they had back in 1989, [illegible] all records but when they still had themselves a white [illegible] Taylor, writing in *New York* magazine, conceded that New Yorkers might in fact be safer but claimed they *felt* less safe because the [illegible] were especially brutal and capricious—"Entire families are executed in drug wars [illegible] kill each other over sneakers. Robbers casually shoot victims even if they have surrendered wallets. The proliferation of carjackings means people are no longer safe even in their automobiles." [illegible] *Times*, *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen chimed in with an October 1993 column that asserted, "Aside from the deranged, there's not a single Gothamite who thinks he's getting better under Dinkins—no matter what his statistics say."

No matter what his statistics say! It could no longer be maintained that crime, or unemployment, or any other problem facing New York was due to [illegible] cause, which might yield some practical solution. New York's plight had become one big moral parable, about a culture of permissiveness, fostered by a black mayor, on behalf of his black constituents. Cohen pro- [illegible] ideological politics, writing, "When Giuliani emphasizes civic responsibilities and collective obligations— [illegible] as well—he is sounding no different from Clinton in the presidential campaign. It's the sort of rhetoric that won Clinton the [illegible] and has elected politicians of all races to city halls in Cleveland, Hous- [illegible] and Jersey City. Sometimes it [illegible] Democrat is a Republican."

[illegible] the brand is more impor- [illegible] was precisely the sort of [illegible] Rudolph Giuliani could [illegible] Day 1993, Giuliani signifi- [illegible] 1989 margins of victory in [illegible] cut his 1989 deficits by [illegible] Manhattan, 28,000 in [illegible] the Bronx, thereby transforming a narrow loss into a narrow [illegible] ry. According to Giuliani biographer [illegible] Siegel, polls showed Giuliani especially "[illegible] ing gains among Upper West Side Liberal [illegible] en defecting from Dinkins on the crime is[illegible] Nor was this a passing conversion. In the [illegible] lowing election, in 1997, Giuliani won a [illegible] among these white, upscale, once-liberal [illegible] ers, cruising easily to victory against [illegible] Messinger, an opponent who was herself a [illegible] ular Upper West Side liberal. Giuliani [illegible] done the seemingly impossible. He had [illegible] aged to line up supposedly liberal Northeast [illegible] Democrats behind a campaign of racial fear [illegible] hatred, with a dexterity that would have [illegible] Karl Rove, or Bill Clinton, to shame.

DO-NOTHING MAYOR

Giuliani's two terms as mayor are the only [illegible] tive office he has ever held, and true to the [illegible] ideological politics of the 1990s, he achieved [illegible] most nothing of significance in that time [illegible] presented no sweeping vision of his city's fu[illegible] built no great public buildings, instituted no [illegible] reforms, and in fact made no meaningful effo[illegible] restructure New York along either liberal *or* [illegible] servative lines. In true Clintonian fashion [illegible] political fortune was largely a function of the [illegible] Jones index, which stood at 3,754.09 the da[illegible] took office and opened at 10,136.99 the day he[illegible]

It is true that crime continued to drop pre[illegible] itously during Giuliani's mayoral reign—as it [illegible] all around the country, for many reasons. Giul[illegible] credited the decline mostly to a "CompSt[illegible] computer-driven system brought in by his new [illegible] lice commissioner, William Bratton—origin[illegible] a Dinkins hire—then forced Bratton out when [illegible] began to steal some of Giuliani's own spotli[illegible] Meanwhile, police response time actually [illegible] *creased* by 24 percent in his first term, and the [illegible] centage of felony arrests leading to an ind[illegible] ment *dropped* by almost one third.

The city's public schools, a perennial source [illegible] despair, continued to decay, while Giuliani fo[illegible] out three different chancellors over various t[illegible] al disagreements. He removed 600,000 N[illegible] Yorkers from the welfare rolls, with methods t[illegible] the courts repeatedly struck down as illegal [illegible] arbitrary. What happened to most of these peo[illegible] how they managed to live and where, is simply [illegible] recorded—just as it is not recorded what h[illegible] pened to the more than 8 million people w[illegible] were thrown off the rolls by Bill Clinton's natio[illegible] "welfare reform."

What Giuliani relied upon to rule were reg[illegible] authoritarian gestures. He screamed at report[illegible] during press conferences and ranted at caller[illegible] his radio show; tried to cut off city funding to [illegible] nonprofit AIDS hospice that had dared to cr[illegible]

him; attempted to censor controversial art; and berantly picked fights with unpopular out-of-ners, such as Yassir Arafat, or the entire state Virginia, which had balked at accepting New k's garbage.

Race never went away either. Without quite ng so, Giuliani made it clear that *white* people uld no longer be on the defensive in his city. administration was punctuated by a series of y incidents, including the fatal shooting of adou Diallo, an unarmed man mistaken for a ist by four plainclothes police detectives who d forty-one unanswered bullets at him; the l shooting of a club security guard, Patrick smond, after he was approached at random ndercover narcotics officers who insisted that sell them crack; and the brutal rape of a sus-t, Abner Louima, by police officers armed h a broken broom handle.

Any protests over such actions were usually eted with indifference or renewed shows of ce on the part of the mayor. Giuliani con-nted mourners of the world's AIDS victims h police snipers on the roof of City Hall, in-idated demonstrators by ensuring that they nt as much time as possible being put "through system," and summoned an unnerving array eavily armed police, complete with hovering icopters, to virtually "lock down" part of rlem when a noxious black nationalist dared hold a rally there. In the case of Dorismond, murdered guard, Giuliani went so far as to il-ally open and leak the contents of his juvenile ice file to the public.

This sort of behavior came to seem like more n just pandering, perhaps even an authentic ex-ssion of Giuliani's ceaselessly belligerent out-k. His aggressive pursuit of so many demons er the course of his mayoralty eventually began erode his popularity. He pursued street ven-s, saloon dancers, and—in a now famous radio oadcast—even people who loved their pet fer-s. Clearly adrift during his last few months in ice, he informed his wife and children that he uld be seeking a divorce at a public press con-ence; brazenly squired his new mistress about wn; and freely related to the tabloids the details how prostate cancer had affected his sex life. His ll numbers continued to sag, while the end of term-limited time in office loomed with no ob-us political destination on the horizon.

PTEMBER 11 RELAUNCH

In retrospect, it is clear that Giuliani's han-ng of the attack on September 11, 2001, and its ermath was largely a debacle. Our image of udy" as the hero of that day—as "America's ayor"—is the residue of the uncharacteristic avitas and responsibility he displayed in those first few days, the grace note he struck when he stood before the television cameras and told the world that the "number of casualties will be more than any of us can bear," but that "New York is still here," and that we "should act bravely, we should act in a tolerant way."

Giuliani himself was fortunate to still be there. Against the advice of numerous security experts, he had insisted on situating a lavish, $61 million emergency "command bunker" on the twenty-third floor of the forty-seven-story 7 World Trade Center tower. The tower contained no fewer than sixteen different emergency generators and sat over 109,000 gallons of oil in a Con Ed substation; the command bunker added another, *unprotected*, 6,000-gallon fuel tank suspended above the mezzanine. When burning debris from the twin towers fell on 7 World Trade, it went up like "a blowtorch," in the words of investigative reporters Wayne Barrett and Dan Collins, who note in *Grand Illusion, The Untold Story of Rudy Giuliani and 9/11* that Giuliani's defenseless fuel tank acted as a giant fuse.

AS NEW YORK'S MAYOR, THE ONLY ELECTIVE OFFICE HE HAS EVER HELD, GIULIANI ACHIEVED ALMOST NOTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Office of Emergency Management that Giuliani created failed utterly to coordinate rescue efforts between the city's Police and Fire Departments. Even worse, it also failed to ensure that the New York Fire Department had an effective system for communicating with *itself*—a deficiency that had been exposed by the original 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, and one that led eight years later to hundreds of firefighters' being cut off in the towers, without any way of receiving word that the buildings were about to collapse. Giuliani, on-site throughout the disaster, made no attempt to devise any other means to keep the firefighters informed. In 2004, as *New York Times* reporters Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn make clear in their book *102 Minutes*, Giuliani lied against the memory of these men, falsely testifying before a fawning 9/11 Commission that they had refused orders to evacuate.

In the days and weeks after the attack, Giuliani failed to ensure that the workers digging out Ground Zero had adequate protection against hazardous waste, an oversight that it now seems may have led to serious, long-term health consequences for thousands; proposed that his term in office be arbitrarily extended for an indefinite period in order to deal with the recovery from the attack; and placed his mistress and future third wife, Judith Nathan, on the board of a charitable fund for families of the attack's victims. Giuliani would later urge

as police commissioner at the time of 9/11, Bernard Kerik, in charge of training the new Iraqi police force, a task he failed at dismally before scurrying back to New York. Kerik was then nominated on Giuliani's recommendation to become the new head of Homeland Security, before background probes uncovered a thicket of legal and ethical improprieties. These included Kerik's appropriation of an apartment designated a rest area for exhausted World Trade Center excavators as a trysting place for his affair with his publisher, Judith Regan.

Yet the indelible political image of 9/11 remains that of the heroic Rudy. All of the ugliness, all of the racial divisiveness and the relentless bullying, was buried under the rubble of the twin towers, granting Giuliani a remarkable new lease on life. In the wake of the terrorist attack, the whole issue of race would be more deeply repressed in the American consciousness than it had been in at least the past sixty years. Giuliani himself could be safely "relaunched," rebranded as the very embodiment of post-ideological strength, competence, and heroism. What was more, the entire city he led, one that often had been the focus of Americans' most profound suspicions and prejudices in the past, could be reborn with him, as the object of not only our deepest sympathies but also our greatest desires.

THE UNGOVERNABLE WORLD

City Hall has long served as a mausoleum for political ambition in this country, and nowhere more so than in New York, where the ambitions tend to be particularly outsized. Fiorello La Guardia, John Lindsay, Ed Koch, and a host of other New York City mayors all saw their dreams of the presidency crushed under the weight of both their failures *and* their successes in running the country's leading city. (Fernando Wood, perhaps the most brazen scoundrel ever to occupy the office, tried to become head of state by proposing that New York follow the South out of the Union in 1861 and reconstitute itself as the new nation of "Tri-Insula." This notion actually came to a vote in the Common Council before being defeated.) To be mayor of New York was always to associate oneself with a future that too many Americans regarded with fear and loathing, an America full of new immigrant groups, racial and sexual [illegible] liberalism and post-industrialism, crime and divi[illegible]

Yet Rudolph Giuliani's New York had been transformed in the national imagination. Like many leading American cities, it had been turned figuratively inside out. The term "inner city," which had become a euphemism for "slum" or "ghetto" in the 1980s and '90s, has largely faded from the lexicon because in[illegible] cities are now where many of the very wea[illegible] est, most glamorous citizens in the whole co[illegible] try live. Meanwhile the poor are pushed m[illegible] creasingly to the far edges of the city, or all [illegible] way out to "edge cities," small, distant, fa[illegible] metropolises where they are all but invisibl[illegible] the national media.

New York is by many measures the safest [illegible] city in the country, a place whose leading r[illegible] dents accumulate spectacular wealth thro[illegible] all-but-incomprehensible methods. It is [illegible] place where the new class romps through [illegible] endless array of four-star restaurants and mu[illegible] million-dollar condos; a city largely free[illegible] smokestacks or even ships in its harbor. M[illegible] than ever before, New York is what Americ[illegible] *want* the future to be, no matter how fanta[illegible] cal (probably *because* of how fantastical [illegible] seems. It has crossed the bridge to t[illegible] twenty-first century.

Both New York's newfound allure and [illegible] agony during 9/11 made it the inevitable cho[illegible] for the 2004 Republican National Conventi[illegible] and it was no less inevitable that Giulia[illegible] would make his opening bid for national off[illegible] there by spinning out a new narrative of *inter*[illegible] *tional* disorder. Now, speaking behind a rostr[illegible] that bore an uncanny resemblance to a wood[illegible] cross, not three miles from the site of his o[illegible] Gethsemane at Ground Zero, Giuliani recou[illegible] ed his own heroic role on 9/11—now elevat[illegible] to "the worst crisis in our history"—and plac[illegible] the blame for the attacks squarely at the feet [illegible] . . . Europe.

"Terrorism didn't start on September 11, 200[illegible] he informed his ecstatic audience. It began [illegible] stead with—of all things—the 1972 attack [illegible] the Israeli team at the Munich Olympics and [illegible] aftermath, when "the terrorists who slaughter[illegible] the Israeli athletes were released by the Germ[illegible] government—set free!" From there, Giuliani we[illegible] on to cite a long history of European "accomm[illegible] dation, appeasement, and compromise" with te[illegible] rorism that only led to more terrorism and was ak[illegible] to trying to "appease Hitler or trying to accor[illegible] modate the Soviet Union through the use of m[illegible] tually assured destruction." Any objective inqui[illegible] into how a Republican administration allowe[illegible] 9/11 to happen, or what the best strategic r[illegible] sponse to it should be, was irrelevant—as irrel[illegible] vant as digging into the objective reasons for Ne[illegible] York City's economic and social decline.

Giuliani had made the brief not so much fo[illegible] Bush as for himself—the same case, essentiall[illegible] that he had made as to why he should be mayo[illegible] For Europe's spinelessness in the face of terro[illegible] substitute the crime, permissiveness, and coc[illegible]

g of pathological young men and welfare re-
ents supposedly rampant in pre-Giuliani New
k. All that was necessary was will, faith, and
ngth. We could shut down the squeegee men
Al Qaeda in a second. Indeed, all we really
ded to do was to stop coddling them in the fey
nner of Upper West Side Europeans.

Giuliani's convention speech was met with
e acclaim in the major media, in which he was
npared with Winston Churchill and Teddy
osevelt. Once again an objective reality had
n replaced by a moral fable, a pressing situa-
n answered with a resentment. A scapegoat had
n found, an other to blame. And thus the
uliani brand was established—the mayor who
l tamed the ungovernable city would now go
to tame the ungovernable world.

Faced with mounting disorder abroad and at
ne, Americans may well buy into Giuliani's
of new villains and morality. After all, the last
e we felt sufficiently threatened some of our
dia and political elites were willing to throw
de the most established beliefs about race
l genetics and agree that we had the right and
y "to strengthen our species' cognitive de-
ses against an increasingly dangerous global en-
onment." And yet Islamic terrorists are not
eegee men, and Osama bin Laden is not David
akins. A President Giuliani would not be able
nply to bully or overawe the enemies America
s in the world today, although there is every rea-
n to believe that he thinks he could do so.

'ARTY OF ONE

Other than his own temper, the greatest ob-
cle facing Giuliani in 2008 is that this time
e narrative of disorder plainly indicts his own
rty. The war in Iraq, the disaster in New Or-
ns, and the corruption scandals that keep
etastasizing within the executive branch are
inextricably linked not only to the Bush
dministration but to the Republican Party it-
f. Giuliani will be particularly hard-pressed
wriggle out of his continuing support for
sh's war—though he has found ways to sub-
criticize the conduct of the war, telling Lar-
King that he would "do it with more troops,
aybe 100,000, 150,000 more."

The war and the terrorist threat clearly re-
ain *Rudy*'s "issues," ones on which he contin-
s to command unequaled respect from the
merican public and the commentariat. They are
so the most pressing issues of the campaign to
ising number of Americans and particularly to
publicans, as opposed to the diminishing num-
r of voters still preoccupied with the old cul-
re-war staples. Some 31 percent of G.O.P. vot-
s chose Iraq as their top priority and 17 percent
oose terrorism and security, according to the
Pew Research Center; just 7 percent chose abor-
tion and 1 percent picked gay marriage.

Just as Bill Clinton was able to silence labor,
the advocates of racial and gender equality,
and all of the Democrats' other so-called spe-
cial interests in the wake of his party's repeated
presidential defeats, so Rudolph Giuliani may
be able to mute the Republicans' religious wing
in the wake of George W. Bush's disastrous ad-
ministration. Yet what will this mean? Many of
us would welcome any setback for the Christ-
ian right, in view of the buffoonish antics of
many of its leaders; its bigoted, know-nothing
assaults on gays and lesbians, evolution, and
abortion rights; its biased and hypocritical in-
terpretations of the Bible. Yet to expel evan-
gelical Christians from the body politic would
also be to dismiss millions of Americans who
are profoundly disturbed by the amoral cyni-
cism that now permeates this nation's elite
classes; by the waves of misogynistic pornogra-
phy and ultra-violence that inundate our popu-
lar culture; by the growth industries that have
grown out of gambling and hedonism. To dis-
miss these evangelical Christians would be to
dismiss millions of Americans who genuinely
believe in something greater than themselves,
a whole population that has been slowly but
steadily won over to such causes as environ-
mentalism and social justice in recent years.
And where would such people go? The obvious
answer would be, into some sort of coalition
with all those the Democratic Party has tried
to banish from *its* ranks—that is, the poor and
the working poor, people of color, and all those
dislocated by the global economy. This would
mean a party of the religious and the disinher-
ited—exactly the combination that has given
rise to the sort of extremism we so deplore in
the Islamic world.

As repugnant as George W. Bush's brand of so-
cial conservatism has been, it is not ideology
that is at the heart of his administration's failure
but his personality, for in the post-ideological
world the politics of personality is all that re-
mains. The worst excesses of the Bush regime
have stemmed directly from its leader's charac-
ter—that is, its rampant cronyism; its arrogance
and egotism; its peremptory, bullying tone and
methods; its refusal to brook criticism from with-
in or without; its frighteningly authoritarian im-
pulses; its need to create enemies as a means of
governing; its impulsiveness and naïveté; its out-
right contempt for the law; and its truly stag-
gering ability to substitute its own versions of
what it wishes the world to be for any recogni-
tion of objective reality. Judging from his record
in gaining and holding power, there is no reason
to believe that Rudolph Giuliani's presidency
would be substantially different. ■

HARPER'S BOOKSHELF

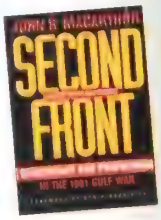


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BATTLING THE HARD MAN

Notes on addiction to the pornography of violence

By Benjamin DeMott

itors' note: When our friend and longtime ıtributor Benjamin DeMott passed away September 29, 2005, he left behind the owing manuscript, which he had worked on udily throughout his final illness. We find it ıarkable not only for its courage and style for an honest insight that if anything has y appreciated with time.

t first I barely noticed "him"—the sly, implausi-, mean-spirited loiterer whis-ring hard-man trash in my ad. I dismissed the filth and nt as an insignificant side cur-nt—something that could ve been running in me, pol-ed and unnoticed, for years, dden by high-level self-gard. Who let this in? Who uld the hard man hurt?

But over time, he's claimed ace. Before my own eyes, not swear) because of any overt tion on my part, I have anged for the worse in ought and feeling. It's a done ing, seemingly, over and ne. The hard man has fin-ed the job.

At moments I'm certain my shame genuine—the same for the pain. But an also see myself as one more erwrought, late-life ego-tripper—lf-deceived, lost in his *Eigenwelt*, inking and writing in Bud Light, not od. If I could put this as a plea to au-ority I would say: Give me back my cancy. Not my "goodness," not my nocence, just yesterday's futureless let-it-be vacancy—the self who couldn't conceivably say *make it happen*. This was the writer at sixteen, a twelve-dollars-weekly map clerk, kid soon to be called up, prospectless runaway from home and school, who sometimes



climbed to a fifty-five-cent Saturday matinee seat at the Morosco or wherever, and when he did was ready to tear up the minute Saroyan's pearly-pure offstage cornetist eased into "My Wonderful One." Big-eared in the photo album, wide round eyes, sweet grin picking daisies in a field with an older sister, he knew from toddlerhood the blame was his for what he was—a fuckup—and surrendered in early adolescence, without protest or resentment, to going nowhere and hating nothing. If I could recover him, this everything-accepted sentimentalist and weeper, if we could somehow get back in touch—

WAITING FOR CASUALTY REPORTS

The hard man wears a grim look as the nightly TV news casualty report draws near. The purpose is to forestall—through playacted concern—charges of heartlessness. My humanity isn't yet extinguished, says the look—my anguish at the suffering of the dead and injured and bereaved. Naturally the look isn't to be trusted. The numbers delivered by anchorpersons settle and spread within the hard man's body much like any familiar, anticipated, enjoyable, middle-range, controlled-substance fix. Always I'm aware that the emotions I present in living room response to the human tragedies—my gestures of "bitter revulsion and despair" (a bewildered headshake at the "terrible futility," weighty sigh or slow zombielike nodding meant to bespeak frustration and impotence)—are removed (either slightly or far) from the emotions felt (the latter can include gratification).

But unambiguous guilt about mixed hypocrisy and duplicity seldom obtrudes. When, as happens, a

ıpture," by John Brill. Courtesy the artist and Kent Gallery, New York City

ome sort of enormous horse race in which horses dashed at top speed and collided with one another and riders were thrown and blood was spilled and a horse had to be put down with a rifle and all of that—this remarkable event would naturally have energized the child's mind in a certain never-to-be-altered way, and would have validated, made permanent, some potential brain pathways that otherwise might have been stagnant or nonexistent. Well, every child in America has had those crash-and-burn brain pathways energized and activated. This is something that we must all necessarily understand. There is no child born now who has access to television who does not have those hyperactive pathways energized and validated.

—George W. S. Trow,
My *Pilgrim's Progress*

My *Umwelt* was mild, maybe as old as 1890. Birth year: 1924. Grandfather farms. Fragrance of grape arbor, sun&dust barn easily smoked. Can harness team, clean shaft hooves. Father missed first war. (No war talk in front of kids.) No football. (Fatal accident to player three years before I start high school.) Low hyperactive energized pathways, long short. Played fine "Wonderful Wine"—no sloppy vibrato—on borrowed Olds trombone.

No crash-and-burn *environment* to blame.

THE HARD MAN'S PHYSICALITY: EVER "IN THE MIDST OF POWER"

The swagger is the outward expression of the inward reality of feeling oneself "in the midst of power." The power swirls round the hard man's shoulders and extends downward into the hands—my loosely clenched (but also mysteriously, even humorously relaxed) fists. The careless coordination of knees, elbows—the general physique—speaks for—or at least aims—at-homeness in any and every field of force. *Mental* at-homeness.

When a NASCAR event goes wrong and therefore erupts on a screen, this car goes toward the infield, that car dodges it but swipes car three, five or six cars bang each other, a wheel comes off, tearing down the track on its own—straight up, running synecdoche—past a driver peeling himself from wreckage in flames. When and if the TV rebukes hard men—sends us back, that is, to the prissy anchor desk—there's again the sense of letdown. (Night without casualty report.) The same when that desk "cuts away from" just-exploded, burning Humvees on the Baghdad airport expressway. "Cars, cars, fast, fast!" Le Corbusier wrote close to a century ago. "One is seized, filled with enthusiasm, with joy. ... The simple and naive pleasure of being in the midst of power.... One participates in it.... One takes part in [it].... One believes in it."

Le Corbusier had only the whizzing in mind, not the *POW*—not so much as a fenderbender. But in the global present "fast, fast" and crash-crash constitute kindergarten prep in seeing and feeling for all. What binds us to the Toyota kids—crash-empowered viopornified grownups to crash-empowered youth—is felt intimacy with, direct or near-direct experience of, explosive strength: something in which to participate, believe, get off. A strong lasting experience, says the Levitra woman.

The ecstasy of impact underwrites the hard man's viofreak swagger. Or, rather, the memory or imagination of such ecstasy. A knife through butter, a car through the wall. The sense that one CAN bring it down, bring all of it, all of it down. Atta at the wall of the Old City in Cairo watching U.S. enterprise and taste bring down a world (homes, relics, kitchens, prayers, memories). Bush telling a Tampa crowd—I saw this—that he dares to touch the third rail—social security—which others are frightened even to gaze at. You feel power swirling close to the man's collarbone—upper torso. So does he. A casual thing yet clearly joyful. The hijacker's manual, says Kanan Makiya, explains what to do if a passenger does "rise up and stop you." You are to "consider that this is an offering that God has given you.... It is a gift—not an offering, a gift that has been bestowed, which you can give as an offering to your mother and father as you slaughter the passenger.... An act of slaughter emulating the great sacrifice that stands at the foundations of religious faith, namely that of Abraham sacrificing his son. A great foundational story of faith ... turned on its head." The joy—the ecstasy—of impact.

> Cold. No life in his face. No expression in his face. If I am happy, I smile. When I'm angry, I look angry. This guy [Atta] had just a cold face.
>
> —Rudi Dekkers,
> flight school owner

> When you came down from a flying lesson you'd be very excited, you'd want to share some information, et cetera. You never had that feeling with Mohammed Atta, definitely not. Because I can see him striding towards me, towards the aircraft, and the thing that struck me was that he had a terribly set expression on his face. Totally unemotionless. Cold eyes.... He seemed to have a sort of fixed purposeful expression on his face almost as though he was hypnotized, in a way. There was not a flicker of a smile, or of a recognition ...
>
> —Anne Greaves, student pilot

HORSEPOWER FASCISM

Fantasies of obliteration—or, at the minimum, of inflicting pain that shocks and awes—are correctly assumed to figure in the ecstasy of impact. "What driver is not tempted," Adorno wrote a half-century ago, "merely by the power of his engine, to wipe out the vermin of the street, pedestrians, children and cyclists? The movements machines demand of their users ... have the violent, hard-hitting, unresting jerkiness of Fascist maltreatment." It's a mistake to fail to reckon the joy of slaughter, in short, when brooding on your own and others' temptations. After years I haven't forgotten sweeping myself—my former less polluted self, that is—my wife and some daughter back onto the curb, a half-second to spare, just out of a truck's path, on a centuries-old European street; the approaching truck driver running the light had made his decision: stay in my path, vermin, and you are done. The hard man's anticipatory joy of impact.

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF REPLAY

But a [illegible] connected to me mine—" Where it *our* car." The call to arm the other night—they grasped that delight in an injury done. The passion—call recall from the minute before and the minute after, from incarnation and attraction—from consequence generally. It's utterly apolitical impatient with or derisive of ownership rights (of car, country, or person). It's self authorized to delete complicating detail (youth, age, redness, beauty, attachment, commitment)—stripped of sympathy by the force need to make it happen. "Terrible hit," on football field—made them happen. After the middle linebackers level the pitiably vulnerable end, down and score momentarily vanish. Immaterial to the hard man spectator whether the prone motionless casualty belongs to "my" team or theirs, whether my side loses or gains from the event. Desire suspends attachment at an unacknowledged still point. I want another crushing full throttle collision. Give me a repeat of the featureless player driven into the ground again, vaporized again. *Make it happen.* How *many* flaming flying bodies from the towers? "Everything but the enemy was vaporized," says the voiceover as the camera noses about in the Baghdad smoke. One hundred and sixteen dead. No, one hundred and twenty-two. Infuriatingly postponed at first, response to my demand for replay arrives as trainer and stretcher approach the crash site, whereupon power and strength swirl around my shoulders again, granting another interval of participation and belief in the all or nothing violent stroke. Here at last—the censored flaming burning bodies!

Replay is to violence porn and its hard man audience what bondage (capture, whipping, and the like) is to standard porn. The promise of endless return.

But who made a boy read a dry field the client? The teenager who reared up for *The Beautiful People*?

A CULTURE HERO PROBES THE PROCESS

The papers announce that Spielberg the filmmaker will address the killing of eleven Israeli athletes, by the PLO's Black September, at the Munich Olympics in 1972, and the retaliatory assassinations of Palestinians by the Mossad. The article notes Spielberg's hiring of the playwright Tony Kushner "to humanize" what he felt was in one script "too procedural a thriller." The film's first fifteen minutes will be devoted to the killing of the Israeli athletes. The problem for the filmmaker, according to one historian invited to comment on the project, concerns the alleged "misgivings" after the fact felt by at least a few of the Mossad assassins. "It's become," said this observer, "a stereotype, the guilt ridden Mossad hit man. You never see guilt ridden hit men in any other ethnicity. Somehow it's only the Jews. I don't see Dirty Harry feeling guilt ridden. It's the flip side of the rationally motivated Palestinian terrorist: you can't have a Jew going to exact vengeance and not feel guilt ridden about it, and you can't have a Palestinian who's operating out of pure evil—it's got to be the result of some trauma."

This historian may or may not be wrong—but the business about guilt ridden Jewish hit men is an irrelevancy. What is relevant is Spielberg's own unexamined addiction.

The pretense that this pornified artist's subject is the appetite of others, not his own, that he isn't himself a creator of the hard man's taste he now presumes to examine. At the summit of the murder of mind and feeling in our day stand the Spielberg monuments—fifteen, twenty, twenty-five minutes and more of soul-crushing flesh-rending *savored* human destruction. Make it happen again—the immeasurable brutalities of war, genocides, slave torture, assassinations. Have it both ways. Present yourself as humane inquirer—a cute I.I. *sensuti*—as you intensify the worldwide—the universal—voyeurizing epidemic.

Neither high art nor mass art—never mind how rich in "sympathy"—can wash away the voyeur's sins.

I have just committed a self exculpating indictment? Yes, but the result all the same is a true bill. Takes a hard man to know one.

INTERVAL OF DECENCY

He came off the mound flying alo[ng] at the moment the bat met the [ba]ll and the concussed ball struck into [his] head. The terrible sound that's [im]possible when you attempt to pull [it] into words, forgetting that it was [nev]er really a sound, that it stopped sound, speech, cheers, crowd noise. "Na[me] Clement—" A play by play announcer began with those words and [bro]ke off. He's down, the line drive hit [him] hit his head.

Now came the interval of decency. Trainers and players rushed to the fallen man, became a protective circle for him. A player held Clement's hand. An announcer gave the man's name. Another player was on a cell phone and a voice from the screen speculated that the call was made to Clement's wife. The camera followed the movements of the emergency workers. The silences were protracted. The period of seconds—or little minutes—the increments were [un]strained—but unpolluted by excesses of interruption. Interruption is, in other words, meant to establish mastery. A moment of violence is allowed to settle in the mind. Decency surely was a word one might have dared to use had it not communicated unconcern, absence of intense involvement. I remember "thinking" when the play by play man spoke of someone holding Clement's hand—thinking of that day I went to see my dying friend Eric at Columbia Presbyterian. Sitting in a chair at bedside I touched his face. He seemed in a deep sleep. Patted the "tousled" gray hair round his ears. I thought of Eric's first friend Kingsley's loving dismay [at] no one had thought to have Eric's hair cut in the hospital. "He looks like Lear on the moor," Kingsley complained sharply. I stroked Eric's face, realizing never in a whole [life]time had I caressed a man physically until this moment. I was in [awe] at the pleasure—the lost pleasure too—of the experience. I imagined a smile forming on Eric's features. I thought—No, he's smiling, [he's] half-conscious?

When the play by play people spoke of the possible phone call to

ment's wife I thought of Mailer's
ute to DiMaggio's courage—day
r day facing pitchers' efforts to
sh him back, scare him—using
awful power of the headhunter
reak his will to face them down.
s this tribute pure macho bond-
? One more embrace of violence?
attempt to peer into the mystery
his wife's love for him? I won-
ed, waiting with millions of oth-
if Mailer's feelings had any tinc-
e of awe for a *life* of excellence
lt on daily courage, rather than
hyped-up rush of wartime or
gtime combat. Did a routiniza-
n of risk occur. Could it immu-
e the potential victim.

My wayward reflection went to
Maggio's marriage, back to Clement
l down, the silent stands, on to the
cher's wife. Did she come to the
k for home games? Were there
ldren? What were players' human
ationships truly like? How many
m friends might they have? Did
y ever talk, as grown men talk,
ut their wives' foibles, their chil-
n's achievements?

Later in the day, on other news
grams, and in the sports pages—
erywhere as it seemed—the mo-
nt was reduced to the simplifying
elty of the replay. The sound of
click off the head, the instant
ing on about Clement, the hospi-
, condition, and so forth. The ru-
nation, the succession of irrele-
ncies, the connecting of the
ment of violence with family,
nily life and love, friendship,
ath, physical inhibition, courage—
that assimilates horror, all that
ters into the weak but durable
ng called human decency—the
ce to imagine the impulse of giv-
physical comfort to the doomed
lete, stroke his hair, his face, to
l his unconscious form that he is
ply loved—

All that space was erased by replay.
But I remember that during the time
at space existed I occupied it natu-
ly, easily, no effort. I was not impa-
nt for the replay. The bang bang
sh. I grew back to humanness. No
ger conditioned to demand they
ke it happen.

I resolved to store this memory
hin myself. Together with the kind



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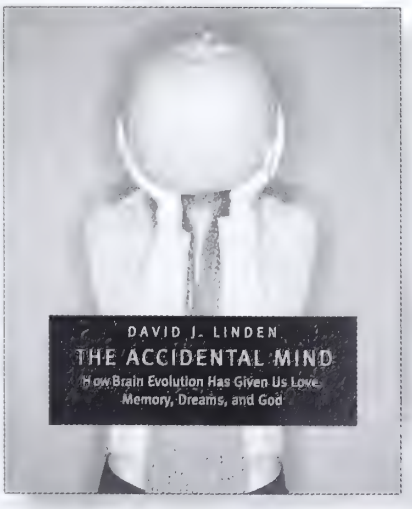
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forty, the loss of the good, and of Our Transparency.

We can't bequeath to account good writing, and play by play initiation? the question will be how to transmit?

MEMORIAL AS REPLAY

> *A week [during time recorder Tech Center I was enclosed in a phone booth the size of a grave immediately after the attack. The only way that I can the pressure. It became a cure to be bedder of the sentence, and pulled it perpetrate-supersentential rape.*
>
> Jimmy Breslin
> "Simple Sight Is Most Moving,"
> *Newsday*, May 21, 2002

OS PROPOSITION 8, WHICH I LIKE I'M THE RESULT OF IMPERSONAL INELUCTABLE DECLINE

What is to be done with memory for the life, myself? With the therefore-ness? With those who came under touching but will not rock on with them even more? People who will say anything in their pursuit of an utterance except *I am the cause*. When I was a kid I was reaching to come. Asserting that I have become what I have become owing to the technique of replay. The age of mechanical reproduction. We begin in innocence. An era of inevitable decline.

This explanation I find more tolerable than Jerry Falwell on the edge of 9/11. ("The pervert and the abortionist and the feminist and the gay and lesbian" are to protect Hell. Billy Graham: "Another who believes the 'Cause' was our immoral conduct (for your sins)." Since we assume we have taken them for at God and said, 'God we want you out of our school, our government, our business, we want you out.'") When I hear myself saying I perience to blame I perience did me in, the idea of decline becomes liable more to break down than the idea of guilty, except for hubristic comparison. Once I was good, you see. I turned from the snapshot. In the field with my dear sister Jennie, pedunculate. The four-year-old I already mem-

ories, time with the boys, conversations, walking, and not judging as safe.

But this is there as a touchstone to come. The hard-won comedy.

THE SCRIPTS' STATION

A dozen years ago, as a hospital for the first time since the war, I pushed myself to walk from my bed to the nurses' station and one day a nurse, very young, probably new, pale and looking quite ill herself, stopped me at the desk, catching my breath. She said, *You have such a kind face*. I made a short speech. I said, to myself, Lordy, when the memory returns I dispatch it quickly. My personal "kind face" is moral capital I will not—must not—spend. I have similarly scary, backsliding attitudes about certain pieces of music—sounds that could sweeten time at the end, shored-up fragments we can't crumble at the touch, it seemed. Implicit here is the assumption that redemption is conceivable enough to the end. For the hard man as for others. Straight to the end one will be capable of needlepoint or refashion a Schubert trio or Purcell aria or Billie's Lover Man duet. Cool, cool, cool/what a little moonlight will do(o-oo-oo)—or the memory of a young nurse reading one—Eve (hence one's nature) as "kind"—enough to the end not even the hard man will believe that the losses suffered—the irreparable damage—are permanent.

TRACING THE "DECLINE": WALTER REED HOSPITAL

Because of the remembered nurse and a precious snapshot in a family album and inexplicable devotion to Schubert's B-flat Trio and the song "I remember, I remember" and many lines of Wordsworth (memorized 1942–45) still recitable minus error, I believe a time existed in my life when I could not have passed over, unaffected, the presidential visit to Walter Reed hospital to talk with wounded troops—the living human creatures whose limbs were cut off, burned, blasted, ripped because of the authoritarian decisions for invasion. (I defend

herewith and hereby the assertion that even I wasn't a hard man.) In exhaustive detail beside the maimed human creature in front of him speaking cordially, I would have been presented *in thought*, Matthews's *Hardball* wanted to know what the President said to the Captain after the leg blown off by a land mine he'd risen yesterday to return to combat. Replay footage is shown of the mine prosthesis flying off as they took him to run. Thing flew into the air. He thanked me, said the Captain, author of the best-selling book *Leadership in Action*.

Matthews was especially taken by the evocation in the Captain's book of the experience of feeling the leg come off in the boot. The moment of being hit. "You make us feel proud," Matthews said admiringly to his Captain. He tries with a hand gesture or movement of his head to recreate the sense of physicality that the Captain brought to his description of the moment of the wounding. And the final severance—

> MATTHEWS: When you're conscious of it, a doctor—or a pretty doctor—says, "Do you want to keep it?"
> CAPTAIN: He said, "We can cut it off or we can try to put something it together. It", fancied up, and
> MATTHEWS: "—it will have a deployment"?
> CAPTAIN: "—we'll probably cut it off. We'll probably cut it off on you."
> MATTHEWS: But didn't he say "I will have a deployment"?

I listened with interest, feeling more revulsion at Matthews's fascination than at the authorities' cordiality.

The "self" that understands Matthews's detached curiosity about "how it feels" and is undisturbed by the authorities' clubbable congeniality with the representative of those killed or maimed is like the poacher to be who doesn't protest as Mokuu the kid stuffs turkey scraps in Ogde's *The Immortal*. The scene screams for outrage—the wife's outrage at Toyota teaching grandchildren to children. The "adversary culture"—Lionel Trilling's phrase—we're pony up the outrage for plausible-sounding reasons detailed nonetheless by dozens of Underground Men and

men. I have my reasons, too: my
ons are my *decline*, which is not
fault.
Decline from *what*?

NTEMPT FOR ONE'S OWN PRETENSE SERIOUSNESS

lings of distance, detachment,
elty—these are inescapable. But
sense that they don't matter—
t they belong either to a puzzle or
fiction—comes from the mind of
hard-man prick. I am nagged, I
nit, by contempt for my own "se-
usness." When I feel concern
kering at my losses—of decency,
ntmindedness, goodness—I blame
iers—persons, institutions—as a
ans of changing the subject.
hen I try to isolate details of feel-
in myself I discover they're in-
stantial—snowflakes and dande-
n fluff, breathe and they're gone. I
gh out loud at tough political
ckery of "sensitivity," enjoying it,
d abruptly remember that once I
s on the side of those who found
sitivity to be the defining human
ality (*such a kind face*)—but feel
me only briefly about laughing. I
rk at drawing a fine contrast—
ween, for instance, my loved one
d myself—and then mute the
es because understanding what
truly about might establish one
y or another that something of
sequence is indeed happening.
t why, always why—the question
ineradicable. Why must this
nething of consequence happen?

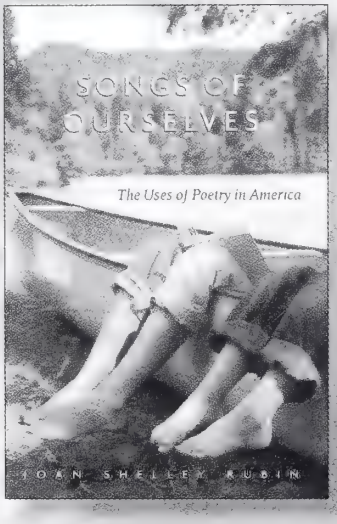
E PORNIFICATION OF MOHAMMED TA

fore he began the 9/11 planning, Mo-
mmed Atta lived crash after crash.
ere was the cavity somewhere outside
eppo in Syria—a lost city being ex-
vated. (Atta's dissertation master at
mburg Technical U. sent Atta to
ruins in 1994 to observe because of
latter's interests in archaeology, ar-
itecture, city planning, the Islamic
st.) Soon after came Aleppo itself,
other crash-crash site because a re-
velopment project was in progress.
ar the kitchens down. A reporter,
rry McDermott, following Atta's
cks years later, wrote that in Aleppo

SONGS OF OURSELVES

THE USES OF POETRY IN AMERICA

JOAN SHELLEY RUBIN

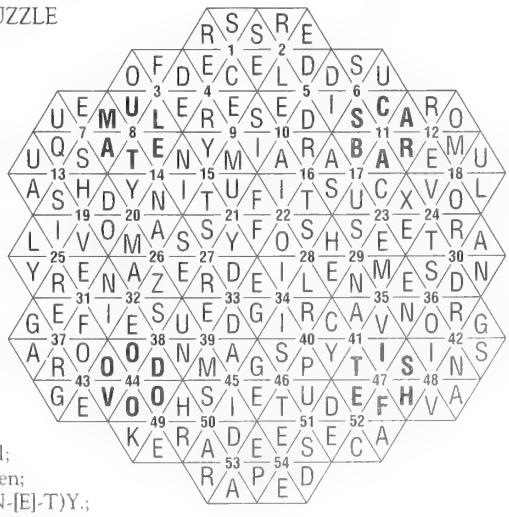


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—ROBERT PINSKY

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SOLUTION TO THE JULY PUZZLE



NOTES FOR "HEX SIGNS":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram*

The four unclued entries are (clockwise): AMULET, SCARAB, FETISH, and VOODOO.

1. RECESS, two mngs.; 2. (w)ELDERS; 3. F-OUL[E]D*; 4. RECEDE*; 5. DID-DLE*; 6. DISCUS(S); 7. MASQUE, homophone; 8. AMULET; 9. MISER(L)Y; 10. RAISED, razed; 11. SCARAB; 12. REMORA, hidden; 13. SQUASH, two mngs.; 14. N.(IN-[E]-T)Y.; 15. M(idwest)-U-TINY; 16. TIARAS*; 17. A-BAC(rev.)-.S. 18. VOLUME, two mngs.; 19. DOVISH*; 20. DYNAMO*; 21. 'S-TUFFY, pun; 22. SOF(FI,rev.)T; 23. EX-CUSE, queues; 24. V(ORT)EX; 25. LIVERY, pun; 26. A-MAZES; 27. DR(ESS)Y; 28. HE(LI[ft])OS*; 29. EN-MESH*; 30. STRAND, two mngs.; 31. RE-FINE; 32. (qui)Z-A(NI)ES, rev.; 33. DR-EDGE; 34. G.I.-R-L-I.E.; 35. V-AN ME*-N; 36. DRONES*; 37. FO(RAG)E; 38. U.N.-DOES; 39. UN(M.A.)DE*; 40. CRISPY, hidden; 41. C(A-V)ITY; 42. GR(O)INS*; 43. GROOVE*; 44. VOODOO; 45. AGEISM*; 46. G(renades)-ETUPS*; 47. FETISH; 48. VAN-IS-H; 49. HOOKER, two mngs.; 50. RA(w)-DISH; 51. ETUDES, * of DES(tit)UTE; 52, DEF(rev.)-ACE; 53. PARADE*; 54. SEE(P.E.)D.

The solution diagram for "Upwardly Mobile" in the July issue read "MISKS" and "SHUN," whereas it should have read "MINKS" and "SHUT." We apologize for the error.

the collision of old and new isn't merely theoretical":

> You can follow old roads, twisting along lines of elevation and drainage, through old neighborhoods, dense and jumbled just as they must have been a thousand years before, then suddenly come upon something new—a concrete apartment building that looks like it arrived from Mars or Moscow, or a three-story mini-mall fresh off the boat from Sherman Oaks.
>
> Atta focused on a neighborhood called Almadiyeh Square. It, too, had suffered modern improvements. In the 1970s, the government dug broad new [access] roads . . . to and through the old town. Crews cut part of a road right through Almadiyeh, tearing down what they needed to, and put up a small building to sell souvenirs to the tourists the road was intended to carry.

The following summer Atta and a couple of friends won a grant to study the Egyptian government's plans for redeveloping the Islamic City in Cairo. Probably this was the onset of his huge hunger—triggered by direct encounter with modernization's earthmovers. Grounds for life and work—ragged, tumbling, stony—were to be cleared as if for Western eyes. All changed, changed utterly. The revolutionary prospect: a theme park. Malls to survey a collection of shiny "monuments," "Oriental" cafés and ersatz arts-and-crafts workshops, lots of lawn. A place inhabited for more than fifty centuries was to be recast, complete with costumes. Atta and companions were appalled. "The government planned [on] removing many of the people who lived there, evicting the onion and garlic sellers . . . and bringing in troupes of actors to play the real people they would displace." In a word, the old city was to be knocked down and marketed as "an Islamic Disneyland."

Events demanded replay.

THEATERGOER AT SIXTEEN; LATER, PALGRAVE IN MY PACK

NOTE: [to anybody trying to read this through: The passage ahead with the Saroyan and his hero who destroys advertisements—papering the stage with ads for the goods—matters to the whole for the reason that the kid isn't ripping anything violently. The kid plays randomly (rip) / burst out with the pearly cornet. A page in the air. No purposedriven motivedriven. He spoke to me because of a peculiar note of hopelessness somehow reconciled. You are going nowhere young man, but maybe there's nowhere to go. No talent. No inside track. No education. So what you could not have, would not have, any kind of a future, well, let it be. Don't mean I was happy about the situation, just that it was so utterly emptied of possibility or destination or any reason to fool yourself with make-it-happen imaginings that you made your bed with it. In your fifty-five-cent seat. I'm not sure I can write this yieldingness—the way the sweetness of Saroyan gave it a kind of voice, made you feel kind, as the playwright imagined himself, as "My Wonderful One" was—the song with its self-abnegating sense of the perfection of the beloved—but the idea is to try. Not to say surrender's the OPPOSITE of pornification. Some would dispute that. For myself I would claim that, after all, by the time I went in the Army, I was a step beyond Saroyan, why else would I know three or was it four stanzas of the Nightingale Ode? And I did, I did.

An irrelevancy. The point is the replaymaking self, the make-it-happen self did not then exist. Look, I had no MEANS. I was not Atta.]

My family broke, I'm out of high school, clerking in NYC for minimum dough but still enough for one two-bit or dollar-ten matinee Saturday, and it's Saroyan I love. Soft, saccharine Saroyan. I can still see the kid ripping pages out of the Satevepost downstage and the lovely pure cornet offstage doing "My Wonderful One" and I can see Eddie Dowling with the "whore" in the bar—all of it still vivid. I teared up in pity for myself over and over, which was bad but not proof of monsterhood. And when Lynn B. set me straight—my first grownup friend, teacher at Hopkins where the infantry sent me for six months before the program folded—he did so by giving me his copy of Keats's letters and then a Palgrave. I think it was a Palgrave.* And back in a rifle company, I memorized some short ones, or pieces of the long ones. The Reaper singing was, to my a version of "Wonderful One" offs But there is no proof of monsterhood this sentimentality. Nor is it mere mean, nor was it softness. It was principle of let it lone, don't push it alone. "Just you only you in the very moonlight, my wonderful derful—" Let the ad pages disappear. Let the story not advance. Let the net keep singing to no end—

REPLAY: I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY DECLINE

> As the millennium approached, American culture became fascinated with violence and disaster scenarios of all kinds from police-chase television programs to animal-attack exposés, to nuclear apocalypse movies. . . . The obsession with destroying New York continued to pervade every aspect of our culture. The cover of the hip hop [artist] Ice Rhymes's album *E.L.E.*, which stood for "Extinction Level Event," [shows] a massive ball of fire engulfing all of lower Manhattan. SimCity software allows computer users to choose what disaster will strike New York, or just watch as programmed disasters play out before their eyes. Microsoft's Flight Simulator software made it possible to fly between the World Trade Center towers, or, if one weren't skilled enough, to crash into them. . . . In *Deep Impact*, huge waves rose over the World Trade Center, obliterating all in their path. And in the months before 9/11, American image makers portrayed disasters that were remarkably similar to what happened on 9/11. . . . Just before September 11, New York and its World Trade Center were repeatedly destroyed. . . . [T]hese fantasies seemed to be irresistible to writers and filmmakers.
>
> —Max Page, "The City's End," in *The Resilient City*

MY BETTER DAYS: THE REPLAY: MORE EXCULPATION

The commonplace book I kept in my late thirties contains nothing

* *Francis Palgrave's selection of "the songs and lyrical poems in the English language": The Golden Treasury (1861; well loved, still in print).*

it mean or violence-craving. The thing in it—I just checked—is a pet of Raymond Williams copied of the *New Left Review* in 1960:

Impact" has become the normal description of the effect of successful communication, and "impact," like "consumer," is now habitually used by people to whom it ought to be repugnant (what ort of person really wants to "make an mpact" or create a "smash hit," and what state is a society in when this can e its normal cultural language?).

And it is a fact that I can still say the sing lines of the "Immortality Ode" l maybe two whole stanzas of "Reaper."

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

R IS IT TRUE THAT I AM ALONE, AT NOBODY ELSE IS BEWILDERED, IAMED, NEUTRALIZED

doctor interrupts a physical m to talk politics. In a tone partly zled, partly confessional he says t reports of declining casualties—veek with a single Marine lost—ve him unhappy. For some time s almost been rooting against his n country.

At a class reunion supper a table-te lists some sayings that anger n—afflatus that "hope is on the e," that "we have turned a cor-," that "all of us pray this cata-ophic eventuality can be avoid-'... Nothing appalls him, he says. t the shooting of a robed judge a dozen helpless kids in a class-m, nothing ...

During a long phone conversation iend, recently widowed, recalls he d to look away in repugnance m ghoulish footage—planes strik-g the towers, Kennedy's brains attered over Jackie—but no ger. An animal's death on the d: repugnance is replaced by defi-e. He no longer looks away.

Needless to say, the audience mat-s. I am the audience. The speakers confident that my negativity matches or overmatches theirs. The confidence arises from my own blackish comments.

Listening to them I want to disavow my blackishness. Instead I proffer my practiced helpless nod.

OUR LEADERS' DREAM OF COURAGE

One link to orthodox porn lies of course in the abstractness: observation at a remove, no fucking; casualty statistics, no blood on my hands when slivers of disappointment come that although six Americans were wounded, none died.

Shrewd early criticism of American culture took it to task for being insufficiently materialistic—not coveting the goods manufactured and sold but hungering for intangibles that hype claimed were embedded in the goods. Which intangibles exactly? The envy of others, the conviction of personal well-being. (I covet an S300 because it will vivify for me the deprivation of others.) The porn-pleasure-like ecstasy of impact resembles boughten envy because, reliant on fleshly images of events, objects, explosions, cars and games, it's also abstract: an affirmation in taut urge-filled silence that heightens my personal consequence as well as his—the leader's—without endangering either of us. *I want*, says the internal hot whisper, *therefore I too shall have*. And (*vide* Pat Robertson, the careless aside) *nobody will be hurt*.

Again I'm writing the obvious: Leaders cherish impact. It hasn't just happened to me, the replay fantasy. In the Reagan years, Cheney, then chair of the House Republican Policy Committee, was said to speak often, in private, about the political benefits of small wars. (Make it happen: jump in and invade.) The thrusting, imprinting example of Margaret Thatcher had shown the way—the people's idolatry of her Falklands war, standing ovations in Parliament, streets mounded with flowers thrown by ecstatic fans as the waving goddess passed ...

"One of the keys to being seen as a great leader," said George W. Bush to a biographer named Mickey Herskowitz two years before 9/11, "is to be seen as a commander-in-chief." (The biographer was later discharged.) The

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President-to-be added: "My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it. If I have a chance to invade . . . if I had that much capital, I'm not going to waste it. . . ." The leader who wastes capital is a hunter who has failed to bag impact. He's expended spirit in a waste of shame—failed to provide followers with experiences of impact in which to participate. Purely masturbatory. The current President's moment of extraordinary animation—eyes brightening, voice rising, half-smile flickering—occurs when he points to images of impact: lines of Shiite voters in Baghdad, for example. "We are watching history being made," he avers with the impatient half-smile. "History that will change the world." *I am making history happen. I am changing the world. Watch. Participate. Believe.* Momentarily the believers feel the weight of events from within. The very word, history, underlined and crashed into the wall, becomes *history*, a weapon fashioned for impact's sake by the Chief Executive, as Commander-technician. There's exhilaration in the observation chamber—the sense of shared triumph—and, subsequently, a return to mass insatiation and new demands.

Risk, daring, fearlessness, bold strokes—these and other key terms in the language of heroism slip smoothly from the discourse of combat and crusade to realms as remote from bomb runs as library reading rooms. The infinite elasticity of metaphor permits the refashioning of debates about privatized deductions and health savings accounts, regulation easements and tax reform—timid deskbound exchanges of neatly marked-up budgetary spreadsheets—into sweaty gore-strewn life-and-death struggles of warriors. The Commander in Chief reminds us that others in his place have lacked the guts to face the "challenges" and "dangers" against which he has resolved to test himself. He draws contrasts between their cowardice and passivity—their terror of consequence, their crippled will to impact—and his own readiness to hurl himself at the wall. The edifice he'll take down is a paper construct, sure, an edifice built of H.R. this and that, compromises, *Congressional Record* posturing, a structure revised and amended and amended and revised over decades by forgotten legislators and committee staffs the memory of whose dogged expertise has all but vanished.

No matter. The thing long ago gained concrete substance in and through leased space, machines, files, tables of organization. Housed in solid federal buildings and offices in a thousand urban downtowns, it's treated by insiders with a kind of wary mockery: the view is that anyone elected who speaks publicly of it without deference can count on being seared and burned. And this potentiality seized the Commander in Chief, lent edge to his appetite. Invade on this ground and you legitimize your salute to doughtiness. You are one who dares what others fear—dares to touch "the third rail of American politics" at the risk of personal destruction. The difficulty of the challenge will make the victory all the more exciting, the Commander in Chief cries out to crowds assembled to hear "the details" of the promised revolution. A daring pilot in no extremity except that which he himself invents, he does not hide his intention—sails brazenly on the wind, not with it, regardless of destination—drives the ship of state hard, makes the trip happen.

And the crowds respond. I saw it, as I said. In Tampa, Florida, an entire hall rises to its feet and shouts Bush's name after a speech on paper money and paper pensions. It's a moment which, for the impact hunter—the hungry master of the politics of impact—renders the risk worthwhile.

What is the point? The point is that I am with him. The policy is immaterial. The need, the longing, the taste—it's all shared. Cars, cars. Fast, fast. The hard man cometh. The hard man stays.

LINES I LOVED AS I LOVED "WONDERFUL ONE"

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils . . .

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

"HUMANIZING" EXPERIENCES OR MEMORIES LOSE VIBRANCY. THE MIND WITH IN THE MIND BLUSTERS THAT HE TRUTH IS YOU HAVE NO CAPITAL—RE NO LONGER EVEN CAPABLE OF MIS NG IT. HOW I LOST THE POET.

I need to remember what happened with me and Wordsworth the Engl romantic poet. The man who "taught him to me—after, just after, the second war—was a New Humanist. An Irv Babbitt follower. Anti-romantic anti-Rousseau. The intellectual epi is all gone, of course. Paul Elmer M etc. So many decades ago. We chi led, war vets, as the teacher mockingly did the bio and the way-out po He told us there was a great Triang Club show at Princeton in which Wordsworth's *wanderjahr* in Europe ured. I sat remembering my Palgr and my deep gratitude to Benny gave me poetry to help me within war. My career as "infantry replacement," heavy weapons gunner.

It seems that on his grand tha wandering "lonely as a cloud," Wo sworth fell in with Annette, got pregnant, and then cleared out shamelessly. The Triangle sketchwrit spoofed this episode with a song line of which went, "and Wordsw th sowed his one wild oat." We, the udience for our professor's joke ab silly-assed, timid WillyW the g who with his friend Coleridge celebrated "wild asses" and lonely wandering, were responsive because were of necessity hustlers, not wanderers. Having grown up, I grasped that only the rich or the feeling could relax into a Wordsworth moment, cherishing dancing daffodil a youngster named Lucy, enjoying evenings in the cottage with Dorcy and the kettle on the hob. The re us had miles to go—long miles, exams to face, theses to write, hid nosed postures to perfect.

Seven years before the Wordswo mocking teacher came another. Rick ett, my high school classmate wh folks weren't broke hence could af

r, had me up to Cambridge and
c me to meet his English teacher.
building, arched windows and riv-
ehind the man at his desk. Not
ind, he took my question, which
about the essay I imagined writ-
—utter fantasy—for a contest in
e theater magazine. Subject: The-
and the Brotherhood of Man. Guy
cs at me and at Rockett. This was
0. You know what was playing in
West End in World War I—or
be it was 1940, who knew? *Chu*
n Chow. Hit show, the guy said.
gest hit in the world. (*Expression*
isgust to accompany scathing tone.)
therhood of man? The question
, as Henry James would say, hang-
High school boy learning a little
iething for the road. Wordsworth
ed his one wild oat. I might well be
amned fool.
Benny said no, god bless him—but
s gone. Made me say some lines
in, as we smoked outside the Hop-
s library. My heart aches, and a
wsy numbness pains my sense. O
my my friend, Blessings for the help
gave the hard man to come.

KE THE BALLOONS HAPPEN: THE RD MAN IS AMUSED

Go balloons, go balloons! Go balloons!
don't see anything happening. Go
balloons! Go balloons! Go balloons!
Standby confetti. Keep coming, bal-
oons. More balloons. Bring it—bal-
oons, balloons, balloons! We want bal-
oons, tons of them. Bring them down.
Let them all come. No confetti. No
onfetti yet. No confetti. All right, go
balloons, go balloons. We need more
balloons. All balloons! All balloons!
Keep going! Come on guys, let's move
t. Jesus! We need more balloons. I
vant all balloons to go, goddammit.
Go confetti. Go confetti. More con-
etti. I want more balloons. What's
happening to the balloons? We need
nore balloons. We need all of them
coming down. Go balloons—balloons?
What's happening balloons? THERE'S
NOT ENOUGH COMING DOWN!
All balloons, what the hell! There's
nothing falling! What the fuck are you
guys doing up there? We want more
balloons coming down, more balloons,
more balloons, more balloons. . . .

—DNC director Don Mischer
on CNN, end of Kerry
acceptance speech

ONCE MORE: THE LOOK OF THE IMPACT HUNTER

Cold. No life in his face. No expression in his face. If I am happy, I smile. When I'm angry, I look angry. This guy [Atta] had just a cold face.

—Rudi Dekkers

The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer.

—D. H. Lawrence

On Monday six Marines dead. Yesterday, fourteen. I watched replays of explosions.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

And again, for the replay's sake:

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

I believe a time existed in my life when I could not have passed over, unaffected, the presidential visits to Walter Reed hospital to talk with wounded troops—the living human creatures whose limbs are cut off, burned, blasted, ripped because of the authorities' desire for impact. The authorities stand beside the maimed human creature, in front of him, speaking cordially. I would have at least protested *in thought*. Maybe left to walk the dog. Matthews of *Hardball* wanted to know what the President said to the Captain with the leg blown off by land mine who's returning to combat. There was footage of the man's prosthesis flying off as they taught him to run. Thing flew into the air. He thanked me, said the Captain, author of the best-selling *Back in Action*.

Regeneration, as the scholar says. Regeneration through violence.

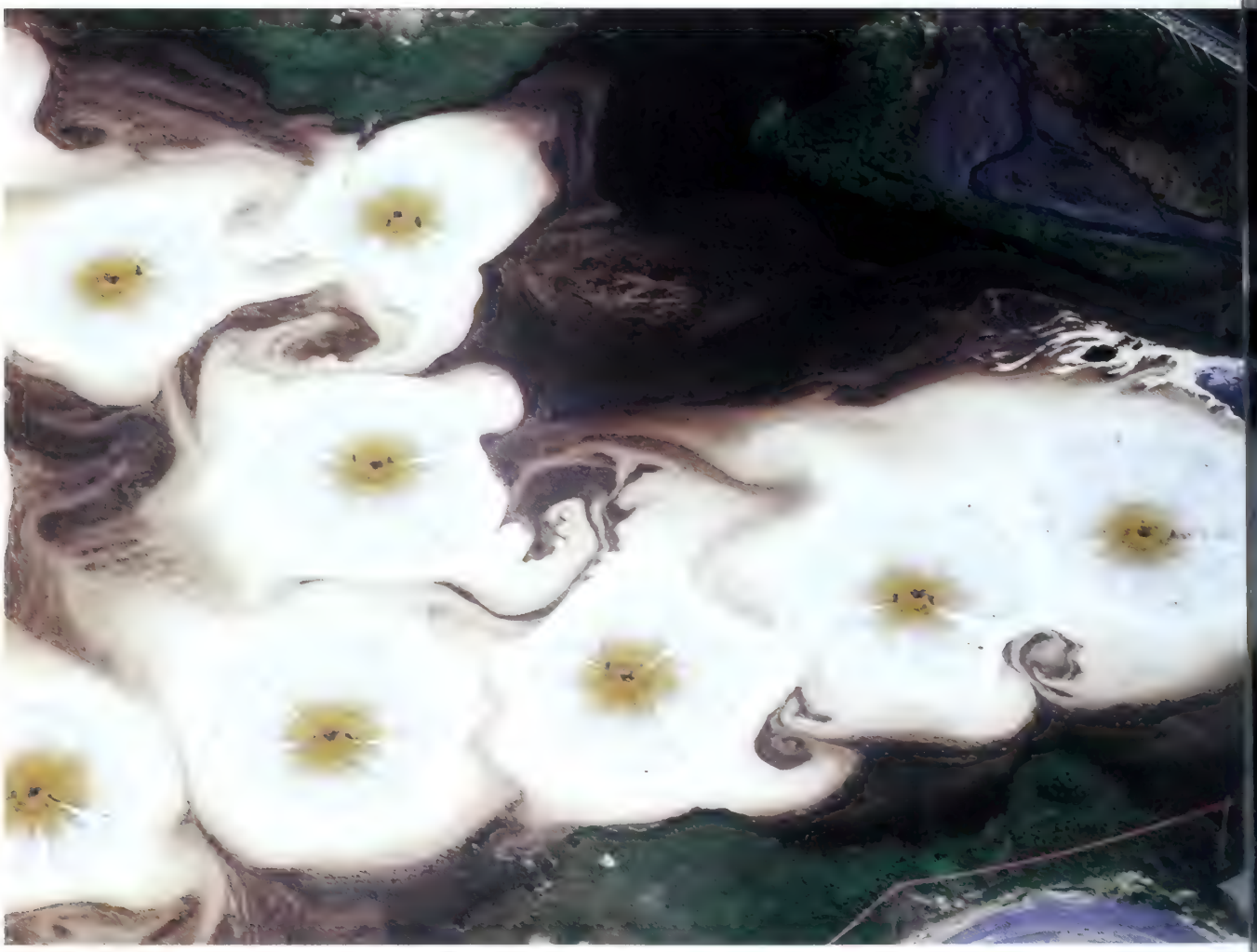
Dear hearts, kids, anyone who reads: I'm still in it, wanting to battle. Wanting not to give in all the way. Reciting to myself thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. ■



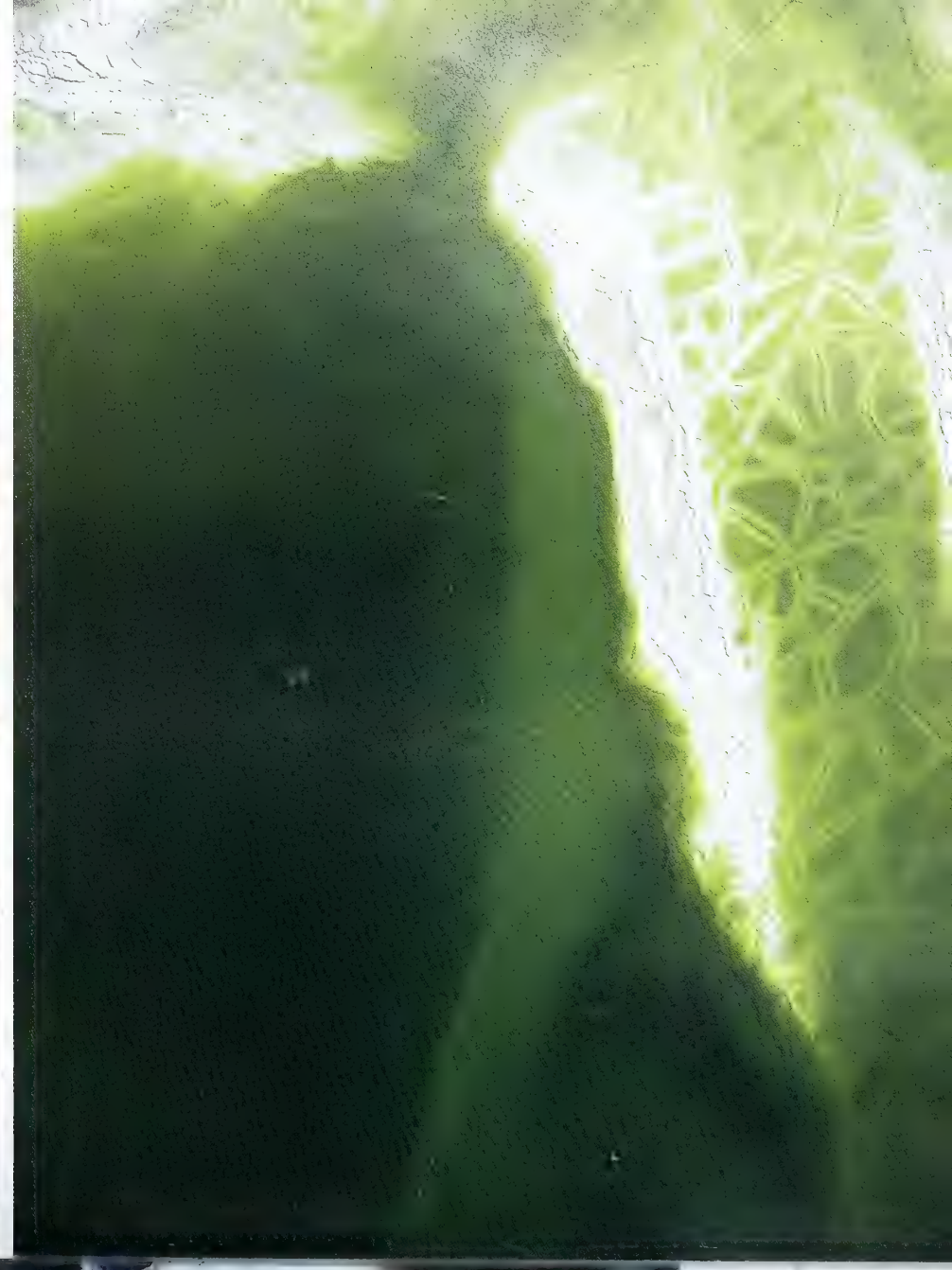
VISIONS OF EXCESS

Photographs of industrial waste

By J. Henry Fair









ılldozer spreading petroleum coke, Texas City, Texas

Roseate spoonbills flying over waste from fertilizer production, Fort Meade, Florida (top), and a pipe spewing waste from fertilizer production, Lakeland, Florida (bottom)

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His textbook on the New Testament is the most widely used in universities today. In addition to his textbook, Professor Ehrman has written dozens of book reviews and scholarly articles, and written or edited 17 books. He was recently featured in *Time* magazine for his book *Lost Christianities.*



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FOUR POEMS

By Frederick Seidel

DARKENING IN THE DARK

I woke in the middle
Of the night in Nevers, Frawnse.
Nuhvair.
I was a tornado funnel spinning across
The American Midwest in the center of France,
In the dark with my jet lag and my childhood.

I wrote in a bedside notebook, with the light on:
"The song is singing.
Meanwhile, grown men do their work.
The animals that live outdoors go on.
The rest of us won't even cross the street to vote."
With that, I turned back into fleshless smoke and slept.

No one my age can go on living for long.
No one the color of a turnip
Can be anything but
Caucasian with a problem—
With his liver or his sunblock—
Or a chameleon Caucasian darkening in the hotel room dark.

My metabolism was a lot younger in the Cher,
Near here, when I lived there.
I breathed away the lovely tons of alcohol
From the night before in the freezing morning air.
There was the crisp sweet of wood smoke from the château.
My dog and I barked frost when we laughed.

Never spend the night in Nevers,
Unless you came with the team for the race at Magny-Cours.
The hotel is unspeakable,
But the circuit is nearby. Manny Coor.
Many languages there were barking frost,
And not all of them in English.

Life is a *tour de chauffe* for the living.
Life is a warm-up lap,
As if it were never too late.
Nehvur.
You rode the wheels off,
And now it is time to start.

BIPOLAR NOVEMBER

I get a phone call from my dog who died,
But I don't really.
I don't hear anything.
Dear Jimmy, it is hard.
Dear dog, you were just a dog.
I am returning your call.

I have nothing to say.
I have nothing to add.
I have nothing to add to that.
I am saying hello to no.
How do you do, no!
I am returning your call.

I rode a bubble to the surface just now.
I unthawed the unthawed.
I said yes. Yes, yes,
How do you do?
I called to say hello
But am happy.

Today it is spring in November.
The weather opens the windows.
The windows look pretty dirty.
I go to my computer to see.
The six-day forecast calls
For happy haze for six days.

The trees look like they're budding.
They can't be in late November.
It is mucilaginous springtime.
It is all beginning all over.
The warplanes levitate
To take another crack at Iraq.

Hey, Mr. Big Shot!
I bet you went to Harvard.
Leaves are still on the trees.
The trees are wearing fine shoes.
Everything is handmade.
Everything believes.

Frederick Seidel's most recent collection is Ooga-Booga, *published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

ALY

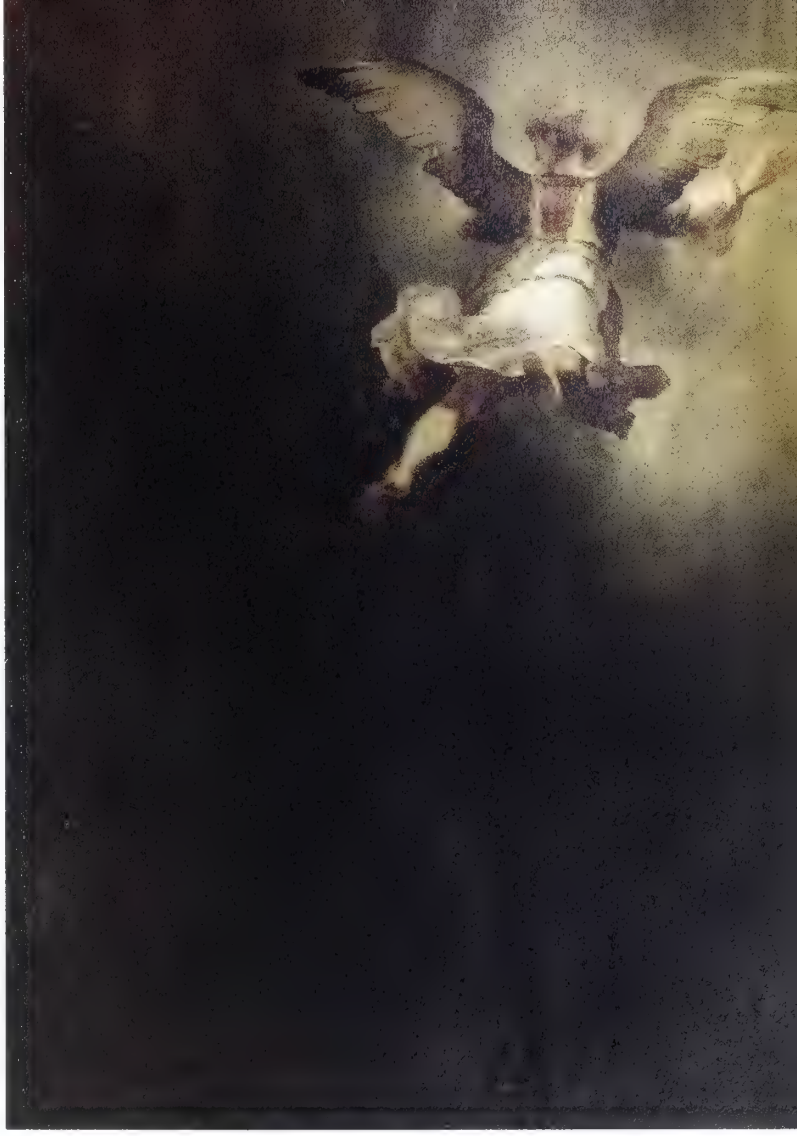
Jonathan Galassi

· last summer on earth
)ent admiring Milan,
t they were having a heat wave.
e Japanese were everywhere.
ey eat lice.
ey order *risotto milanese*.
ey eat everything.
· cell phone has changed my life.
ever talk to anyone.

)ent the summer in Bologna.
logna is my town.
logna is so brown.
:e shavings
tuna roe on buttered toast
spite the heat,
)wn waxy slices of fishy salt
strong as ammonia, Bologna.
logna, it takes a prince to eat *bottarga*.

ly, your women are Italian!
ır motorcycles are women.
lan, your men are high-heeled women.
ogna, your brown arcades
: waterfalls of shade.
cist Italy was ice cream in boots.
crema straddled the world.
icked south in the heat.
icked its boot.

cisti! They take American Express!
nunisti! You forgot to sign!
ave my table at Rodrigo in Bologna.
ways eat at Bice in Milan.
s sweet to eat at Bibe, outside Florence,
walk there from Bellosguardo through the fields.
ntale's little Bibe poem is printed on the menu.
cite my own.
m is coming.



AMI IN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

d the angel of the Lord came to Mary and said:
ı have cancer.
ry could not think how.
man had been with her.

d then there was the other time.
nember how happy we were.
ı were in my arms.
ill had arms.

: rain fell on upturned faces.
rs rained down on the desert.
rybody was body temperature.
rywhere was temperate.

as raining and global warming.
ritual renewal made it beautiful.
ertification turned into desert.
: sky above was shooting stars.

The Martians rode across the desert
In their outfits and their armbands,
Clanging cymbals and banging a big drum.
Boom! Boom!

I am in favor of global warming.
I don't care about great-grandchildren.
I won't be here.
I won't be there.

Angel, I can see your mouth wide open,
But can't hear what you are singing.
The shaking roar of the liftoff
Does a vanishing act straight up.

Fiddles and viols, let me hear your old gold.
Trumpets, the petals of the antique rose unfold.
This is the end.
Testing, one, two, three, this is a test.

Archangel Raphael Leaving Tobias' Family (After Rembrandt), by Odilon Re-
© Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York City

RUN LIKE FIRE ONCE MORE

Chasing perfection at the world's longest footrace

By Sam Shaw



T

function of enabling the Base mp crew to attend to the physical uirements of runners traveling at all eds. (By the sixth week of the race, e hundred miles would separate irse record holder Madhupran lfgang Schwerk, of Solingen, Gerny, from Suprabha Beckjord, in last ce.[1]) But in another, more etherense, the Self-Transcendence Race ld not exist on any other course. re was a kind of living koan, a race invisible miles across a phantom in wider than the continental Unit- States. For fifty days, breathing smal exhaust from the Grand Cenl Parkway, the runner traversed vilderness of knapsack-toting nagers, beat cops, and ladies pilot- strollers. Temperatures spiked. wer grids crashed. Cars also shed—into the chain-link fence und Joe Austin park or into other s. There was occasional street me. One summer a student was fed in the head. The runner en- ed. He crossed the finish line nged. It was said to be the most icult racecourse in the world. Point- point racing is gentler on the spir- and concrete is ten times more pun- ing than asphalt. Such hurdles were re than necessary evils; they were ntral to the nature of the race. As e of the disciples told me, grinning l drawing air quotes with his fingers, s 'impossible.'"

fell into step beside Abichal atkins, a forty-five-year-old elshman with a keen, appraising aint. After only five days, he oked like a man who had wan- ed out of the desert with a story tell. "There are so few things for mind to dwell on here," Abichal d. "It loses its strength." Relative most of the racers, Abichal—born lvin and rechristened in 1999 by Chinmoy—came to distance run- g late in life. That tale begins in mid-1990s, when Chinmoy announced the completion of his millionth "Soul Bird" painting (artworks expressing the "heart's oneness"), and his disciples resolved to match the feat by running, collectively, a million miles. Abichal pledged an even thousand. Within a year, Chinmoy had painted another million Soul Birds, and the running project was scuttled, but Abichal kept it up. In Wales he edits a magazine and a website devoted to multiday ultramarathons. He had finished the Self-Transcendence Race twice before; a third attempt failed when his visa expired 2,700 miles in.

We passed Edison High, progressing counterclockwise up 168th Street toward the Grand Central Parkway. (The runners switch direction every day, not for the sake of novelty but to ensure that the toll of rounding corners is borne equally by both legs.) Abichal does not consider himself an athlete. "The race is a metaphor for life." He gestured, lassoing the whole of Jamaica around us. "People in the neighborhood, we'll see them year after year. They stop by, say hi. They ask, 'How do you do that?'" He laughed. This was the first interview I conducted while power-walking. It was awkward. My pen kept slipping in my hand.

Abichal wore an iPod clipped to his waist, jarring my notion of the Chinmoy disciples as latter-day ascetics. I wondered what he had been listening to. "'Fix You,'" he said, "by Coldplay." For more than a hundred miles, Abichal had been listening to the track on a continuous loop. ("Lights will guide you home," the chorus intones, "and ignite your bones.") He gazed philosophically at his iPod. "There's something special about this song."

As we neared 164th Place, a white town car pulled gently to the curb. With the speed and nonchalance of a dope dealer, a man in the passenger seat reached through the window and deposited something into Abichal's hands. Sri Chinmoy. The sight of him tripped me up. Here was the Guru himself, gold-complected, resplendently bald. Dressed as if for a day at the public pool, in shorts and a cotton shirt, he did not look like a man who had inspired seven thousand followers in sixty countries to forswear alcohol, tobacco, meat, and sex. I wanted to stop, but the race paused for no man, not even an avatar of divine consciousness.

A few paces ahead, Abichal studied the objects he'd received: two strawberries, cupped in his palms like bulbous, red communion wafers. "I don't know why he gave me two," he said. He turned to me, suddenly serious. "I think one of them is for you." Our fables, stretching back to the myth of Persephone and Genesis 3:6, teach circumspection in receiving gifts of fruit. Abichal nodded, and I ate the Guru's strawberry. Within a few weeks, the runners would be hobbled by distance, gorging ice cream and butter to stem the loss of body weight. We passed the giant digital clock, and the women applauded.

Two thousand eight hundred and thirty miles to go.

The specter of death has hung over long-distance running since Robert Browning published his *Dramatic Idylls* in 1879. In a flight of lyric fancy widely mistaken for truth, the poem "Pheidippides" describes an ill-starred footman sprinting from Marathon to Athens with news of a surprise Greek victory in an early battle of the Persian Wars.

> So, when Persia was dust, all cried,
> "To Akropolis!
> Run Pheidippides, one race more! the
> meed is thy due!
> 'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go
> shout!" He flung down his shield
> Ran like fire once more: and the space
> 'twixt the Fennel-field
> And Athens was stubble again, a field
> which a fire runs through,
> Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we
> conquer!" Like wine through clay,
> Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he
> died—the bliss!

Never mind that the story is plainly apocryphal, a pastiche of Herodotus, Plutarch, and Lucian. When Pierre de Coubertin organized the first modern Olympic Games, his friend the philologist Michael Breal urged him to include a distance race in tribute to the doomed runner. Today, in spite of the fact that hundreds of thousands of Americans run

he fifty-year-old proprietor of the Wash- ton, D.C., gift shop Transcendence- fection-Bliss of the Beyond, Beckjord is only female competitor in the race's ory and the only ten-time participant, ing returned to Jamaica every June since inaugural running. She has logged ugh miles around Edison High to circle equator.

marathons,[2] the long-distance athlete in popular culture is typically a Jobian figure, tortured and solitary. Iconic Nike ads of the '90s cast him in grainy black and white, doubled over and unleashing a stream of vomit onto his shoes. The hero of William Goldman's *Marathon Man* gets his teeth drilled by a Nazi. Always, the runner is haunted. His race is a form of flight—from himself, from the mediocrity of society, from a lugubrious backstory.

Browning reimagined Pheidippides at the height of the so-called Golden Age of Pedestrianism. In 1878, the Crimean War veteran, baronet, and amateur sports promoter Sir John Dugdale Astley launched a series of six-day exhibition footraces, held along ellipse tracks before throngs of delirious spectators. The winner crawled away with a cash purse and a small fortune in gate fees, as well as a silver-and-gold belt valued at £100 and bearing the legend LONG DISTANCE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

In June 1879, Edward Payson Weston strode 550 miles in six days along a wooden track in London's Agricultural Hall, beating 10-to-1 odds to become the first American-born Astley Belt champion and an international sensation. "There were Weston shoes, Weston hats, and Weston coats," rhapsodized *Harper's Weekly*. "Musicians composed Weston marches, and young ladies danced to Weston Waltzes." His "clean-cut and shrewd" face gazed nobly from photographs "in thousands of private dwellings as well as in most public places." The dandyish Rhode Island native was a star, and he behaved like one, preening and sulking, issuing crackpot statements to the press, and hobnobbing with deep-pocketed strangers.

That August, Weston sailed from Liverpool to New York City on the steamship *Nevada*, but his triumph was partial and short-lived. The steamer *Harlem*, engaged to intercept the great pedestrian in New York Harbor with six kegs of beer, two cases of wine, and a basket of sandwiches, failed to arrive on schedule, and his admirers greeted him instead in a tugboat. Dressed in a priestly black suit, Weston griped to reporters about a prize watch he had been promised by the mayor of Newark that had never materialized. "If I owned a house in perdition and another in Newark," he said, "I'd rent the Newark house."

At a time when a pound of mutton cost fourteen cents, some 75,000 spectators paid a dollar apiece for admission to the next Astley Belt match, at Madison Square Garden. Loiterers choked 26th Street. They scaled drainpipes and shinnied up ropes to the low windows of the theater, where sentries lay in wait with sharpened sticks. The Englishman Charles Rowell covered 127 miles within the first day and night of the race. His early lead left scant doubt as to the eventual outcome, but the circus inside the Garden roiled on with a Boschian grandeur. Bands played "Yankee Doodle," "Tommy Dodd," and "Marching Through Georgia." Rowell sucked on a sponge while his countryman George Hazael cut a simian figure with his fumbling headlong stride. "The question is often asked, 'What is that thing?' when Hazael goes around," a reporter wrote with jingoistic cruelty, "but the questioner is always awed into silence when told that that is one of the best runners in England." Ever the showman, Weston burlesqued the gaits of his rivals, stopping now and then to spritz himself with eau de toilette from an atomizer he toted around the loop. The other contestants shuffled more or less suicidally toward the grail of 450 miles, short of which they would not see a nickel. It was a scene befitting the venue, raised by P. T. Barnum as a hippodrome for mock-Roman chariot exhibitions. Rowell took ill in the last days of the race, but his advantage was overwhelming. Amid a flurry of rumors that he had been mickeyed with a cluster of poisoned grapes, he completed his 530th mile and repaired to his tent with Weston's prize belt and a share of the gate receipts totaling $25,000—roughly the equivalent of $500,000 today.

The winner of the Self-Transcendence Race would return to his home country with a plastic trophy and a scrapbook. Each contestant forked over an entry fee of $1,250—an investment none would recoup. Self-transcendence, it seemed, was not a lucrative career. In late June, Kuranga Peele of Neusiedl, Austria, flew home. In 2006 Peele had finished second, with the seventh-best time in race history. That year he had logged just over 660 miles. "Kuranga didn't feel up to it," Abbie explained. "You have to be totally committed, or the mind can get in the way."

As the fourteen remaining contestants sauntered around the block, it was impossible to tell at any given moment who was winning and who was losing. Madhupran Wolfgang Schwerk, with a lead of more than a hundred miles two weeks into the race, was heavily favored. Nobody at the racecourse expressed much surprise. Madhupran held the course record. I shadowed him past the playground with a mixture of admiration and unease. His gait called to mind pistons and crankshafts, the famous efficiency of German engineering. Just looking at him made me thirsty for a Coke. Short of a bunch of poisoned grapes, it was hard to imagine anybody closing the gap. This might have had something to do with Madhupran's support team. He was the only runner to have imported a full-time handler, Helmut Schieke, himself a former trans-America record holder, who had fed Schwerk whenever he finished a lap—ten with a plastic cup of diet cola and a slice of honeydew melon. He was also alone in having landed a corporate patron. LANXESS, a German producer of plastics and rubbers, had fronted him airfare, along with his registration fee. In exchange, he arrived each morning dressed in a crisp LANXESS singlet, matching shorts, and sneakers.

Cars passed Base Camp at the louisite school-zone crawl, and the drone of a lawn mower filled me with a strong Pavlovian urge to lie down in a hot

[2] *The ultramarathon (any race exceeding 26.22 miles), which attracts a smaller and more fanatical community of athletes, gained brief notoriety in January 2004, when a member of the Colorado running cult Divine Madness banked 207 miles in the forty-eight-hour race Across the Years and then dropped dead. Further afield, the "Marathon Monks" of Japan's Mount Hiei have practiced spiritual running in a ritual that dates to the eighth century. At the culmination of seven years of training, the aspirant logs two back-to-back marathons per night for three months, carrying a length of rope and a knife so that he can hang or disembowel himself if he fails to complete a run.*

:k. On the refreshment table an ar-
y of chips, raisins, granola bars,
es, cookies, ice cream, and butter lay
n to would-be saboteurs, but who
ıld tamper with a race whose prof-
re tallied in the coinage of the soul?
)n the corner of 168th Street,
an in a baseball cap was squinting
)ugh a handheld video camera at
pageant of runners drifting south-
d. "The footage isn't very good,"
confessed, wagging his head. His
ıe was Daniel, and he had flown
Jew York to report on the race for
L, a German television station. A
)nd German news team was sup-
ed to arrive tomorrow, and Daniel
ıned to beat them to the story.
rabha ambled past, talking on a
phone. "The problem is, they don't
ly run," Daniel said. "They jog,
y stop, they walk. I need *running*. I
d sweat streaming down faces."
the scene on Abigail Adams Av-
e disappointed Daniel, the trouble
partly semantic. The Self-Tran-
ıdence Race was not, strictly speak-
a sporting event. It was spiritual
)x. For two months the athletes
l no bills, ran no errands, conduct-
ıo business. They lived in a state of
)reauvian simplicity. "The mind
s it's stupid to go around and
und," I was told by a volunteer
ıed Aklanta, one of a squadron of
opractors at the racecourse. "But
not stupid on a higher plane." The
revealed the "true nature" above
's "base nature," he said. "You find
what your true nature wants. What
s it *want*? Not what advertisements
elevision tell you you want. That's
ıipulation. I don't want to be ma-
ulated. You need joy in your life.
ıerwise, it's just stimulation—up
down, nothing constant."
A middle-aged man approached Base
np. With his white mustache and
w boater, he recalled Edward Payson
ston walking through Confederate
yland in 1861, disguised, in Wes-
's own words, by "Messrs Brooks,
thers, clothing dealers" as a
squehanna Raftsman on a bender."
stopped on the sidewalk, watching
runners shuffle past with the dazed
of a man who had just been sprung
ı jail. And so he had—it was sum-
vacation. His furlough would
ch until the last week of August,
when he would return to his post as a laboratory specialist at Edison High. "Essentially, a test-tube washer. I help to purchase—or to prevent the purchase of—equipment. Mercury used to be a thing you played with," he said with nostalgia. "Now it's a deadly poison."

A credential sticking out of his shirt pocket identified the speaker as one M. Cogan. He wore his nametag religiously, a precaution dating to the years he worked at Bellevue Hospital. "Someone had to die for that," he explained. Europeans in high-performance sportswear parted around us as he related a long, grim story about a psychiatric patient in a stolen lab coat butchering a female doctor. "I'm not sure if he raped her before he dissected her or after or a little of both." On another occasion, he told me, a paraplegic escaped from the prison ward and disappeared across the border into Mexico. The thought of this wheelchair-bound fugitive thriving under Latin American skies seemed to cheer him up. "They're good neighbors," he said of the Self-Transcendence crew. "That's all I know. Chinmoy seems to attract a nice crowd. But I haven't got to the point where I want to join." He had first encountered the group on an afternoon in the 1970s when a bald-headed stranger reproached him for lighting a cigarette in a local restaurant. The stranger was Sri Chinmoy. "I guess it's a clean-living cult sort of thing. Like the Mormon Church." Not long thereafter, noticing Chinmoy's name in a letter submitted to the *New York Times* by the composer Leonard Bernstein, Cogan realized the Guru was a famous and important man.

We strolled together past the line of Port-O Lets to the refreshment table, where Cogan stopped and told a spindly German volunteer that he intended to run a race of his own, albeit one of humbler length. He seemed an unlikely candidate for cardiovascular exercise, but in this climate of burgeoning goodwill, with songbirds flicking through the trees and rival German news teams trolling Joe Austin park, all things seemed possible. Cogan beamed at the disciples, "You've inspired me."

What, exactly, had Leonard Bernstein written to the *Times*? I never found the letter Mike Cogan remembered, but an item in an April 1979 Notes on People column described a recently formed "mutual admiration society" comprising the Guru and the flamboyant composer of *West Side Story*:

> Sri Chinmoy, whose followers say he has written 3,000 songs, dropped by Mr. Bernstein's Manhattan apartment a few weeks ago, and brought with him a choral group that sang a new Chinmoy number called, "Leonard Bernstein." It went, in part:
>
> > Leonard Bernstein, Leonard!
> > Eternity's singing bird! Beauty truth,
> > Truth beauty,
> > Nectar oneness your divinity.

Bernstein had responded in kind, presenting the Guru with an original work for sitar, flute, tabla, bass, and drone. Until recently, all I had known of the Guru I owed to an LP called *Love, Devotion, Surrender*, a 1973 jazz-rock fiasco by Carlos Santana and John McLaughlin, both former Chinmoy disciples.[3]

Born August 27, 1931,[4] in East Bengal, India, and orphaned at twelve, the Guru spent his adolescence and early adulthood studying meditation at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where he earned the title Fastest Runner twelve years in a row. In 1964 he emigrated to New York and took a job as an assistant in the passport-and-visa section of the Indian Consulate. These were lean years for the Guru. According to his memoirs, he lunched on potato chips or candy bars, often in a telephone booth outside his office, but already he was laying the foundation for his spiritual mission, playing free concerts and lecturing on Hinduism. In the ensuing decades, the Guru's self-transcen-

[3] *The music critic Robert Christgau describes its artwork thus: "On the back cover is a photograph of three men. Two of them are dressed in white and have their hands folded—one grinning like Alfred E. Neuman, the other looking like he's about to have a Supreme Court case named after him: solemn, his wrists ready for the cuffs. In between, a man in an orange ski jacket and red pants with one white sock seems to have caught his tongue on his lower lip. He looks like the yoga coach at a fashionable lunatic asylum. Guess which one is Sri Chinmoy."*

[4] *The 3,100-mile distance of the Self-Transcendence Race celebrates Chinmoy's birth year; an earlier incarnation, held in 1996, measured 2,700 miles, in honor of his birthday.*

ssage table considering the prob-
. His feet looked like they had been
dged out of the East River—chalky
te with a thick brownish discharge
he nail beds. "These are the cards
get," he announced with equa-
nity. A few disciples stood around
massage table while a podiatrist,
er and brusque in a tan nylon jack-
nd gray nylon pants, frowned at
suppurating digits. The diagnosis
bleak. If he left the nails intact, he
lained, the infection might com-
mise the bone, and the toes would
e to be removed. Pranab hugged
knees.
Can he keep walking?" someone
ed.
The question seemed to rattle the
tor. "That's his choice. I wouldn't
t. How much farther till he's done?"
Two thousand miles."
The distance unfurled like a carpet
nning from Queens to Juarez,
xico. I winced a little at the sound
he figure. "You got no shot," the
tor said.
The race, however, had a physic all
own. "You get scared beforehand,"
ichal had told me. "Your body gets
red. It's like stage fright. Like mov-
into a different realm." For two
nths, the high school and ball courts
l the abutting stretch of parkway
ame a shrine. Did I know about ley
es? Abichal asked. The theory, as ar-
ulated in the 1920s by one Alfred
itkins (no relation), posits a system
ircane pathways linking megaliths,
s, and other craggy points across
tain, and possibly the world. Large-
gnored by science, ley lines have
oyed a colorful life in the hinter-
ds of paranormalism, championed
various ends by psychics, pagans,
wsers, UFOlogists, dime-store nov-
ts, and a few Nazi cranks who at-
uted a network of *heilige Linien* or
oly lines" crisscrossing Europe to
ancient Teutons.
'There are rivers, superhighways of
ergy," Abichal told me, "and there
junctions where they meet." The
ctions exert a spiritual tug. Stone-
nge, for instance, or Sedona. "Se-
na is a big energy vortex." So, too,
racecourse. "I get a good vibe here,"
said, indicating a triangle of lawn
hind the wrought-iron fencing of
high school. "It's open. It's green.
There's some kind of energy vortex on
this corner."

The Self-Transcendence runners being mostly European, July 4 went largely unremarked at the racecourse. The fields teemed with men engaged in various team sports. Flags hung limp in the cooling air as Madhupran and Abichal strolled past, each brandishing a Popsicle. A couple of Indian families spread blankets on the grassy margin by the bleachers in Joe Austin park, and chops on a clamshell barbecue threw gusts of meaty smoke into the paths of the vegetarian runners. At dusk, Sri Chinmoy arrived in a white jeep to dispense bananas.[7]

By moonlight, Joe Austin park was a place of desolate beauty. Traffic thrummed eastward undeterred, blanching the runners in a wash of halogen beams. On 168th Street, a man watered his lawn in the dark, while a few stray fireflies winked among the hedges of Edison High. I was given to understand that miracles sometimes visited Jamaica. A white woman in a sari told me that Sri Chinmoy had cured her of lupus. The runners, too, had recovered from injury and illness. "Shin splints that would stop an ordinary runner for weeks last only days," insisted one of the disciples, another chiropractor, on loan from Chicago. "The will of the—if you allow me to say—soul conquers the will of the physical." Witness Pranab, who clipped past me, murmuring into a dictaphone. He had left the racecourse for two hours to have his toenails removed, resuming the race at his usual pace as soon as he returned. "Now I have to soak my toes," he said. "It's a little more work." His date with the podiatrist's knife had cost him roughly eighteen miles.

Beyond the rooftops of Jamaica, the horizon throbbed with light, as of a millenarian firestorm engulfing Manhattan. Now and then a plume of colored sparks crested the tree line, Queens County's rejoinder to the thirtieth annual Macy's Fireworks Spectacular with Lionel Richie and the New York Pops. I decided to buy a proper pair of running shoes.

"Without preparatory training . . . the most fatal injuries may be committed in attempting pedestrian feats." Such was the counsel of *Beadle's Dime Hand-Book of Pedestrianism*, published in 1867. On the cover of the thirty-two-page tract, a man wearing a sporty hat and gaiters trots across a sketchily rendered countryside. Mysteriously, he carries a riding crop. "In a mind upset by literary study," the author urges, "the best plan, if practicable, is to give up the reading and writing entirely, for a time." Duly warned, I toed the line by the weathered scoreboard on Joe Austin Way at a minute to six.

Ribbons of peach and pink banded the eastern horizon, giving the sky the look of a novelty cocktail. At dawn, the scene here was somber. The racers sat glumly on folding chairs or stretched against trees. Many of them doctored their feet with balms and tapes. Sri Chinmoy had returned from a trip to the Far East bearing gifts for the runners, ceremonial white bandannas emblazoned with the bloody sun of the Japanese flag. A few tied these souvenirs around their foreheads. They looked a little like bandages on a company of outnumbered and ill-equipped soldiers marching to certain death. One of the race directors called us to attention and we stood together, observing a moment of silence rendered incomplete by traffic sounds. Then we were off.

The pace was leaden. After five hours of stasis the body of the multi-day runner locks up like a rusty transmission. Madhupran alone advanced at his usual clip, lunging and working his arms like an animatronic cross-country skier. Within fifteen minutes he had lapped me. Sri Chinmoy visited the course at around 6:20, and his arrival had an immediate restorative effect on the disciples. Wearing a preppy pink-striped shirt, he circled the block three times in a blue Smart car, goosing little fanfares from the horn when he passed a group of run-

[7] *The offering of sanctified food—called* prasad*—sometimes flummoxed visitors to the racecourse, as in late July, when the Guru made an offering of Granny Smith apples to a pair of emissaries from Russian TV. The reporter accepted with telegenic diplomacy, but the cameraman froze, plying his camera like a rifle trained on a buck. An hour later, both apples lay uneaten on a table cluttered with audiovisual equipment.*

It was oddly exhilarating to see the Guru operate a car, particularly one he could have parked in a walk-in closet. The runners bowed their heads, touched their hearts, or waved, quickening their pace. "It's the same as if you like the author of a book and then you meet him in reality," a disciple explained. It was difficult to imagine John Updike inspiring this sort of reverence.

The Guru's drive-by was only the opening act in a morning lineup of music, poetry, and cheerleading. Two female choral groups staked out stretches of Abigail Adams Avenue, clapping and singing. Meanwhile, the sun had broken through the clouds, and commuters were tumbling groggily into cars to ford the Grand Central Parkway. When I'd asked her how she felt about Jamaica, Suprabha had told me, "If you use your imagination, you can feel as if you're running on a beautiful country road. You tune out the traffic, the motorcycles." Helmut, Madhupran's handler, echoed her advice. "This is the hardest race you can find. Very hard concrete. You should have it in your mind like an endless road. Don't see it as it is, a dirty sidewalk. You must have the fantasy to see it another way—you must see flowers, a beautiful forest with trees."

I tried to conjure these pastoral mirages as I ran. Here was the broad green sign directing motorists to Queens's Utopia Parkway. The same brown Honda had been parked outside Edison High for weeks. Eventually the summer-school contingent straggled in, glassy-eyed and inured to the sight of nylon-clad wraiths hustling up the block. I wished one of the runners would tell me how to clear my mind of all this urban wrack. After a morning of continuous locomotion, my legs were confused. Each step reverberated up the tibiae, delivering an unhappy shock to my knees. My stomach, too, rebelled. To the aspiring pedestrian, *Beadle's* prescribed a midday smorgasbord of roast beef, mutton, partridge, pheasant, or venison, along with one or two potatoes. No other vegetable was permitted. Short on fresh game, I snacked on nectarines and granola. Even so, I spent a good deal of time locked in the piney, saunalike seclusion of a Port-O-Let.

At around 1:30, I finished my forty-eighth circuit of the block, and a volunteer informed me that I had surpassed 26.2 miles. "You've run a marathon!" she announced. Was this my first? I admitted it was. She clapped her hands. I had transcended myself! Was I excited? My time of seven hours, twenty-five minutes left room for improvement, I felt. Nonetheless, I traded high fives with a few of the runners, who received the news variously with bemusement or wide-eyed gravity. Remembering Pheidippides, I took care to hydrate. Self-transcendence aside, I didn't intend to die in a pair of red nylon shorts.

By nightfall, I was circling Edison High in a trance. The sign for Utopia Parkway shone inscrutably in the darkness, beckoning me eastward toward parts unknown. As if afflicted by a kind of anatomical Stockholm syndrome, my legs bore me clockwise of their own accord, and I had the idea I could keep plodding forever. I was wrong. Blisters ruptured on the soles of both my feet, and every step became a slog through molten glass.

I drove home at geriatric speeds, unsure I'd be able to work the brake pedal in case of emergency. On the advice of a disciple, I sat for a long time in a scalding bath of Epsom salt. I had made eighty circuits of the block for a cumulative distance of 43.904 miles—six miles short of the required daily minimum. My base nature wanted aspirin and 10,000 BTUs of air-conditioning. What did my true nature want? I couldn't say.

A sense of giddy anticipation attended Madhupran's final push on the morning of July 22. LANXESS had dispatched a coiffed and cheerful stringer, who sat in the van interrogating Helmut on the champion's progress and typing what I assumed was a press release on a laptop.

"If I want to say that his diet consisted of da, da, da—" she prompted.

"Rice, sweet potatoes, coconut milk," Helmut replied. "And he ate every day one honeydew. And dinkel bread. No wheat. So. Now comes my horse. Don't forget my horse."

Near the Port-O-Lets, a violi[nist] serenaded an empty swath of spr[ing] fields. By Madhupran's penultim[ate] lap, the throng of acolytes, friend[s] and confused passersby at the r[ace] course numbered about two hun[dred]. That morning, Sri Chinm[oy] had written three new compositi[ons] in honor of Madhupran's succes[s]. Xeroxed sheet music was hand[ed] out, and men and women gath[ered] in scrums along Joe Austin Way to rehearse. A blue ribbon bearing [the] gold-embossed legend SELF-TRAN[S]CENDENCE RACES was strung acro[ss] the sidewalk opposite a gauntlet [of] camera-wielding disciples.

Madhupran accelerated thro[ugh] his final quarter-mile shoulderin[g] a victory flag fringed with gold tas[sels], each stride an object lesson in h[is] kinetics of belief. He had knocked more than a day off his own wo[rld] record. When he crossed the li[ne] Sri Chinmoy led the crowd in a r[ou]mphal sing-along. "The champ[ion] of champions/Am I," proclaimed [the] chorus. "In God's limitless p[ride] sky/I fly."

Like his many thousands of [po]ems, the Guru's songs are nothin[g] not pithy. After the disciples repe[at]ed the first song several times, th[ey] proceeded to the next. "In [the] world's longest bravest distan[ce] run/Who waves the victory fl[ag]? Madhupran!/Madhupran!" [The] Guru clapped a metronomic b[eat] against his knee. Whenever [the] singers fell silent, he beckoned [for] more. The third song was [the] longest, and the most popular:

> I am the world's longest distance
> Daring and shattering runner
> My Supreme Lord's
> Sun-power Smile
> And his Moon-Bliss Love
> Winner

Madhupran crooned along [in] his operatic baritone, clasping [a] plastic-sheathed bouquet like a beauty-pageant winner. Sri Chinm[oy] dispensed vanilla creme cookies [and] individually wrapped Keebler Cr[ax] & Cheddar Sandwich Crackers, [and] then he left. The crowd disper[sed] and the runners who had quit [re]cling the block to watch Madhup[ran] enter the record books returned [to]

grind. Some had nine hundred es ahead of them.

By the vans, an enterprising disciple venged for crumbs in an abandoned lboard box. "They may be dregs," said, smiling, "but they're the mas- s dregs." A kindly, heavyset Russian nan sat counting off laps. In the 0s she had fled the "atheist state" of Soviet Union for Texas, where she overed transcendental meditation. w she gazed mournfully up the block. e felt empty, she said. "It's always e this. You wait and wait for the event. Then in thirty minutes—it's history."

n the last days of July, the tempo of race changed. Wind jostled the s, while in the park a woman herd- leaves with an electric blower. lgame had arrived. Sometimes two ners reached 3,100 miles in a day. h finish triggered music and ap- use, but the excitement of Mad- ran's victory was never quite tched. We sang the Guru's songs in and again, like a touring cast of *dspell* at the end of a fifty-city run. The Self-Transcendence Race was posed to end on August 1, but Sri inmoy granted a week's extension so laggards could finish. The last miles ld prove the cruelest. Scattered ver outages had afflicted Queens. conserve energy in the stupefying t of August, government buildings their thermostats at a balmy 78 de- es, and the lights of Coney Island's mic Parachute Jump went dark. So, , NASDAQ's digital display in nes Square. Summer school was of- lly pronounced "optional." Mayor omberg declared a heat emergency; r, the city would confirm a heat- ated death toll of 140. I worried ut the four runners still circling Joe stin park.

By day fifty-eight, deep red circles omed on Abichal's cheeks. "I think metimes even the runners ask, 'What I doing here?'" he confessed. Often would orbit the block for hours hout glimpsing another racer, a nomenon he called "the dark side he loop." At night he veered into fence outside Edison High. He had nb toes and a strange vertiginous ing, as if the ground were rolling be- th his feet. Sometimes he dreamed about the race. In the dreams somebody chased him around the block, or he was chasing someone else, he couldn't say which. He woke unrefreshed. "I just run all night," he said. "Round and round." The energy on the loop had changed. The race has a force, he explained, a power you feel at every level of your being. "Then when you cut the head off, it's gone."

Rathin Boulton from Australia crossed the finish line on August 7. He held his bouquet while a modest crowd sang and clapped. A few yards away the door of a white sedan hung open. Sri Chinmoy emerged wearing flip-flops, his striped shirt tucked into canary-yellow trunks, and made his halting way to the scoreboard.

Last year, Rathin had run 3,100 miles in fifty-six days, eleven hours. At the Guru's urging, one of the race directors read this figure aloud. Then he repeated Rathin's latest score of fifty-seven days and change. "This is—more?" the Guru asked.

There was nervous laughter from the gallery. Rathin had traveled 3,100 miles around a concrete block in Queens, but he had not transcended himself. The Guru sipped from a juice box while a disciple set up a microphone attached to a small public-address system. "How many years have you been on our path?" Chinmoy asked. "Ten years, Guru," Rathin answered. Chinmoy sat clutching his right knee, head bowed, as neighborhood kids passed by in jeans and baggy shorts. Then, in a warbling voice, he began to sing. "*Rathin, Rathin, Rathin, Rathin.*" I had the impression he was composing this number on the spot. Heedless of the roaring planes overhead, the disciples joined in, timidly at first but with mounting conviction, until the Guru produced a box of vanilla cookies and called them to order. It was snack time.

Afterward he indulged in a little postprandial lecturing. I dutifully recorded what I could, but the very first sentence confounded me. "Once upon a time," the Guru said, and a siren drowned him out. Whole paragraphs were lost in the muddle of ambient street noise, giving his remarks a Dadaist quality. I heard the phrases "unimaginable joy" and "peace blossoms." Chinmoy acknowledged a man who had helped him organize a trip to New Zealand, where he had lifted a thousand sheep. His voice was breathy and sweet. "I am playing a flute for a kangaroo. My only audience is a kangaroo." He spoke at length about Lord Krishna, breaking off to quiz his disciples on their mastery of the Bhagavad-Gita. "In which chapter does Lord Krishna show his divine form to humans?" he asked. "Eleven," someone shouted. Wind buffeted the microphone. I made out the words "bodyguards" and "karate chop." Now and then the Guru paused for a bite of creme cookie, and sounds of mastication crackled from the P.A. My notes resembled a collection of haikus. Finally, the Guru stood and waved, padded to the white sedan still idling at the curb, and was spirited away.

On the loop, Abichal offered some perspective. The mind likes to grasp things, he told me; this is its nature. But reality cannot be grasped. A true master addresses the heart. To do so, he must short-circuit the student's intellect, a process sometimes calling for "special techniques." He speaks indirectly, in riddles, coaxing the student toward a more receptive state. It made a certain sense, but half the time I'd found the Guru simply inaudible. Abichal nodded. "It's like that for a lot of people," he said. "Even the disciples."

By the late 1880s, the pedestrian craze had cooled. "The public may occasionally lose its head," the *New York Times* concluded, "but it is unsafe to assume that it will do so more than once or twice in the same direction. It rushed to see Rowell trot over 500 miles of sawdust because long-distance pedestrianism was a new thing." Slave to the god of novelty, the great unwashed had forsaken distance foot-racing for such arcane conveyances as the bicycle and the roller skate. A century later, the pedestrian has wandered into cultural oblivion, his feats relegated to microfilm archives and a few out-of-print sports chronicles.[8]

[8] *Notably John Cumming's* Runners & Walkers *and* Ultramarathoning: The Next Challenge *by Tom Osler and Ed Dodd.*

Edward Payson Weston clung doggedly to fame well into his senescence, but an accident brought his career to an unceremonious end in 1927. His glory days behind him, the great pedestrian was broke, sharing a Greenwich Village flat and begging for work in the pages of the *Times*. Eight days after he received a gift of $30,000 from Anne Nichols, author of the popular Broadway comedy *Abie's Irish Rose*, Weston was pasted in the streets of New York by a taxicab. He was eighty-eight years old. For decades he had railed against the evils of the motorcar, an invention for loafers and slobs. Weston spent the balance of his life confined to a wheelchair. The age of pedestrians was dead.

I returned the next day to watch Abichal cross the finish line. The heat wave had broken, and he circled the block with a look of resignation. He would finish a week later than he'd hoped. "I feel joy," he said, but I couldn't shake the sense that past races had meant more to Abichal. As we walked against the stream of traffic on the parkway, he told me about a particularly grueling race he'd run a few years back. "I was so looking forward to the end. Dying, dying, dying. Then on the last lap—it all fell away." He made a little magician's flourish with his hand. "What I thought would be the goal just vanished, like a mirage. There was no goal. It didn't exist. I realized that my mind had been playing this trick. It was just another lap, same as all the other laps." This summer, Abichal had not transcended himself in precisely the way he'd imagined, but he would run again.

As we neared the diminished Base Camp with its skeleton crew of volunteers, Abichal's thoughts turned to the future of his sport. There was an upcoming 1,200K in Germany, the Deutschlandlauf; 2006 would see new six- and seven-day races in France and Greece. A note of hope entered his voice."They said the marathon was impossible. Now hundreds of thousands run them. Maybe this is it."

At 10:20 P.M., a few disciples gave up tossing a Frisbee to watch Abichal embark on his final lap. Someone had arranged two long files of tea candles leading to the finish line—the lights of Coldplay's "Fix You," come to guide him home. A bicycle horn bleated in the dark, and we called his name as he lumbered eastward bearing the Self-Transcendence banner in one hand and the Red Dragon of Wales in the other. An unexpected knot formed in my throat as Abichal walked gingerly across the line and accepted his flowers. After the usual singing, Abichal sat with a cake in his lap, while friends filed past to shake his hand, and then we stood in silence. Altogether, the turnout was about a quarter the size of Madhupran's. "Speech," somebody called. The brake lights of a passing car flashed, and a mild electrical current passed through the crowd. "Guru," came a whisper behind me. There was a collective turning of heads. "Guru's here?" "Abichal, I think Guru's here." But the car sped down the block. Pink and blue balloons joggled above Abichal's bowed head. His time was fifty-eight days, sixteen hours, twenty-two minutes, three seconds.

The next week Abichal met me for lunch at Smile of the Beyond, a vegetarian diner managed by one of the race directors. Suprabha had crossed the finish line the previous Thursday, and now the racecourse was empty. Some of the runners had already returned to the jobs they had left behind in their home countries. Others planned to hang around Jamaica for the Guru's seventy-fifth birthday party at the end of the month. The previous year, he had celebrated with a solo concert performance on seventy-four pianos. It would be difficult to top.

Abichal showed up twenty minutes late, his hair newly trimmed to a boyish wiffle—most likely at Perfection in the Head-World, the disciple-operated barbershop down the street. He looked ten years younger, but he walked on the legs of a senior citizen. It was strange to see Abichal in a restaurant. In the seven weeks I'd known him, I had almost never caught him sitting. Now that the struggle was past, he said, he felt a constant sense of freedom. The race was like a weight he'd been carrying for months. He was relieved not physically—although his body was recovering—but psychically. He intended to edit a poetry anthology. There was also his magazine and website. In December he would go to Arizona to run Across the Years, a race that killed a man in 2004. He hadn't decided whether he would return to Jamaica next June. "Ha! We'll wait and see," he said. On a television screen in the corner, Sri Chinmoy lifted an airplane.

After lunch, Abichal offered to walk with me to the racecourse. His thoughts followed a meandering path. "For many of us, the mind is limited," he said. "It's useful, we need to use it, but it grasps at bits. Then it uses those bits to form a picture and acts as if the picture is reality." We lingered on the verge of the racecourse. He looked mistily at a trash can heaped with ice cream wrappers and soda cans. "I feel a connection to this bin. Sometimes it would be full to overflowing. Sometimes somebody would dump a big bag in." Abichal squinted up at the clouds. The light was different now, he said. The race starts just a week before the summer solstice, when the days are at their longest. We fell into a natural orbit around the block. "It's all the same," Abichal said. He pointed out features of the loop like a docent leading a cathedral tour. "Same bins, same cracks in the sidewalk." He nodded at a sapling by the high school. "This oak tree replaced a birch that was here a few years ago. You know what lives where. Blue flowers like this corner. And a flower called a bachelet pimpernel, and yellow clover. This pine tree lives here. And little red flowers, too." Abichal crouched down to show me. Somebody had tossed an empty Newport box in the grass alongside a foil printed with the word BOMB BAG. The flowers were minuscule, each blossom the size of a pin tip. "There's still something here. I can feel my echo. Some trace of the experience." Abichal rounded the corner. "This is where the course flattens out. Now it starts to rise gently. In the past sometimes, I'd get a rush of energy here. You feel that you can run forever."

FICTION

By Alice Munro

The best thing in winter was driving home, after her day teaching music in the Rough River schools. It would already be dark, and on the upper streets of the town snow might be falling, while rain flushed the car on the coastal highway. Joyce drove beyond the limits of the town into the forest, and though it was a real forest with great Douglas fir and cedar trees, there were people living in it every quarter mile from each other, or closer. There were people who had market gardens, and a few cows or sheep or riding horses, and there were enterprises like Jon's—he restored and made furniture—and other advertised enterprises more particular to this section of the world—tarot readings, herbal massage, conflict resolution. Some people lived in trailers, others had built their own houses, incorporating thatched roofs and log ends, and still others, like Jon and Joyce, were renovating old farm cottages.

There was one special thing she loved to see, as she was driving home and as she turned into their own property. At this time many people, even some of the thatched-roof people, were sitting in what were called patio doors—even if like Jon and Joyce they did not have a patio. These were usually uncurtained, and the two oblongs



of light seemed to be a sign or pledge of comfort, of safety and replenishment. Why this should be so, more than with ordinary windows, she could not tell. Perhaps it was that these were meant not just to look out on but to open directly on, or out of, the forest darkness, and that they displayed the haven of home so artlessly. Full-length people cooking, or watching television. Scenes which beguiled her, though she knew things wouldn't be so special, inside.

What she saw when she turned into her own unpaved puddled driveway was the set of these same doors—patio doors—that she and Jon had put in, and framed in them the gutted glowing interior of their house. The ladder, the unfinished kitchen shelves, exposed stairs, the warm wood, all lit up by the lightbulb that Jon could position to shine wherever he wanted it, wherever he was working. He worked all day in the shed, but when it began to get dark he sent his apprentice home and turned to working on the house. Hearing her car, he would turn his head in Joyce's direction just for a moment, in greeting. His hands would be too busy, usually, for him to wave. Sitting there, the lights of the car turned off, gathering up whatever she had to take into the house, Joyce was happy even to have that last dash to the door, through the dark and the wind and the cold rain. She felt herself shedding the day's work, which was harried and uncertain, filled with the dispensing of music to the indifferent as well as the responsive. How much better to work with wood and by yourself—she didn't count the apprentice—than with the unpredictable human young.

She didn't say any of that to Jon. He disliked hearing people talk about how basic and honest and fine it was

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Illustration by Stan Fellows

to work with wood, what interest they had, what dignity.

He would say, Crap.

Jon and Joyce had met at an urban high school in a factory city in Ontario. Joyce had the second-highest I.Q. in the class and Jon had the highest I.Q. in the school, and probably in the city. She was expected to turn out to be a fine concert performer on the violin—she hadn't yet switched to the cello—and he was to be some daunting sort of scientist or genius whose labors were beyond description in the ordinary world.

In their first year at college, they dropped out of their classes and ran away together. They got jobs here and there, traveled by bus across the continent, lived for a year in Oregon, were reconciled, at a distance, with the parents, for whom a light had gone out in the world. It was getting rather late in the day for them to be called hippies, but that was what their parents called them. They never thought of themselves that way. They did not do drugs they dressed conservatively though not too tidily, and Jon made a point of shaving and getting haircuts. They tired of their minimum-wage jobs finally and borrowed money from their disappointed families, so that they could become qualified to make a proper living. Jon learned carpentry and woodworking, and Joyce earned a degree that made her eligible to teach music in the schools.

The job she got was in Rough River. They bought this tumbledown house for almost nothing and settled down to a new phase in their lives. They planted a garden, got to know their neighbors. Some of those were real hippies. They tended small grow operations deep in the bush and made bead necklaces and herb sachets to sell.

They liked Jon. He endeared himself to people without trying to. He was still skinny and bright-eyed, egotistical but ready to listen. And it was a time when many people were just getting used to computers, which he understood and could patiently explain. Joyce was less popular—her method of teaching music was thought to be too formalized.

Jon and Joyce cooked supper together and drank some of their homemade wine. (Jon's method of wine-making was strict and successful.) Joyce talked about the frustrations and comedy of her day. Jon did not talk much right away—he was, for one thing, more involved in the cooking, more systematic than Joyce was. But when they got around to eating he might tell her about some customer who had come in that day, or about his apprentice, Edie. Something Edie had said. They would laugh, but not in a disparaging way. Edie was like a pet, Joyce sometimes thought. Like a child, maybe—but if Edie had been their child, and been the way she was, they would have been too puzzled and probably too concerned to laugh.

Why? What way? Edie wasn't stupid. Jon said that she was no genius when it came to woodworking, but she learned and remembered what you taught her. And the important thing was that she wasn't garrulous. That was what he had been most afraid of when the business of taking an apprentice had first come up. A government program had been started—he was to be paid a certain amount for teaching an apprentice, and the apprentice would be paid enough to live on, while learning. At first he wasn't willing, but Joyce had talked him into it. She thought they had an obligation to society.

Edie might not have talked a lot, but when she did talk it was forcefully. "I abstain from all drugs and alcohol," she had told them at her first interview. "I belong to A.A. I am a recovering alcoholic. We never say we are recovered, because you never are. You never are as long as you live. I have a nine-year-old daughter who was born without a father and is my total responsibility, and I mean to bring her up right. My ambition is to learn woodworking to provide for myself and my child."

While delivering this speech she sat staring at them across their table. She was a short sturdy young woman who did not look old enough or damaged enough to have had a career of dissipation. Broad shoulders, thick bangs straight across her forehead, tight ponytail, no possibility of a smile.

"And one more thing," she said. She unbuttoned and removed her long-sleeved blouse. She was wearing an undershirt. Both arms, her upper chest, and, when she turned around, her back were decorated with tattoos. It was as if her skin had become some other garment of colored lace, with designs of birds, flowers, fish, dragons too intricate to be comprehended.

The first thing you had to wonder was whether her entire body was tattooed in the same way.

"How beautiful," said Joyce.

"Well, I don't know if it's beautiful or not," Edie said. "It would have cost a pile of money if I'd had to pay for it. A friend did it for me. That's what I had into at one time. What I'm showing it to you for is that some people would object to it. Like if I got hot and had to work in my shirt."

"Not us," Joyce cried hastily. "Wouldn't you like a cup of coffee?"

Edie was putting her shirt back on. "No thank you. I don't drink coffee. A lot of people at A.A., they live on coffee. What I say is, why exchange one bad habit for another?"

"No matter what you say, she gives you a bit of a lecture," said Joyce when the girl was gone. "I didn't dare inquire about the virgin birth."

Jon said, "She's strong. That's the main thing. I took a look at her arms."

When Jon said strong he meant just what the word used to mean. He meant she'd be able to carry a beam.

Jon had always worked with the radio tuned to CBC. Classical music, mostly, news, commentaries. Edie had opinions on what they listened to and Jon something to tell Joyce, in the evenings.

Edie didn't believe in evolution. (There had been a phone-in program on which some people objected to being taught in the schools.)

Why not?

"Well, it's because in those Bible countries—" Jon said, then switched into his firm monotonous Edie voice—"in those Bible countries they had pets of monkeys and the monkeys were always swinging down from the trees, and that's where the crazy idea came from that they swung down and became people."

"But it isn't the *Bible* that says that," Joyce interrupted.

"Never mind," said Jon, giving Joyce an Edie stare. "Never mind and shut up."

Edie also believed that medical companies knew the cure for cancer but

t they had a bargain with doctors to
p this information hushed up be-
se of the money they and the doc-
; made.
:die had heard the Ode to Joy
yed on the radio while she and
were working, and she thought it
nded awful, it was like a funeral.
Also, she thought that Jon and
ce—that is, Joyce—should not
ve wine bottles in plain sight on
kitchen table.
That's her business?" said Joyce.
Apparently she thinks so."
When does she get to examine our
:hen table?"
Well, she's got to go through to
toilet. She can't be expected to
in the bush."
They're empty bottles."
Not always. Not entirely."
I really don't see why—"
And sometimes she comes in here
l makes sandwiches for herself and
"
So? It's my kitchen. Our kitchen."
It's just that she feels so fragile yet.
something you and I can't under-
id."
What Joyce should have under-
od, and at that moment, was
nething that Jon himself was
bably not even close to knowing.
e word "fragile" should have
ned her. Not a word Jon often
d. Not a word you would expect
ear, in connection with Edie. He
falling in love.
alling. That suggests some time
n, a slipping-under. But you can
k of it as speeded up, to a moment
second when you fall. Now Jon is
in love. Tick. Now he is. There was
way it could be seen as probable, or
sible, unless you think of a blow
ween the eyes, a sudden calamity.
e stroke of fate that leaves a healthy
n a cripple, the wicked joke that
s clear eyes into blind stones.
oyce set about convincing him
t he was mistaken. He had little
erience of women. None, except
her. They had always thought
t experimenting with various
tners was childish, adulteries
ssy and destructive. He should
e played around more, she said.
had spent the dark close winter
ths shut up in his workshop, ex-
ed to the confident emanations of
Edie. It was comparable to getting sick from bad ventilation.

Edie would drive him crazy, if he took this seriously.

"I've thought of that," he said. "Maybe she has."

Joyce said that was just stupid adolescent talk, making himself out to be dumbstruck, helpless.

"What do you think you are, a Knight of the Round Table?"

Then she said she was sorry. The only thing to do, she saw, was to take the whole thing on as a shared problem, a valley of the shadow which would later be seen as a mere glitch in the course of their marriage.

"We will ride this out," she said.

But Jon looked at her distantly, even kindly.

"There is no we," he said.

How could this have happened? Joyce asks it of Jon and of herself and then of others. A heavy-footed heavy-witted carpenter's apprentice in baggy pants and flannel shirts and—as long as the winter lasted—a dull thick sweater flecked with sawdust. A mind that plods inexorably from one cliché to the next and proclaims every step of the journey as if it were the law of the land. How could such a person have eclipsed Joyce, with her long legs and thin waist and maidenly braid of silky dark hair? Her wit, her second-highest I.Q., her reading and her music, her cello playing?

"I'll tell you what I think it was," said Joyce. This was later on, when the days had lengthened and the candles of swamp lilies flared in the ditches. When she went to teach music wearing tinted glasses to hide eyes that were sunken from weeping and drinking, and instead of driving home after work drove to Willingdon Park, where she hoped Jon would come looking for her, fearing suicide. (He did, but only once.)

"I think it was that she'd been on the streets. She was, you know. She lost her child and everything. She told him all about it. She got herself tattooed from top to bottom, that attracts customers.

"Men are aroused by that sort of past," she said. "They won't admit it but they are. All that experience and availability. And now reformed. It's your fucking Mary Magdalene, that's what it is. And he's an infant sexually. It makes you sick."

She had friends now, to whom she could talk like this. They all had stories. They were mostly women she had known before, but not as she knew them now. They confided and drank and laughed till they cried. Despair.

"I can't believe it," Joyce said, and the friends said, "That's why it's true. They do just what you can't believe, men do."

In the midst of talk like this Joyce felt all right, really all right. She said she was having moments in which she felt grateful to Jon, she felt as if she'd never really been alive till now. It was terrible but it was wonderful. A new beginning. Naked truth, naked life.

But then she woke up at three or four in the morning and wondered where she was. Not in the house anymore. Edie was in that house now, Edie and her child and Jon. This was a switch that Joyce herself had favored, thinking it might bring Jon to his senses. She had moved to an apartment in town belonging to another teacher, who was on a sabbatical. She woke in the night with the vibrating pink lights of the restaurant sign across the street flashing through her window and illuminating the other teacher's Mexican doodads. Pots of cacti, dangling cat's eyes, blankets with stripes the color of dried blood. All that drunken insight, the exhilaration, had been cast out of her, like vomit. Aside from that, she was not hungover. She could wallow in lakes of alcohol and wake up, it seemed, dry as cardboard, flattened. Her life gone. A commonplace calamity.

The truth was that she was still drunk, but feeling deadly sober. And then she was in danger. She was in danger of getting into her car and driving out to the house. Not of driving into the ditch, because her driving style at such times was slow and sedate, but of parking in the yard under the dark windows and crying out to Jon that they must simply stop this. Stop this, this is not right. Just tell her to go away.

Remember sleeping in the field and waking up with the cows munching all

around and we hadn't seen them the night before. Remember washing in the creek. Picking magic mushrooms up on Vancouver Island and flying back to Ontario and selling them, and that paid for our trip when your mother was sick and we thought she was dying. And we said it's all right, we're not druggies, we're on an errand of mercy.

The sun came up and the Mexican colors began to blare at her in their true hideousness, and after a while she got up and washed and slashed her cheeks with rouge and drank coffee that she made as strong as mud and put on some of her new clothes. She had bought new flimsy tops and flutter skirts and earrings decked with rainbow feathers. She went out to teach music in the schools, looking like a gypsy dancer or a cocktail waitress. She laughed at everything and flirted with everybody. With the man who cooked her dinner in the restaurant downstairs, the boy who put gas in her car, the clerk who sold her stamps in the post office. She had some idea that Jon would hear about how pretty she looked, how sexy and happy, how she was simply bowling over all the men. As soon as she went out of the apartment she was on a stage, with Jon as the essential, secondhand spectator. Although Jon had never been taken with showy looks or flirty behavior, had never thought that was what made her attractive. When they traveled together they had often made do with a common wardrobe, both of them being thin, and with only a couple of inches difference in height. Heavy socks, jeans, dark shirts, windbreakers.

Even with the youngest or the dullest children she taught, her tone had become caressing, full of mischievous laughter, her encouragement irresistible. She was preparing her pupils for the recital held at the conclusion of the school year. In other years she had not been enthusiastic about this evening of public performance. She had felt that it interfered with the progress of those students who truly learned, showed them into a situation they were not ready for. All that effort and tension, she said, could only create false values. But this year she threw herself into every aspect of the show. The program, the costumes, the lighting, the introductions, of course the performances. This ought to be fun, she announced. Fun for the students, fun for the audience.

Of course she counted on Jon's being there. Edie's daughter was one of the performers, so Edie would have to be there. And Jon would have to accompany her.

Jon's and Edie's first public appearance before the town. Their declaration. They could not avoid it. Such switches as theirs were not exactly commonplace but they were not unheard-of, particularly with the people who lived out south of the town. Though the fact that rearrangements were not scandalous didn't mean they weren't interesting. Then after a while things settled down, people got used to the new alliance, the newly aligned partners would be seen chatting, or at least saying hello to the castoffs in the grocery store.

But this was not the role Joyce saw herself playing, watched by Jon and Edie (well, really by Jon) on the occasion of the recital.

What did she see? God knows. She did not, in any sane moment, think of impressing Jon so favorably that he would come to his senses, when she was called on to take the applause of the audience. That his heart would break when he saw her happy and beautiful and in command, rather than moping or suicidal. But something not far off from that—something she couldn't describe to herself but couldn't stop hoping for.

It was the best recital ever. Everybody said so. They said there was more verve. More gaiety, yet more intensity. The children were costumed to harmonize with the music they performed, and their faces were made up so that they did not look so scared and sacrificial.

When Joyce came out at the end she wore a long black slit skirt that shone with silver as she moved, silver bangles, and glitter in her loose hair. Some whistles mixed with the applause.

Jon and Edie were not in the audience.

II.

Joyce and Matt are giving a party at their house in North Vancouver, to celebrate Matt's sixty-fifth birthday. Matt is a neuropsychologist who is also a pretty good amateur violinist. T is how he met Joyce, who is now a fessional cellist and his third wi lean eager-looking woman w swinging mop of pewter-colored and a slight stoop that may come coddling her instrument, or just a habit of being an obliging li and a ready talker.

"Look at all the people here," J keeps saying. "It's positively a lif ry. Isn't it amazing?"

There are Matt's colleague course, from the university—bu the ones he considers his per friends. He is a generous but outspo man, so it stands to reason tha all his colleagues fall into that a gory. Then there is his first wife ly, accompanied by her caregiver ly's brain was damaged when sh in a car accident at the age of tw nine, so it is unlikely that she k who Matt is, who her three grow are, or that this is the house she in as a young wife. But her ple manners are intact and she is de ed to meet people, even if she h them already, fifteen minutes b Her caregiver is a tidy little S woman who explains to almost e body that she is not used to big parties like this and that she d drink while on duty.

Matt's second wife, Dorothy, with him for less than a year, th she was married to him for t She is here with her much yo partner, Louise, and their daughter, whom Louise bore months ago. Dorothy has s friends with Matt and especi with Matt's and Sally's son, To who was small enough to be i care when she married his fa Matt's two older sons are pre with their children and the dren's mothers, though one o is divorced from that mother a accompanied by his present p as well as her children. Tomm for the first time brought alon lover, a young man named Ja has so far not spoken to anybo

Joyce hardly stops laughing a explains the status of the offici outlying members of her family says that she does, truly, thi them all as her family, espec since she and Matt have no chi

neir own. She herself has no chil-
ı at all, though she does have an
ıusband, Jon, who lives up the
ıt in a mill town in which the
has now fallen on evil days. But
's woodworking and house-
ovating business is doing well.
invited him to come down for
party but he couldn't, because he
to go to the christening of one of
third wife's grandchildren. Of
:se, Joyce invited the wife too,
ıgh she hasn't met her. Her name
hristine and she runs a bakeshop.
wish they'd been able to make
says Joyce, explaining all this to
ighbor (some of the neighbors
e been invited because they are
ıds, and some who are not quite
ıds have been invited so there'll
ıo fuss about noise). "Then I
d have my share in the compli-
ons. I'd have got *his* second wife,
I've no idea what's become of
and I don't think he has either."
here is lots of food that Matt and
:e have made and that people
e brought, and lots of wine, and a
dren's fruit punch and a real
ch that Matt has concocted in
or of the good old days when
ple really knew how to drink. He
that he would have made it in a
bbed-out garbage pail, the way
y did then, but he was afraid
ple would be too squeamish to
k it. Most of the younger adults
e it alone anyway.

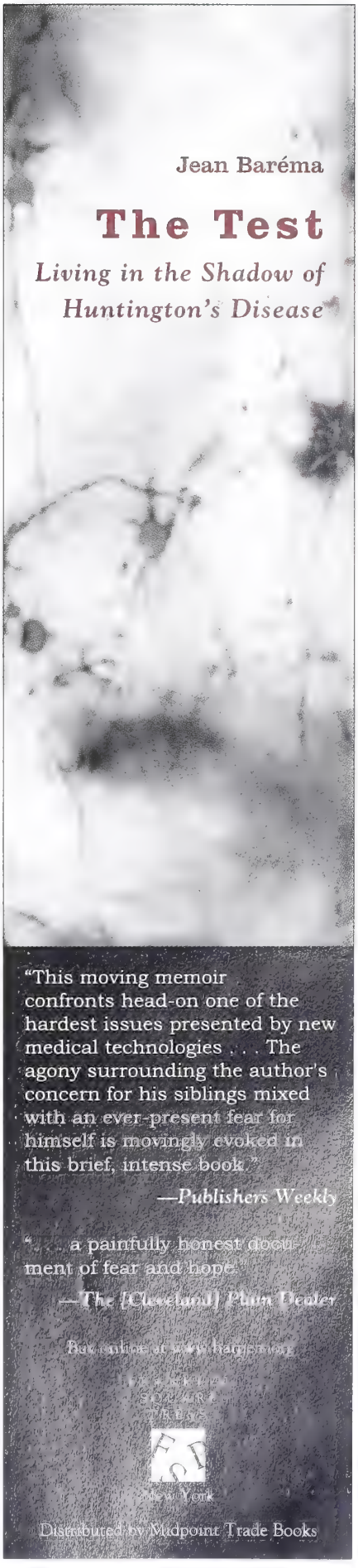
he weather is perfect and the
ınds large, so that people can
der about or play croquet, and
children can run around shriek-
at their own games and try out
ıld wooden swing that Matt has
up. Most of them have seen only
swings and plastic play-units in
back yard. Matt is surely one of
last people in Vancouver to have
childhood swing handy and also
e living still in the house he grew
ı. A house on Windsor Road on
slope of Grouse Mountain, near
t used to be the edge of the for-
It isn't now, of course: houses
o climbing above it, most of
n with massive garages that
ıp the imitation castles attached.
ilar dwellings line this street
. The houses Matt remembers,
e houses built of wood, roomy
bungalows with dormers and porches stuck on, and no thought of design, have been pulled down to make way for them. One of these days, Matt keeps saying, this house will have to go. It will have to bite the dust, he says, and a couple of monstrosities will replace it.

Joyce can't think of her life with Matt going on anywhere else. The house seems always to be full of people. People coming and going, leaving things behind—including children—and picking them up later. Matt's string quartet playing in the study on Sunday afternoons, the local Unitarian Fellowship meeting in the living room on Sunday evenings. Green Party strategy being planned in the kitchen. The play-reading group sounding off in the front of the house while some younger person spills out the details of his or her real-life drama in the back (Joyce's presence being required in both places). Matt and another professor in the study worrying out some department business with the door closed.

She often remarks that she and Matt are seldom alone together except in bed.

"And then," she says, "he'll probably be reading something important. While I'm reading something unimportant."

This is his kind of life. It is what she saw, and so much wanted to be invited into, when she met him years ago. There is some large conviviality and appetite he carries with him, wrapped around him. A need for food and drink and affection and talk (anecdotes, politics, the serious games of life, usually—matters to do with his work being reserved for fellow professionals). He seems to be the least solitary person she has ever known. Even at the university, where he is involved with graduate students, collaborators, detractors—he's in a well-managed sort of whirlwind. All this once seemed to her so comforting—it probably still would, if she had time to look at it from outside. She would probably envy herself, from outside. She is his matching woman, with all the friends and duties and activities and of course her own career as well. You would never look at her now and think she had



been so lonely when she first came down to Vancouver that she had agreed to go out with the boy in the dry cleaners who was a decade too young for her. And then he had stood her up.

Now she is walking across the grass with a shawl over her arm for old Mrs. Fowler, the mother of Dorothy, the second wife and late-blooming lesbian. Mrs. Fowler can't sit in the sun because of her sensitive eyes but gets shivery in the shade. And in the other hand is a glass of freshly made lemonade for Mrs. Gowan, the on-duty companion of Sally. Mrs. Gowan has found the children's punch too sweet. Sally is not supposed to have anything to eat or drink—she would be sure to spill it on her pretty dress or throw it at somebody in a fit of playfulness. She does not seem to mind this deprivation.

On her journey across the lawn Joyce skirts a group of young guests sitting in a circle. Tommy and his new friend, and other friends she has often seen in her house, and some she does not believe she knows at all. She hears Tommy say, "No. I am not Isadora Duncan."

They all laugh.

She realizes they must be playing that difficult and snobby game that was popular years ago—what was it called? She thinks the name started with a B. She would have thought they were too anti-elitist for any such pastime.

Buxtehude. She says it out loud.

"You're playing Buxtehude."

"You got the B right anyway," says Tommy, laughing, so that some of the others can laugh, too. "See—my *belle-mère* she isn't so dumb. But she's a musician. Wasn't Booxtahoo a musician?"

"Buxtehude played the organ," says Joyce primly. "Bach walked fifty miles to hear him."

Tommy says, "Hot damn."

A girl in the circle gets up, and Tommy calls to her.

"Hey Maggie. Maggie? Aren't you playing anymore?"

"I'll be back," the girl says. "I'm just going to hide in the bushes with my cigarette." She is wearing a frilly black skirt that makes you think of a petticoat or a nightie, and a severe but low-necked little black jacket. She drifts away without another word. Wispy pale hair, evasive pale face, invisible eyebrows. Joyce has taken an instant dislike to her, thinks her the sort of girl whose mission is to make people feel uncomfortable. Tagging along. Joyce is sure she tagged along—to a party at the home of people she doesn't know but feels a right to despise. Because of their prosperity, their shallow cheer, their bourgeois hospitality. (Do they say bourgeois anymore?)

It's not as if a guest couldn't smoke anywhere she wants to. There aren't any of those fussy little signs around. Joyce feels her own cheer draining away.

"Tommy," she says abruptly. "Tommy, would you mind taking this shawl to Grandma Fowler? Apparently she's feeling chilly. And the lemonade is for Mrs. Gowan. You know. The lady with your mother."

No harm to remind him of certain relationships and responsibilities.

Tommy is quickly and gracefully on his feet.

"Botticelli," he says, relieving her of the shawl and the glass.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to spoil your game."

"We're no good anyway," says a boy she knows, Justin. "We're not as smart as you guys used to be."

"Used to be is right," says Joyce, at a loss now as to what to do or where to go next.

They are washing the glasses in the kitchen—Joyce and Tommy and the new friend, Jay. The party is over. People have departed with hugs and kisses and happy cries, in some cases bearing platters of food that Joyce has no room for in the refrigerator. Wilted salads and possibly contaminated cream tarts and deviled eggs have been thrown out. Few of the deviled eggs got eaten anyway. Cholesterol. Too old-fashioned.

"They were a lot of work, but they must have reminded people of church suppers," says Joyce, tipping a platterful into the garbage.

"My grandma always made them," says Jay. That's the first sentence he has addressed to Joyce. She is grateful, even if he puts her into the category of his grandma. She prob belongs there.

"We ate several," says Tomm and Jay have worked alongside gathering glasses and plates and lery and napkins that were sca all over the lawn and throughou house, even in the most cu places such as in the porch flo pots and on the bookshelves an der cushions in the study. To v people must have retreated for conversations and, as Joyce s God knows what else. These b she thinks of them as boys—a stacked the dishwasher more ex ly than she in her worn-out could ever manage, and prepare hot soapy water and cool rinse- in the sink, for the glasses.

"We could have just saved for the next load in the dishwa Joyce has said, but Tommy said

"You wouldn't think of pu these in the dishwasher," he sa you weren't out of your right with all you had to do today."

Jay washes and Joyce dries Tommy puts away. He still re bers where everything goes in house. Out on the porch M having a strenuous conversa with one of the students. A ently he's not so merrily dru the plentiful embraces and h felt farewells of half an hou would indicate.

"Quite possibly I'm not i right mind," says Joyce. "At the ment my instinct is to pitch the out and buy plastic."

"Post-party syndrome," says Tom my. "We know all about it."

"So who was that girl in the frills?" Joyce asks. "The one walked out of the game?"

"Maggie? You must mean Mag Maggie O'Dell. Justin's wife. Just O'Dell."

"Well, I know Justin. I just d know he was married."

"Ah, how they all grow up," Tom my sighs, teasing her.

"Justin's thirty," he says. "S possibly older."

Jay says, "Definitely older."

"She's an interesting-looking gi says Joyce. "What's she like?"

"She's a writer. She's okay."

y, bending over the sink, makes
ise that Joyce cannot interpret.
nclined to be rather aloof,"
ımy says. He speaks to Jay. "Am
ht? Would you say that?"
She thinks she's hot shit," Jay
distinctly.
Well, she's just got her first book
' Tommy says. "I forget what it's
ed. Some title like a how-to
c. I don't think it's a good title.
get your first book out, I guess
that does puff up your ego
for a while."

ıssing a bookstore a few days lat-
oyce sees the girl's face on a
er. And there is her name—
gie O'Dell. She is wearing the
e black jacket she wore at the
y. Tailored, severe, but with a
ocatively low V-neck. Though
has practically nothing there to
v off. A black hat, too, wide and
py. She stares straight into the
era, with her somber, wounded,
ıntly accusing look.
Where has Joyce seen her before?
he party, of course. But even
ı, along with her probably un-
anted dislike, she had felt she'd
that face before.
student. She has had hundreds
udents, in her time.
ne goes into the store and buys a
y of the book. *How Are We To*
No question mark. The woman
sold it to her says, "And you
w if you bring it back Friday af-
oon between two and four, the
ıor will be here to sign it for you."
poster of Maggie O'Dell—the
e one that is in the window but
ı this additional information red-
ciled onto it—is stuck up behind
desk.
ust don't peel this little gold
ıp off, so we'll know you got it
," the woman says.
oyce has never understood this
ness of lining up to get a signa-
and a look at the writer, but she
murs politely, indicating neither
ıor no.
ne doesn't even know if she will
the book. She has a couple of
l biographies on the go already
she's sure are more to her taste
ı this will be.
ow Are We To Live turns out to be a collection of stories, not a novel. This fact by itself is disappointing. It seems to diminish the book's authority, making the author seem like somebody just hanging on to the gates of Literature, rather than safely settled inside.

Nevertheless, Joyce takes the book to bed with her that night and turns dutifully to the Table of Contents. About halfway down the list a title catches her eye.

"Kindertotenlieder."

Mahler. Familiar territory. She feels reassured, as she turns to the page indicated. There she finds that somebody has had the good sense to supply a translation.

"Songs for the Death of Children."

Beside her, Matt gives a snort.

She knows that he has disagreed with something that he is reading, and is waiting for her to ask what.

"What?"

"Christ. This idiot."

She puts *How Are We To Live* facedown on her chest, making sounds that show she is listening to him.

On the back of the book's cover is another picture of the girl, without the hat this time. Unsmiling still but not quite so disdainful or sullen. While Matt talks, Joyce shifts her knees so that she can position the book against them and read the few sentences of biography.

Maggie O'Dell grew up in Rough River, a mill town on the coast of British Columbia. She is a graduate of the UBC Creative Writing Program. She lives in Vancouver with her husband, Justin, and her cat, Tiberius.

When he has explained to her what the idiocy is, Matt lifts his eyes from his book to look at her book and says, "There's that girl that was at our party."

"Yes. Her name's Maggie O'Dell. Justin's wife."

"She's written a book then. What is it?"

"Fiction."

"Oh."

He has resumed his reading but in a moment asks her, with a hint of contrition, "Is it any good?"

"I don't know yet."

She lived with her mother in a basement apartment in a town between the mountains and the sea . . .

As soon as she reads these words Joyce feels too uncomfortable to continue reading with her husband beside her. She closes the book and says, "I think I'll go downstairs for a little."

"Is the light bothering you? I'll be turning it off in a minute."

"No. I think I want some tea. See you in a while."

"I'll probably be asleep."

"Good night then."

"Good night."

She kisses him and takes the book with her.

III.

"Songs for the Death of Children"

She lived with her mother in a basement apartment in a town between the mountains and the sea. For a long time before that she had lived with Mrs. Noland, who took in foster children. The number of children in Mrs. Noland's house varied from time to time. The little ones slept in the bed in the middle of the room, and the bigger ones slept in the cots on either side of the bed so the little ones wouldn't fall out. A bell rang to get you up in the morning. Mrs. Noland stood in the doorway ringing the bell. When she rang the next bell you were supposed to have been to pee and washed and dressed yourself and be ready for breakfast. Bigger ones were supposed to help the little ones, then make the bed. Sometimes the little ones would wet the bed because it was hard for them to climb out at night. Some big ones would tell, but others who were nicer would just pull up the covers and let it dry and when you got in again at night it would be not quite dried.

That was most of what she remembered about Mrs. Noland's.

Then she went to live with her mother, and every night her mother took her along to the A.A. meeting because she had nobody to leave her with. At the A.A. there was a box of Legos for kids to play with, but she didn't like Legos very much. After she started learning the violin she took her child's violin with her to A.A. and took it into the kitchen they had where they made coffee,

and she stayed in there by herself and practiced. It was better there than in the apartment because the people who lived upstairs didn't like to listen to her violin.

The violin lessons were given at school. If you didn't want to learn an instrument you could play the triangles, but the teacher liked you best if you wanted to play something harder. The teacher was a tall woman with brown hair that she wore sometimes in a braid down her back. She smelled different from the other woman teachers who might have perfume on. She smelled of wood or trees. Crushed cedar. And after the child's mother went to work for the teacher's husband she also smelled that way but not quite the same. The difference was that her mother smelled of work and the teacher smelled of music.

The child was not very talented, but she worked hard. She didn't do that because she loved music. She did it for love of the teacher and nothing else.

Joyce puts the book down on the kitchen table and looks again at the picture of the author. What is there of Edie in that face? Nothing in the shape, the coloring. She gets up and fetches the brandy, and puts a little of it in her tea. She searches her mind for the name of Edie's child. She had never written a word to Jon until she decided to invite him to the birthday party, and then he had written and told her about the woman who owned the bakery, but nothing about Edie. She was sure he had not mentioned the name of the daughter.

The child could not have been entirely without ability, or Joyce would have got her on to something less difficult than the violin. But she couldn't have been gifted—well, she said she wasn't gifted—or her name would have stuck.

A blank-faced blob of female childishness. That's all Joyce can remember from those days, though she has recognized her in some faint and troubling way as a grown-up. As a child she must have accompanied her mother, on the Saturdays and Sundays when Edie was not officially working but would drop in, to see how a job was going and probably lend a hand. If Jon was working on the kitchen she would plunk herself down in a chair to watch whatever he was doing, and get in the way of any conversation Joyce might have had with him.

Margaret. That was it. Transformed easily into Maggie.

Margaret must have been privy in some sort of way to the courtship. Jon must have dropped in at the apartment, just as Edie dropped in at the house. Edie might have sounded the child out. How do you like Jon? Wouldn't it be nice to go and live with Jon, in Jon's house? Mommy and Jon like each other very much, and when people like each other that much they want to live in the same house. Your music teacher and Jon don't like each other as much as Mommy and Jon do, so your teacher would like to go and live in her own apartment, and you and Mommy and Jon can go and live together in the house.

That was the turn Joyce fears this story is going to take. The child mixed up and suffering in the grown-ups' nasty dealings and delusions. But when she reads on she finds the switch of dwelling places passed over with the barest mention.

Everything is hinged on the child's love, the love for her teacher.

Thursday, the day of the music lesson, is the momentous day of the week, its happiness or unhappiness depending on the success or failure of the child's performance, and the teacher's notice of that performance. Both are nearly unbearable. The teacher's voice would be controlled, kind, making jokes, covering its weariness and disappointment. Or suddenly relieved and merry. There we are, good for you, you've really made the grade today.

On one good Thursday, one marvelous Thursday, there was even notice taken of the knee the child had skinned in a fall on the playground. The teacher's hovering hands parting the air above the scab, her suddenly soft voice asking what had happened, declaring that the injury called for a treat. She reached for the Smarties she handed out to encourage the youngest children.

"Which is your favorite?"

The child, overcome, said, "A

Is this the beginning of a ch
Is it because of spring, the pre
tions for the recital? The child
herself singled out. She is to
soloist, she must stay after scho
practice, and this means she ca
ride home on the school bus, t
house where she and her mothe
now living. The teacher offe
drive her home, and on the way
if she is nervous about the recita

Sort of.

Well then, the teacher says
must train herself to think of s
thing really nice. Such as a bir
ing across the sky. What is he
vorite bird?

Favorites again. The child
think, can't think of a single
Then, "A crow?"

The teacher laughs. "Okay. C
Just before you begin to play, t
of the crow."

Then perhaps to make up
laughing, sensing the child's hu
ation, she says, "Let's go down t
park and see if they've opene
the ice-cream stand yet. Do
worry if you don't go straight ho

"They know I'm with you."

"They do. Yes."

The ice-cream stand is o
though the selection is limited.
haven't got the more exciting fl
in yet. The child picks strawber
flavor she doesn't much care f
was the only one she could thin
in her bliss and agitation.
teacher picks vanilla, as many a
do, but she laughs and jokes with
attendant, telling him to hurr
and get rum and raisin.

Maybe that is when things ch
Hearing the teacher speak in
saucy voice, almost the way big
talked, the child relaxes. From
on she is not quite so stricken
adoration, but entirely happy.
drive down to the dock to look a
moored boats, and the teacher
she has always longed to live
houseboat. Wouldn't it be fun
sighs, and the child of course a
They pick the one they'd choo
is homemade, painted sky blue,
a row of little windows in w
there are geraniums. That lea
conversation about the house

is living in now—the house
e the teacher used to live—and
progress is being made there.
after that, on their drive, they
n return to this subject. The
reports that she likes having
own bedroom but doesn't like
dark it is outside. Sometimes she
s she hears wild animals outside
indow.
hat wild animals?
ars. Cougars. Her mother says
are in the bush.
o you run and get into your
er's bed when you hear them?"
n not supposed to."
oodness. Why not?"
n's there."
/hat does Jon think about the
and cougars?"
e thinks it's just deer."
/as he mad at your mother for
she'd told you?"
o."
guess he's never mad."
e was sort of mad one time.
n my mother and me poured all
ine down the sink."
e teacher says it was a pity the
was scared of the woods and that
time they should go there to-
r. The teacher knows the paths
re perfectly safe. Now is the time
all the spring flowers will be com-
ut. She lists their names. The
oth violets, the trilliums, the
-robins, which some people call
illiums, the true violets, and the
nbines. The chocolate lilies.
ave you ever heard of chocolate
"
o."
think there's another proper
e for them but I like to say
late lilies, it sounds so delicious.
urse it isn't the way they taste
ne way they look. They look like
late but they have just a little
purple in them. They are quite
rare. But I know where
there are some."

yce has to put the book down
n. Now, now, she really has
it the drift, she can feel what is
to happen. She feels the hor-
oming. The innocent child, the
dult, the seduction. She should
known. All so in style, nowa-
Practically obligatory. The

woods, the flowers. Here was where the writer would graft her ugly lie onto the people and the situation she had copied from real life, being too lazy to invent but not to malign.

For some of it was true, certainly. She does remember now. She does remember driving Margaret home, (and how she never thought of her as Margaret, but always as Edie's child). She remembers how she would not drive into the yard to turn around, but let her passenger out and went half a mile or so farther to a wide place in the road. She does not remember anything about the ice cream. But there did used to be a houseboat like that one, moored permanently at the dock.

She has to continue, just to see how bad it is. She wants to pour more brandy, but she has rehearsal at nine o'clock in the morning.

Nothing of the sort. She has made another mistake. The woods and the chocolate lilies drop out of the story, the recital is almost passed over, school has just ended. And on the Saturday morning after the final week the child is wakened early. She hears the teacher's voice in the yard and she goes to her window. There is the teacher in her car, with the window rolled down, talking to Jon. A small U-Haul is attached to the car. Jon is in his bare feet, wearing only his jeans. He calls to the child's mother and she comes to the door, walks a few steps into the yard but not up to the car. She is wearing one of Jon's shirts, which she uses as a dressing gown. She always wears long sleeves and hates for anybody to glimpse her tattoos.

The conversation is about something in the apartment that Jon promises to pick up. The teacher tosses him the keys. Then he and the mother, talking over each other, urge the teacher to take some other things, but she laughs unpleasantly and says, "All yours." Then she says, "Okay. See you." And Jon says, "See you. Good luck." At which she laughs again. He gives her directions to help her turn the car and the U-Haul around. By this time the child has come downstairs in her pyjamas, though she knows the teacher is not in the right mood to talk to her. Her mother says, "You just missed her. She had to catch the ferry."

Jon raises one hand, there is a toot of the horn. He comes across the yard and says to the child's mother, "So. That's that."

The child asks if the teacher is going to come back, and he says, "Not likely."

The story does not dwell on the child's shock, her sense of abandonment. That is all over in a couple of sentences. What takes up another couple of pages is her slowly increasing understanding of what has really been going on. She has begun to understand the teacher's reasons for being friendly with her. She recalls certain questions, twists of conversation, the seemingly haphazard probing there had been, for information. Information about Jon and her mother. Such scraps as: When did they get up in the morning and who got up first? What did they like to eat and did they cook together? What did they listen to on the radio? (Nothing—they had bought a television set.)

What was the teacher after? Did she hope to hear bad things, encouraging to herself? Would anything do to grease the path, so that those things could come later? Or was she just hungry to hear anything, to be in contact with somebody who slept under the same roof, ate at the same table, was with those two people daily?

That is what the child can never know. What she can know is that she herself counted for so little. Any feeling the teacher had for her was only because of that contact.

Does this fill her with bitterness? Of course it does. For a while she is certainly bitter, and proud of it. She thinks of herself as a person never to be fooled again. An image of the teacher, sneaking into her mind, can be eliminated only by the horrid notion of driving spikes into its eyes.

But something happens. And here is the surprise ending. Her feeling about the teacher and the whole episode in her childhood does change. She doesn't know how or when. She does not know why. Nevertheless, it changes. Now she comes to think of that whole time as something other

than a cheat. She thinks of the music she painfully learned to play (she gave it up, of course, before she was even into her teens). The buoyancy of her recurring hopes, the streaks of happiness, the curious and delightful names of the flowers in the bush, which in fact she never got to see.

Love. She was glad of it. Also she thought that there must be some remarkably thrifty emotional housekeeping going on in the universe, if the great happiness of one person—however temporary, however flimsy—could be the result of the great unhappiness of another.

Why yes, Joyce thinks. Yes.

She remembers that last time she saw the house, and Jon, and heard his voice directing her how to turn the U-Haul and car around in the yard. Maggie O'Dell heard that, too. And here it's written, with more to it (possibly) than Joyce ever knew. And such a transformation does make that old misery seem less of a waste.

On Friday afternoon she goes to the bookstore. She brings her book to be signed, as well as a small box from Le Bon Chocolatier. She joins a lineup. She is slightly surprised to see how many people have come. Women of her own age, women younger. One of them is pushing a stroller. A few men, all young, some accompanying their girlfriends.

The woman who sold Joyce the book recognizes her.

"Good to see you back," she says. "Did you read the review? In the *Globe*?"

Joyce is bewildered, actually trembling a little. She finds it hard to speak.

"Wow," the woman says, raising her eyebrows. She must be speaking of the review. She passes along the lineup, explaining that only books bought in this store can be signed and that certain anthologies in which one story of Maggie O'Dell's has appeared are not acceptable either.

The woman in front of Joyce is as tall as she herself is, and broader. So Joyce does not get a look at Maggie O'Dell until this woman bends forward to put her book on the signing table. Then she sees a young woman quite different from the girl on the poster and the girl at the party. The black outfit is gone, including the hat, and in its place Maggie O'Dell wears a festive jacket of rose-red silk brocade, with tiny gold beads sewn to the lapels. A lacy pale pink camisole is worn underneath. There is a new gold rinse on her hair, gold rings in her ears, and a gold chain fine as a hair around her neck. Her lips glisten like flower petals and her eyes are shaded with umber.

Well—who wants to buy a book written by a grouch or a loser?

Joyce has not thought out what she will say. She expects it to come to her. Now the saleswoman is speaking again.

"Have you opened your book to the page where you want it to be signed?"

To do that, Joyce has to set her box down. She can actually feel a throbbing in her throat, a fairly desperate emotion, way beyond anything called for.

Prepared to sign, Maggie O'Dell smiles up at her—a smile of polished cordiality, professional disengagement.

"Your name?"

"Just Joyce will be fine."

Her time is passing so quickly.

"You were born in Rough River?"

"No," says Maggie O'Dell, with some slight displeasure, or at least some diminishing of cheer. "I did live there, for a time. Shall I put the date?"

Joyce retrieves her box. At Le Bon Chocolatier they sold chocolate flowers, but not lilies. Only roses and tulips. So she bought tulips, which were not entirely unlike lilies, after all. Both bulbs.

"I want to thank you for 'Kindertotenlieder,'" she says so hastily that she almost swallows the long word. "It meant a great deal to me. I brought you a present."

"Isn't that a wonderful story?" The saleswoman takes the box—"I'll just hang on to this."

"It isn't a bomb," says Joyce, laughing. "It's chocolate lilies. Actually no, it's chocolate tulips. They didn't have lilies, but tulips are the next best thing."

She notices that the saleswoman is not smiling now but is taking a hard look at her. Maggie O'Dell says, "Thank you."

There's not a scrap of recognition in the girl's eyes. She doesn't know Joyce from long ago in Rough R or from a couple of weeks ago, a party. You couldn't even be that she recognizes the title o own story.

And certainly not the signific of the chocolate lilies.

You would think she had not to do with it. As if the story wa a skin she wiggled out of and le the grass. And as for whatever true, before the story existed— that was disposed of now, it w even a skin.

Maggie O'Dell sits here writes her name as if that wa the writing she could be respon for in this world.

"It's been a pleasure to chat you," says the saleswoman. looking skeptically at the box, w the girl at Le Bon Chocolatie fixed up with a curly yellow ribb

Maggie O'Dell raises her ey greet the next person in line.

Joyce at last has the sens move along, before she becom object of general amusemen

God knows, perha interest to the police.

This could turn into a fairly ny story someday. Joyce would be surprised. That's what she does with her life.

August Index Sources

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EW BOOKS

John Leonard

he Swedish Academy was so de-rmined to foist the Nobel Prize r Literature on an Austrian in , a case could be made that the rian should have been Peter lke rather than Elfriede Jelinek. o have a dog in this fight you to be a lot more comfortable in an than I am. Let's just say that ver accomplished Handke is as ist—and *The Goalie's Anxiety at nalty Kick* (1970), *A Sorrow Be-Dreams* (1972), and *The After- of a Writer* (1987) are remark-ndeed—any chance he had for a l fell off a cliff in the 1990s, when med Western politicians and the a for the disintegration of Yu-via, took the side of Slobodan ević in the Balkan bloodlettings, ublished an agitprop travelogue l *Justice for Serbia* (1996). He l even speak at Milošević's fu-in Belgrade in 2006.

OSSING THE SIERRA DE GRE- (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $30) ndke's first novel he surfed this wave nic cleansing. Nat-, we read it for clues disorderly state of . Just as naturally, hiding out in alle-wearing veils. A fe-banker and former ar, wealthy and cos-litan but missing other and her daughter, leaves a ern river port to cross the Span-ountains on a pilgrimage into Eu-n history and literature and her ast. She is on her way to La Man-here an author waits to "narrate" ory, for a generous fee. If La Mancha suggests Cervantes, Homer and Boccaccio also come to mind. And Voltaire and Céline. And Jonathan Swift and the Brothers Grimm. We stop overnight in imaginary cities, forests, caves, and "Zones," in the middle of civil wars. We are asked to admire olive trees, oyster shells, the "smoke-colored sky-blue" of stained medieval glass, the Middle Ages generally speaking, and Mother Nature across the board. We are encouraged to be skeptical of journalists and other cardsharps, "ready-made" and "prefabricated" images, the conventions of traditional narrative, and, of course, language, too, that inauthentic and authoritarian shuck. Half the sentences seem to end with question marks, as if to repudiate themselves. Much is made of an Arabic grammar, as if an alternative history of Islamic conquest shadows the pilgrim like a raptor's wing. And there is a very funny paragraph on cell phones.

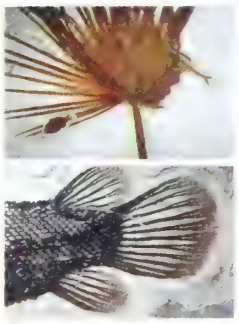


Handke has gone on such allegorical voyages before. In *A Moment of True Feeling* (1975), the Austrian press attaché wanders all over Paris sucking on a peach stone and looking for an alternative identity. In *The Afternoon of a Writer*, the novelist leaves his room and his cat for a winter walk in urban ruins that turn out to be language itself—traffic din, sibilants, cuneiform, chords, squeaks, and silence: "The snow in the air could have been flying seeds, the snow on the ground could have been fallen blossoms. The rounding of the image gave emptiness a radiance." In *Absence* (1987), an old man, a young woman, a soldier, and a gambler quit a nameless city in an unnamed country, fleeing castles, statues, and catastrophe, on a trek into a twilight zone of dunes, chimeras, and labyrinthine caves, where their guide deserts them and the author abandons his book: "We remembered how in childhood we had often hidden from others because we wanted them to look for us." But never before has Handke gone on at such inordinate length, 480 pages, before arriving at that same old postmodern solipsism that feels sorry for itself because it no longer believes that anything else is real, certainly not Srebrenica.

Doris Lessing is no slouch at pilgrimming either. THE CLEFT (HarperCollins, $25.95) is, by my count, her twenty-sixth novel and fifty-sixth book, but I've probably missed a couple, and at least one,

Toledo, by El Greco © Francis G. Mayer/CORBIS;
with Oysters and Quince, by Giuseppe Recco © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York City

Retreat to Innocence, she herself suppressed. She's still in the speculative-fiction mode that gave us last year's *The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog*. Except that instead of imagining a remote future and another ice age, she dreams the prehistoric past, as a Roman scribbler at the time of Nero tries to reconstruct it from hearsay, hindsight, tall tales, fossil traces, and documentary fragments. Once upon a geologic time, in comfy caves above the convenient beach, a race of women, calling themselves Clefts, didn't need men, called Squirts, at all. Somehow, the sea-wind seeded these sluggish mermaids, and when they chanced to deliver themselves of a male "Monster," they'd either try to render it girlish through genital mutilation or feed it to the eagles.



Never mind how an exceedingly childish colony of Squirts would come to subsist unseen and deer-suckled in a nearby valley, with very little language and fewer housecleaning skills. Nor how Maire, before becoming a matriarch and a mother goddess, discovered the existence of this colony and the secret of the co-opted eagles. Nor why more venturesome young Clefts dally in the valley before returning to the beach mysteriously with child. Nor what we are supposed to make of the first fire, first murder, first orgy, first sports contest, and first tenderness. What matters is what happens when a man named Horsa takes over as the boss of the Squirts and decides to circumnavigate the island. Brave, cunning, and curious he may be, but Horsa forgets that even "children of the eagle" need to be clothed and cuddled. Off to quest they go, in caravans, on rafts, with catapults and seashell splinters, singing and crying. But flies swarm, babies swoon, friends die, mountains explode, and Horsa is disrespected. In this maze of tunnels, caves, wells, and underground rivers, Clefts and Squirts alike discover longing, wanting, dreaming, comfort, grief, and powdered bones.

Lessing, as she so often does, begins with stereotypes and ends with archetypes. No serious writer is less seductive of her readers. Instead, relentlessly, she grinds us down to acquiescence. This, she says, is how it is and always has been with men and women. Only children and terminal naïfs believe in such fantasies as free will or liberal humanism or existential psychology or historical determinism or the Holy Ghost or the Enlightenment. The pilgrimage becomes a carousel.

For reasons that Colin Thubron is reluctant to explain, even to the imaginary third-century Sogdian trader in indigo and salt with whom he argues in his head when his travels leave him feverish, the author of SHADOW OF THE SILK ROAD (HarperCollins, $25.95) is forever on his difficult way from a rock to a hard place. Or Ulan Bator to the Great Wall. Or Samarkand to Herat. He is not a pilgrim. He travels "for understanding," for "mystery," for "significance," because he's "afraid of nothing happening," and because the idea of a "Pure Land" in foreign religions "seems beautiful . . . as if it were a place we once had, but was lost." After forty years on the road his hinges creak, but still he inches forward from Xian in the middle of a SARS epidemic to Tibet, where the monks hate China. And from Kashgar with its streetside mosques, painted pillars, potted flowers, and Uigur skullcaps to Bukhara with its teahouses and blue turbans. And from the white marble tombs of Gazargah, shrine of the Sufi Ansari, to the sunken walls of Tus, devastated by Tamerlane in 1390, where the mystic al-Ghazali and the poet Firdausi are buried, to the Seljuk oasis of Nishapur, in order to consult the shade of Omar Khayyám. After which, dread Alamut, down which the Assassins of Hasan-i-Sabah descended to kill caliphs and khans, unto, finally, Antioch, second in its Chinese-silken grandeur only to Alexandria and Rome.

It's an exhausting journey and a marvelous book. Along the way, Thubron introduces us to an Islam not the least bit bloodthirsty. But that's the Silk Road for you, where they ed over the centuries not only i indigo, amber, and tin but in cul and myths and poets and gods.

Alex von Tunzelmann's I AN SUMMER (Henry $30) is the best narrative torical account I've seen of the by end of the British Empire an bloody beginnings of indepen India and Pakistan. Von Tu mann is old-fashioned enou look at the political incompeten the English and the communal vulsions of the Indians throug prism of a love triangle—D Mountbatten, well-born clot horse; his wife, Edwina, filthy and idealistic; Jawaharlal N Brahmin politician and discip Mohandas Gandhi—yet also s enough to remind us that a m died while these people ha pankied, as well as sardonic en to keep glad company with novelists of politics and perso as the Evelyn Waugh of *Sw Honour*, the Joan Didion of *D racy*, and the Susan Sontag o *Volcano Lover*. To be sure, von zelmann is harder on Gandhi the Mahatma deserves. (Saint supposed to make life difficult f rest of us.) And she seems to Nehru almost as much as Ed did. (Really, Kashmir wasn't hi blind spot; what about Indira? since I agree with her abou windbag Churchill, she gets t whatever she wants to about hammad Ali Jinnah, who may have wanted a separate Pakista certainly not an Islamic theocra

Indian Summer should spee on to Ramachandra Guha's ma rial INDIA AFTER GANDHI HISTORY OF THE WO LARGEST DEMOCRACY ($34.95) and William Dalryn Gibbonesque THE LAST MUG THE FALL OF A DYNASTY: D 1857 (Knopf, $30). Then waiti you in the library wings are Scott's *Raj Quartet*, in a new volume Everyman edition, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's dren*, a novel so transcende makes you wonder what ever be of the young man who wrote it.

"Ida Fossil and Fish Fossil" and "Tail of Early Eocene Fish Fossil" © James L. Amos/C

'S A ROUND WORLD FTER ALL

lia, China, and the global economy

Pankaj Mishra

sed in this essay:

lephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China and What It Means for of Us, by Robyn Meredith. W.W. Norton. 268 pages. $25.95.
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a widely circulated essay pub-shed in 1941, Henry Luce, the under and editor of *Time*, *For-* and *Life*, exhorted his fellow rymen "to create the first great rican Century." Americans 't only to promote "a system of conomic enterprise." As "inher-f all the great principles of West-vilization—above all Justice, the of Truth, the ideal of Charity," were also meant to make the United States "the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels." Born to Presbyterian missionaries in China, Luce was prone to moralize; but he was also quick to attend to the bottom line. Lamenting that "our thinking on world trade today is on ridiculously small terms," he speculated that Asia "will be worth to us four, five, ten billion dollars a year."

Luce's predictions must have appeared fantastical to most of his American readers. In 1941, the United States was emerging from a prolonged spell of political and economic isolationism. Just three years later, however, at Bretton Woods, it would redraw the rules of the international economy, making its aid to war-ravaged countries conditional upon their acceptance of free trade. Luce guessed correctly that the war that devastated Europe and Asia would enthrone America as the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, its industries able to triumph over any other in a global free market. And unlike most of his contemporaries, who in the 1940s were obsessed with Europe, Luce saw America's global destiny fulfilled by a capitalist and Christianized Asia.

Nevertheless, neither democratic India nor Communist China embraced free trade, opting instead to protect their fragile industry and agriculture from foreign competition. Luce probably felt the same kind of pity for his errant wards that Robyn Meredith, a reporter for *Forbes* in Asia, expends on the postcolonial fate of India and China. Plainly, the two countries did not know what they were doing. "For decades, the Indian and Chinese economies had plodded along, isolated from and ignored by the rest of the world," Meredith writes in *The Elephant and the Dragon*. "Their peoples



Mishra's most recent book is Temp-s of the West: How to Be Modern a, Pakistan, Tibet, and Beyond.

the World Famous Brand, by the Luo Brothers. Courtesy the artists and Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

more poor, with little hope for a better life." Meredith says it was only when both countries opened their economies, beginning with China in 1978, that "their fortunes began to change."

And how: the economies of India and China now grow at more than 9 percent annually. Meredith uses words such as "turbocharged" (Thomas Friedman's favorite adjective in *The World Is Flat*, the intellectual inspiration for books like Meredith's), "blasted off," "rocket," and "supercharging" to describe how "the rise of India and China is transforming the global economy." Long perceived as stagnant by Western commentators, the world's most populous countries suddenly appear to be "rising" to the consumer paradise that is the summit of human achievement. Meredith expresses a commonplace ideological prejudice—one that informs not only the average issue of the *Wall Street Journal* or *The Economist* but indeed most of the foreign coverage in the American and British media—with assertions such as this: "Capitalism decisively won the Cold War debate, and that has helped hundreds of millions of Indians and Chinese prosper by ushering in the globalization era that has created so many jobs and bettered so many lives in developing countries."

Relegating to a footnote the relevant fact that poverty in the "globalization era" has in fact increased in much of the developing world apart from India and China, Meredith admits that "capitalists from corporate America and elsewhere surely did not set out to help Asia's downtrodden, but they did. Call them accidental activists." Indeed, Henry Luce, who knew that the post-Depression recovery of corporate America depended on new overseas markets, would have recognized well that "the two emerging-market giants are the only places where most big companies can grow rapidly, their only hope for adding vast numbers of new customers, and thus for pleasing stockholders and corporate boards."

But Meredith goes on to point out that "neither America nor Americans are ready for the changes at hand." Certainly Luce couldn't have imagined that China would one day underwrite American consumerism—that the country's cheaply manufactured goods would check inflation in the United States, or that China's billions of dollars of foreign-currency reserves in U.S. Treasury bonds would keep interest rates down, encouraging Americans to spend more than they earn. He also didn't anticipate that China, India, and other East Asian countries would have to improvise their own forms of capitalism, just as Western Europe did more than a century earlier, tempering free-market policies with activist governments and welfare states.

Luce wasn't the first to have tried to fuse the pecuniary motive with the do-gooding urge. His was that pious American effort to rationalize self-interest, which, though relieving a Puritan guilt, has rarely deceived the rest of the world. In 1858 and 1859, as British and French warships bombarded Chinese port cities in the second of the two Opium Wars, they had few spectators more eager than American diplomats and missionaries. The European powers wanted China to allow entry and rights of residence to foreigners, especially those businessmen involved in the highly profitable opium trade. As in the First Opium War (1839–42), when they followed the British in exacting special privileges from the battered and humiliated Chinese, the Americans were ready again to reap the fruits of European military victory. The growing Chinese addiction to opium did trouble the conscience of the Protestant evangelists who often helped draft and negotiate the American treaties with the Chinese, but it didn't take them long to echo the sentiment of S. Wells Williams, a missionary and the first major American sinologist, who explained the bombardment of China as "a wholesome infliction upon a government which haughtily refused all equal intercourse with other nations."

Still, for much of the nineteenth century, American politicians and businessmen merely watched as European powers pursued their commercial interests around the world, establishing trading factories at a hectic pace deep in the African and Asian hinterlands and freighting laborers from India and China to the Caribbean and South Africa. During this first phase of globalization, the United States had a growing and potentially vast internal market of its own, and foreign competition would only have threatened American manufacturers and farmers. The task of the American West to be conquered and settled and the Midwest to be industrialized; and though slavery was ended in 1865, cheap labor flocked eagerly to America, from China as well as from Europe. Besides, for many Americans the historical memory of their own liberation from the British Empire was strong enough to make them hostile to gunboat commerce of the kind that the British brought to India and that China. The United States could simply insist on an "open door," whereby the privileges enjoyed by foreigners in China were not denied to Americans.

By 1898, anti-imperialist inhibitions had weakened sufficiently to allow an American invasion and acquisition of the Philippine Islands. The missionary impulse again came in handy. President McKinley emerged confident from a nightlong consultation with God that "there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them." By then America's industrial revolution was complete. Manufacturers, investors and bankers in the industrial Northeast and Midwest, as well as farmers and miners in the South and West had already begun to benefit from networks of trade, finance, and migration strengthened by European investors in the late nineteenth century.

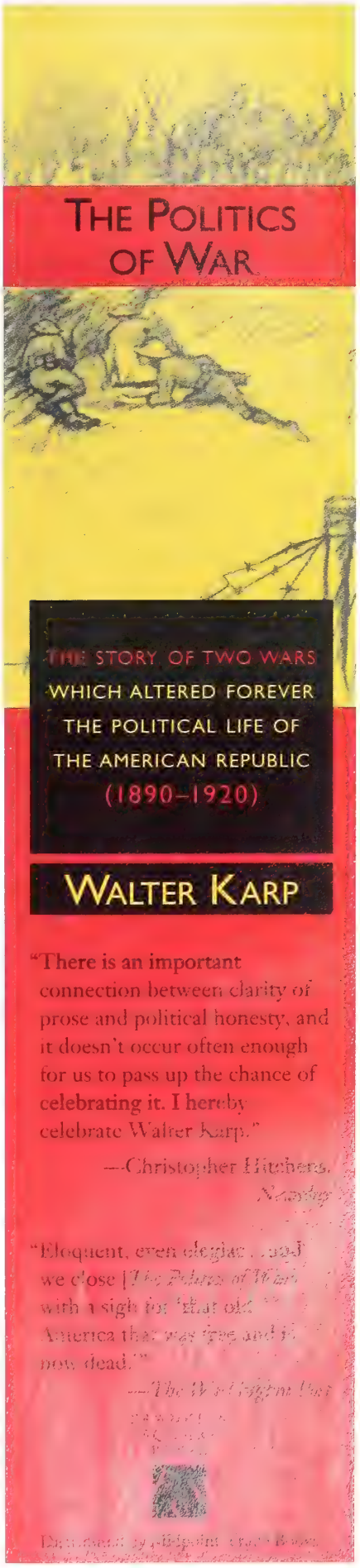
American visitors to China in the early twentieth century were acutely aware that China remained the biggest prize for businessmen everywhere, a temptation summed up by the title of a bestselling book published in 1901, *Four Hundred Million Customers: Experiences—Some Happy, Some Sad, of an American in China, and What They Taught Him*. Its author, a journalist turned businessman from Missouri named Carl Crow, had arrived in Shanghai in 1911, the year in which the inward-looking Qing Empire finally lapsed. Observing China while it waited for the next quarter-century to reconstitute itself as a modern nation, Crow reflected the growing ambitions of his compatriots back home. According to his recent biographer Frank French, a constant theme in Crow's

ng was "the successful industrial-
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built a formidable mass base in
ountryside through the 1930s and
1940s. Indeed, such ideological
ity found supporters among those
rican politicians who were already
arsing for the Cold War.
n early anti-Communist and ar-
cold warrior, Luce never ceased to
the considerable influence of his
a empire and to use his connec-
within the Republican Party in or-
o realize his providential world-
. Propagandizing for Chiang
hek through his magazines, which
then essential reading for Amer-
educated middle class, Luce helped
e a special role for China in Amer-
thinking. When China proved in-
rent to Luce and other reality-
ers of his time, going Communist
949, so many Americans were
y to believe," as Harold Isaacs, an-
r perceptive reporter in China,
, "or to find nothing absurd in the
f—that we 'had' China to 'lose.'"
eling himself personally betrayed,
led the hunt for scapegoats in
rica. *Time*, among others, aggres-
y posed the question "Who lost
a?" setting the stage for the witch-
s of the McCarthy years, which
e the most experienced "China
ls" out of the State Department
he universities. The delusion that
l "lost" China eventually helped
a paranoid American establish-
into battle with the ghosts of
olithic communism" in Vietnam.
e historian John K. Fairbank was
f the many distinguished China
ls accused of pro-Communist sym-
es. Looking back in 1982 at the "American experience in China" during the 1940s, he described it as "a first-class disaster for the American people." Fairbank included the wars in Korea and Vietnam as "part of this disaster," and blamed what he called "one of the great failures in history" on Americans who, like himself, had reported from China:

> We had no knowledge, in other words, and no way to gain any knowledge, of the life of ordinary Chinese people. . . . Our reporting was very superficial. . . . We could not educate or illuminate or inform the American people or the American leadership in such a way that we could modify the outcome.

Fairbank may have been too harsh on himself and his colleagues—at least insofar as they might be judged by any subsequent standard. Few journalists with the erudition and sympathy of Fairbank, Isaacs, and Hersey are likely to be found in India or China today. The ignorance about ordinary Indians and Chinese is particularly egregious among reporters who aim to alert Americans to the promise and perils of rapid economic growth in the two countries; they seem to find it enough to proclaim periodically, as Robyn Meredith does in *The Elephant and the Dragon*, that globalization has lifted hundreds of millions of Indians and Chinese above the poverty line (pegged by the World Bank at $1 a day, for altogether opaque reasons).

Meredith has probably spent more time in India and China than Thomas Friedman, who famously needed no more than ten days with information-technology tycoons in Bangalore in order to conclude that the world was being flattened. Yet she fails to introduce her readers to a single Chinese farmer—or anyone else working in the stagnant agriculture sector on which the majority of India's and China's populations depends. Reverential before CEOs spouting banalities in their software parks ("Outsourcing has shown we can compete in the world and win"), Meredith seems not to have noticed the volatile new urban working class crowding the slums of Bombay and Chongqing. Perhaps it must be left to novelists to explore the piquant fact that $1 a day brings to an immigrant



lignified existence than when he was a struggling farmer, invisible to the World Bank's poverty researchers.

One doesn't have to read too widely in contemporary fiction by Indian and Chinese writers, such as Rohinton Mistry, Amit Chaudhuri, Han Shaogong, and Su Tong, nor delve too deeply into the sensitive recent reportage by Peter Hessler, Ian Johnson, and John Pomfret, to realize that India and China are old civilizations with complex histories. To see them in terms of whether their "rise" would help Americans make money is to uphold a crude philistinism. But not much more seems required today from think-tank experts and correspondents for business periodicals. The books they end up writing after a few tours of duty in the East—menacingly titled *The Strange Rise of Modern India*, *China Shakes the World*, *The Coming China Wars*, *The Writing on the Wall*—reveal very little about how most Indians and Chinese live, or how they see themselves and the world, and very much about how certain assumptions and prejudices, strengthened by the West's supposed victory in the Cold War, have overwhelmed many journalists in Britain and America.

Conditioned to see their own consumer societies as the inevitable and desirable terminus of history, these journalists tend not to inquire much into the past. Thus their readers remain barely aware that India and China dominated global trade until the nineteenth century; trading as far as Russian Central Asia, Indian merchants even had a colony near the Egyptian Red Sea port of Quseir; overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia were among the first to invest in China in the 1980s. Merchant communities from India and China had developed [illegible] and double-entry bookkeeping long before the European incursions of the mid-nineteenth century.

Meredith acknowledges some of this history when she writes, "In 1600, India and China combined accounted for more than half the globe's economic output. . . . Until the late nineteenth century, China and India remained the world's two largest economies." Her next sentence, however, briskly leaps across the twentieth century. "Protectionism and world wars intervened, then India and China shut themselves off from the world, and by 2003 India and China together accounted for just [illegible] percent of the global economy." Dismissing the twentieth century as an "aberration," she doesn't try to figure out why these independent countries were slow to open their economies to Western investors. When, for instance, the British de-industrialized India in order to turn it into a suitable "free" market for its industrial products, such slash-and-burn capitalism stoked nationalism in India and China and created their postcolonial identities, committing them to an import-substitution model of economic growth.

Meredith also has nothing to say about how India, recovering from a century of colonial exploitation, achieved the fastest economic growth in its modern history after independence in 1947; or how China, in spite of such disasters as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, grew even faster than India, greatly reducing illiteracy and improving health care and education. Convinced that protectionism is evil and the free market good, she seems unaware that Britain, America, Russia, and Japan adopted their own "protectionist" economic policies while building their industrial infrastructure in the nineteenth century; or that the much-vaunted "tiger" economies of East Asia relied on heavy state intervention in the creation of their apparently free markets.

In another journalistic reflex, Meredith dates economic growth and poverty reduction in India and China to their market reforms, as though the two countries had done little in preceding decades except lurch from one [illegible] to another. But India's industrial output and overall GDP, building on gains made in previous decades, soared in the 1980s, well before a foreign-exchange crisis forced the government to liberalize the economy in 1991. Economists Angus Deaton and Jean Drèze point out that poverty in India during the 1990s declined not much faster than it had before market reforms. Similarly, poverty in China had been substantially reduced by the mid-1980s, largely as a result of rural reforms and government investments in education undertaken after Mao Zedong's death in 1976. As in other East Asian countries, the Chinese state continues to carefully regulate domestic industry and foreign trade and investment, besides maintaining control of public services.

In fact, several of China's "New Left" intellectuals maintain that government intervention has been insufficient and weak in its application to check the negative consequences of market reform. It is clear now that the benefits of increased foreign trade and investment have been unevenly spread, exacting great social and environmental costs in both India and China. China's unchecked Chinese obsession with manufacturing low-end goods for export has caused the contamination of air and water across the country; poverty is declining much more slowly now than it did in the 1980s; and social welfare guarantees for the poor are disappearing, forcing tens of millions to flee to the already overcrowded cities.

India's information-technology and business-processing offices, which employ 1.3 million of the 400-million workforce, have little to offer the large majority of illiterate or badly educated Indians. Although it has been instrumental in creating private wealth, the service-oriented economy not only has failed to create enough jobs for the swelling ranks of the young unemployed in India but also has deepened pre-existing imbalances between rural and urban areas.

If Meredith seems reluctant to engage with the less-than-good news about globalization, it may be because her worldview, like that of many American and British commentators of her generation, has been shaped by events of the previous two decades: the Reagan and Thatcher revolutions that renewed a belief in the "magic of the marketplace," and the collapse of Communist regimes, which provided the conviction that the world had little choice but to converge on a single model of government (liberal democracy) and a single economic system (free-market capitalism).

Profound changes in the nature of American capitalism and technology also helped create the favorable

for globalization in the 1980s. economist Alice H. Amsden de- es the situation in her new book, *)e from Empire*:

nancial services were becoming the gest single industry in the United ites. To spread its wings, Wall Street manded that the Treasury Depart- nt get Tiird World countries to egulate their financial markets. No s vocal, multinationals wanted de- oping countries to practice free trade l drop all investment controls.

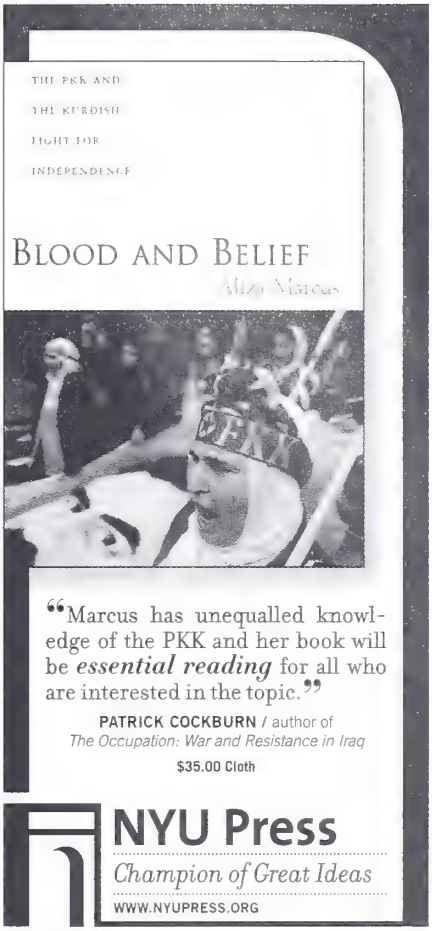
ie thirst for global markets was cularly acute among finance, ommunications, and transport anies, which had benefited most new technological advances. To- r with their political allies in the e House and the Republican- nated Congress, they helped cre- hat came to be called the "Wash- n Consensus": an economic e consisting of deregulation, pri- ation, tax and spending cuts, and eneral withdrawal of the state social services.

this neo-liberal vision, which was sed initially by the World Bank he IMF and later propagated more y by the World Trade Organiza- platitudes replaced reality: wealth, h concentrated in fewer hands before, was always likely to "trick- wn," presumably creating "the hat would lift all boats"—at least he long run" (when, as Lord es pointed out, we are all dead). minishing the state seemed the thing to do not only in America, e the reigning culture of individ- n has long distrusted "big" gov- ent, but also in countries with vulnerable populations. Thus it ne possible in the 1990s to un- upon unsuspecting economies Thomas Friedman admiringly the "Electronic Herd": people move large amounts of money s national borders while sitting ir computers were able to control resources and industries far, far They found themselves shaping olicies of countries that they, in of their expensive educations, next to nothing about.

is global mobility of capital was, me countries, a disaster. Shock- pied into the free market, post-Communist Russia degenerated into gangster capitalism and political despotism. Deregulated and privatized, the economies of Mexico, Argentina, New Zealand, and Thailand declined swiftly. Income inequality in the United States itself has begun to resemble the gap between the rich and the poor in Latin America. The rage and frustration of a hundred million living on a little more or less than $1 a day seem to be boiling over even in "rising" China, which witnessed 87,000 protests in 2005 alone, and in India, where over a hundred thousand farmers committed suicide in the previous decade and militant Communist insurgencies have erupted in the poorest and most densely populated provinces.

As Amsden points out, "despite the desperation of millions of people, the United States never changed course." It continues to demand that India and China speed up the "reform" of their economies—in other words, make them more open to foreign speculators, import the hire-and-fire practices of American companies, and so on. Echoing these corporate aspirations, Meredith again appears unwilling to see why the ruling elites of India and China are not rushing to fulfill them.

Chinese leaders, who lately are becoming much keener on equitable growth and justice in their public speeches, seem to realize that even an authoritarian political system has to appear responsive to the poor majority, lest it lose all legitimacy. Recent election results in India prove that the social costs of market liberalization are so high that, as the British philosopher John Gray writes, they "cannot for long be legitimated in any democracy." Angered by the severe inflation accompanying rapid economic growth, Indian voters have unseated several governments over the previous decade, including, in 2004, the Hindu-nationalist-led coalition in New Delhi. Like preceding regimes, the present Indian government is obliged to play by the W.T.O.'s mandated rules of "free trade." But it refuses to commit political suicide by lowering import tariffs on foreign agriculture products, which would expose Indian farmers to international competition—a contest that has already been rendered unfair by the subsidies that the United States



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and Europe lavish on their farmers. At the W.T.O.'s Doha Development Round of talks held in Geneva in the summer of 2006, the Indian commerce minister decided that his time would be better spent watching the World Cup.

Political sentiment against the outsourcing of white- and blue-collar jobs, and the related stagnation and decline in median wages, builds even in America. But it is the growing backlash against free trade in the newly developing markets that seems to alarm business elites more. Deploring the collapse of the Doha Round, the *Financial Times* lamented that "leading players" such as India have become "servants rather than managers of their domestic constituencies" and that the Indian government "pandered shamelessly to its protectionist farmers." But no amount of managerial sweet-talking can impose the Washington Consensus for long on a country with a highly unequal and politicized population of one billion plus.

Meredith, too, confuses democratic politics with business management. "The Indian government," she sternly declares, "must convince voters that the changes it uses to spur economic development will bring them gains. . . . And if the government fails to carry those arguments—as it has so far—it must be content to let companies like Mr. Murthy's Infosys, Mr. Ambani's Reliance Industries, and Mr. Tata's Tata Group make the changes the government cannot." Occasionally, she tries to console American readers worried about the rise of India and China: "Moving jobs overseas also allows companies in America to rely on higher-paid American workforces for more sophisticated work while factories in China do the dirty work of building their goods, and cubicle farms in India do their boring back-office work." Low wages, pollution, and drudgery, then, for the toiling millions out there in India and China, and exciting innovation and big paychecks for Americans—at least for some of them. In any case, "as India gets richer and rejoins the world economy, it is costing America jobs but allowing the United States to export its way of life." After all, "people in China believe what they see on their new TVs": "For now, China's TV viewers are more impressionable than jaded American and European viewers. That naïveté is helping Western companies sell to the Chinese."

Meredith herself is far from naive. She knows just whom economic globalization benefits most and why: "Much of the global economy," she writes, "has simply moved to China, and it is owned and run by the same multinationals that controlled it before." As for Chinese workers, they "have seen incomes go up, but the lion's share of the winnings has gone straight to the foreign companies and foreign consumers, who are paying lower prices than they otherwise would." She hints that the World Bank's figures about hundreds of millions of people being lifted out of poverty may be, as Paul Krugman has termed economic statistics, a subgenre of "science fiction." "The majority of China's people," she admits, "remain poor; they are just less poor than they were before."

"China, it seems, has not been invited to its own coming-out party," Meredith notes. So how do these bleak facts square with her hymns to globalization? Actually, they don't; they merely show that passively internalized ideological beliefs—that capitalism won the Cold War, that American-style capitalism is the only way to go—will always come up short against the great internal diversity and contradictions of countries like India and China.

As former poster children of the free market such as Russia, Argentina, and Venezuela turn into economic nationalists, while Iraq—the most audacious experiment yet in exporting American-style democracy and capitalism—descends into an unimaginable hell, many Anglophone journalists have seemed especially eager to claim India and China as a kind of vindication: what *Foreign Affairs* in a cover story on India last year called a "roaring capitalist success story." The need for such triumphalism may seem odd among people entrusted with the task of reporting accurately and objectively, but the temptation to take sides hasn't gone away since Henry Luce and Carl Crow chose the model of unblemished American achievement over the obscurely evolving reality of the rest of the world.

Reflecting on his years as a reporter in China, John K. Fairbank po[int]ed out that

> every journalist is walking on a [fi]ne—of unresolved and ambivalent h[is]toric situations—trying to repres[ent] some way in words. It is probably [the] essence of the journalistic profess[ion] that reporters deal with ambivalen[t] situations where the outcome is uncer[tain] the values are mixed, and the sid[es] in conflict.

It may be that Meredith found he[r] chosen for her. In the previous de[cade] of globalization, when the richn[ess] the world seemed not only to gro[w] also to become available to ever[y] from ordinary investors to ext[ra]gantly salaried and bonused C[EO]s many business journalists broke[n] of old allegiances to region, na[tion] and democratic institutions. Ex[it] to a glamorous new transnational they were more likely to be found ing their expertise with corporate es at Davos and Aspen than repo[rt] on non-unionized labor in Guang and Delhi.

Confronted now by economic ulists and nationalists in their countries, these groupies of the "tronic Herd" falter. As India and na rise, increasingly refusing to by American rules and demand large share of the world's resou the cheerleaders for corporate gl ization find themselves speaking forked tongues, scrambling to a the insecure masters of the uni that the world, while being flatten aggressive upstarts in India and C can still be made pleasantly unev not quite round.

Aware that "the era of Ameri the world's unchallenged, hegen power could be cut short," Mer ends her book by exhorting Amer to "walk tall into the ways of a world shaped by the rise of India China. Let the rise of India and C be a catalyst to reestablish Ame competitiveness." This pep talk o last page seems far removed from ry Luce's dream of endless Ame glory. But then the preceding p have spoken, if only inadvertent nothing so eloquently as the failu Luce's project—and a growing an and confusion as the American tury draws to an early close.

AUGH VS. WAUGH

e family ties that bind

Evelyn Toynton

ssed in this essay:

rs and Sons: The Autobiography of a Family, by Alexander Waugh. Nan A. lese/Doubleday. 472 pages. $27.50.



Arthur Waugh were to address s son today as he did when the y was at boarding school in the 1900s, he would probably be sum- d by a social worker and direct- seek counseling. "Son of my he called the teenage Alec, in f the letters he sent him almost "who has walked so many miles, n in mine, and poured out to me t that the rest of the world will know, but which I treasure as a

Toynton's last review for Harper's ine, *"A Delicious Torment," ap- in the June issue.*

golden gift from God." So besotted was Arthur that his friends feared for his sanity, and his employees—he was the managing director of Chapman and Hall, publishers of Dickens, among others—would inquire sarcastically as he entered the office, "And how is Master Alec this morning, sir?"

Having been tyrannized in his youth by his own sadistic father, who was known in family legend as the Brute, Arthur continued to pour out loving-kindness on his "Dear Boy" even when Alec had to leave school in disgrace after a homosexual dalliance. Instead of upbraiding him, a heartbroken Arthur invoked the image of a French crucifix in which "the nails that pierce the Son's hands pierce the Father's also. . . . And it is always so with you and me. Every wound that touches you pierces my own soul."

Meanwhile, Alec's younger brother, Evelyn, who was conspicuously excluded from their father's child-worship, seems to have developed, early on, a certain skepticism about Arthur's histrionics, regarding him as something of a fraud. By the age of sixteen, he was writing in his diary, "Father has been ineffably silly the whole holidays"; another diary entry records that Arthur was being "incorrigibly theatrical as usual." Significantly, Evelyn had also come to loathe Dickens, the author his father revered above all others. One of Arthur's great pleasures was to read aloud to his family, with many dramatic flourishes, and Dickens's were most often the books he chose.

A writer as well as a publisher, Arthur produced reams of essays and reviews and paeans to domestic harmony ("Home meant Mother alone; it was she who lit the light, fanned it with tender hands, and kept it glowing in her children's imagination, by day and night") that are almost as choked with sentiment as his letters to Alec. It does not seem entirely coincidental that his neglected second son, when he became a writer himself, ruthlessly satirized the misty-eyed pieties that were Arthur's stock-in-trade, in a style as cool as Arthur's was clammy. It would be reductive to attribute some of the most lucid prose produced in the twentieth century to filial resentment alone, but just as Arthur's saccharine tone willfully negates the realities of life with the Brute (sentimentality, said the psychoanalyst Donald Winicott, is a denial of hate), the collected works of Evelyn Waugh add up to a complete repudiation of everything his father stood for.

In fact, what emerges most clearly from *Fathers and Sons*, Evelyn's grandson's lively history of five generations of male Waughs, is the extraordinary degree to which all the complicated feelings that sons can have for their fathers—rivalry, fear, rage; the desire to win their fathers' approval

ıph, from left to right, of Harriet Mary, Margaret, Evelyn, Auberon Alexander, Septimus, Teresa, James, and Laura Waugh © Mark Gerson/National Portrait Gallery, London

on the one hand and to rebel against them on the other—were acted out in the pages of the nearly 200 books they wrote among them. It wasn't just a matter of sons dedicating books to fathers, or vice versa, though that was a frequent occurrence; it wasn't even confined to sons taking their fathers as models for their characters. Their relationships with their fathers seem to have been reflected in their very deployment of language.

Alexander's use of the family's private papers—the Waughs were prolific writers of letters and diaries as well as books—not only adds richly to the entertainment value of his account but also serves to illuminate just how tangled are the threads of filial love, hurt, awe, and competitiveness that run through their work. Although he ranges freely over two centuries of family anecdotes, amusing and appalling by turn, the dominant figure here is, as it should be, Evelyn.

Famous in America chiefly for *Brideshead Revisited*—the only one of his books that contains a trace of his father's rhapsodic excesses—Evelyn Waugh is more celebrated in his native England for his savagely funny early novels about the Bright Young Things of the Twenties (of whom he was a prominent member) and his more somber Second World War trilogy. More than one critic has compared him to Swift, and, like Swift, his humor could be very black indeed, grounded as it was in fierce outrage. He called his war trilogy *Sword of Honour*, and in his view of things, it is always honor, never kindness or compassion, that is the supreme virtue. What he hated was moral shoddiness—self-deception, venality, hypocrisy—and all his furious comedic energies were directed toward exposing it. In that sense there was a sort of religious impulse in his writing even before he became a Catholic at the age of twenty-six. (Arthur, who shared the general English distrust of popery, was horrified by his son's conversion.) But if Evelyn was skeptical, from an early age, of Arthur's Victorian meliorism, his bleak view of humanity was undoubtedly made bleaker by the conduct of his first wife, who left him, without warning, for a man Waugh and everyone else in their circle regarded as a lightweight. "I did not know it was possible to be so miserable and live," he wrote to a friend. This experience informs the novel that is generally acknowledged as his masterpiece, *A Handful of Dust*.

Tony Last, its protagonist, is a kindly, conscientious, slightly dim-witted country squire, deeply rooted in the English past. His wife, Brenda, however, has become infected with the disease of modernity. Bored with their peaceful rural life, she takes up with a vapid young man on the fringes of London's smart set, a fact of which Tony remains unaware long after it is apparent to everyone else. She then demands that Tony sacrifice his beloved family home to provide her with a divorce settlement large enough to bribe her lover into marrying her. A despairing Tony escapes to Brazil, joining an expedition in search of an ancient lost city known among the Amazon Indians as the "Shining" or "Glittering"—a sort of substitute, though Waugh is never crude enough to spell this out, for what was lost to Tony when he discovered the full extent of Brenda's betrayal: "A whole Gothic world had come to grief . . . there was now no armour, glittering in the forest glades, no embroidered feet on the greensward; the cream and dappled unicorns had fled." Once in the jungle, he is catapulted from one disaster to another, finally winding up the captive of a madman who, illiterate himself, makes his prisoner read the novels of Dickens aloud to him . . . over and over and over. In its depiction of an almost medieval figure—a "Gothic" man—cast adrift in a world without God, fleeing the savages of the fashionable world only to fall into the hands of the savages of the Amazon, *A Handful of Dust* is both horrifying and painfully funny, giving rise to laughter of a peculiarly uncomfortable kind.

Evelyn Waugh inspires a special reverence among writers for the almost uncanny precision of his language. Graham Greene compared his style to "the Mediterranean before the war: so clear you could see right down to the bottom." Gore Vidal, not usually one to gush, called him "our time's finest satirist . . . [writing] in a prose so chaste that at times one longs for a violation of syntax to suggest that its creator is fallible, or at least American." Nobody, perhaps wrote more beautifully crafte tences. It's not a matter of being by a gorgeous image here or a pr perception there; it's simply that thing comes sharply alive o page—there is no deadwo Waugh—even as the bala rhythms of the prose take on a k muted majesty:

> Dawn broke in London, clear and dove-grey and honey, with pro good weather; the lamps in the paled and disappeared; the empty tun with water, and the rising sun it as it bubbled around the hydra men in overalls swung the nozzles hoses from side to side and the wa ted and cascaded in a sparkle of

Waugh was also a brilliant wri dialogue: you never lose track o is speaking, a more difficult ach ment than one may imagine. almost any of his books and it to understand why the critic Fussell called him "one of th roes, perhaps one of the sain verbal culture."

But if Waugh was saintly in h of language, his ferocious rud was such that he was widely reg as a monster. An arch-reacti he made no secret of his loathi the depredations of the welfare or his nostalgia for the stable h chies of the prewar landed aris cy, whose way of life he regard the last hope and remnant of E civilization: "they provided not the statesmen and admirals diplomats but also the cranks thetes and revolutionaries; formed our speech, they direct artists and architects . . . they c and preserved our conceptions tice and honour and forbeara One of the characters in his *Scoop* refers to "the so-called t eth century," a preposterous p that nevertheless seems to su Waugh's own contempt for th he lived in.

From strictly middle-class o himself, he played out the rol landed gentleman, to the deris all the progressives who regular viled him in the press. His fri however, recognized the eleme

ly and playacting in this performance—shades of Arthur, with added. He had a tailor make a suit out of the sort of bold ked cloth "real" gentlemen used ountry caps and sporting over-, with the bright-red stripe of abric running along his fly. Al-gh he chose his friends almost ely from the upper classes, he 10 more likely to behave well at dinner tables than he was when alists came to interview him. dom was his great enemy and est fear, and when bored he no attempt to hide it; when he drunk, as he often was, he be-ruder still. He complained that rips to London were expensive ly because he had to send so flowers to the society hostesses e guests he had insulted.

remained a practicing Catholic e end of his life, attributing his survival to the sanity it provided the chaos of the world, though he eeply distressed by the modern-of Catholic liturgy and practice began in the 1950s and, in his impoverished his faith. It was changes taking place in the olic Church, as much as anything hat contributed to his deepening ssion as he grew older. ("All fates orse than death,'" he wrote in his a few years before his own death 66, at the age of sixty-two.) On ccasion, his friend Nancy Mit-after witnessing his spectacular ess to a French admirer—he had ed the young man to tears—asked ow it was possible for him to be tuitously cruel when he was sup-to be a believing Christian. "You no idea how much nastier I would I were not a Catholic," Waugh er. "Without supernatural aid I l hardly be a human being."

was just as prone to tormenting e in print as in person. In book af-ok, he would name some partic-despicable or disgusting minor cter Cruttwell after his Oxford who had been as enraged by Eve-dleness and insolence as Evelyn een by Cruttwell's bullying strict-and who refused to extend Eve-scholarship after his dismal per-nce in the degree examinations. well is said to have dreaded the publication of each new Waugh novel; he later went insane, although whether that had anything to do with his recurring appearances in his former student's fiction is not clear. But not even friends and admirers were safe. Cyril Connolly, who had devoted an entire issue of his magazine *Horizon* to Evelyn's novella *The Loved One*—a ferociously macabre satire of a California pet cemetery, whose portrayal of godless souls attempting to deny death Connolly compared to Swift and Donne—found himself very recognizably lampooned in *Unconditional Surrender*, the final volume of Evelyn's war trilogy, as a dandified literary editor surrounded by fawning young women.

One of Alexander's most interesting contentions is that Arthur, too, was the model for certain ridiculous characters in Evelyn's fiction who have not previously been identified with his father. There is, of course, the mad Dickens-lover in *A Handful of Dust*, which began life as a short story called "The Man Who Loved Dickens"—a perfect description of Arthur, the president of the Dickens Fellowship and the editor of two complete sets of Dickens's work. But Alexander also detects traces of Arthur in various of the other grotesques who populate Evelyn's fiction.

In Evelyn's first novel, *Decline and Fall*, published when he was just twenty-four, there is a lugubrious character named Prendergast, a former clergyman assailed by religious doubt. ("It wasn't the ordinary sort of Doubt about Cain's wife or the Old Testament miracles or the consecration of Archbishop Parker. I'd been taught how to explain all those while I was at college. No, it was something deeper than all that. *I couldn't understand why God had made the world at all.*") Alexander points out that Prendergast shares several of Arthur's characteristics, including greed at the dinner table, a tendency to grow weepy when kindness is shown him, and a habit of calling people "capital fellows"—apparently one of Arthur's favorite expressions. If Alexander is right about this, it should provide rich fodder for the Freudians: Prendergast meets his end at the hands of a deranged convict who has been given carpentry tools to help him express his creativity (the "enlightened" prison governor having decided that all evildoing is the result of thwarted artistic impulses) and saws off "Poor Prendy's" head when he comes to his cell to instruct him in the Bible.

Alexander also identifies the mild-mannered, sweetly smiling lunatic Mr. Loveday, in the short story "Mr. Loveday's Little Outing," with Arthur, noting their shared fetish for young women on bicycles. Since Mr. Loveday is fond of killing people, we are given Arthur as murderer as well as Arthur murdered: a son's hostility to his father could hardly reveal itself more clearly than that. Occasionally, however, Alexander may be overstating things a little. For example, it seems like stretching a point to identify Arthur so closely with the narrator's father in *Brideshead Revisited*, who subtly and slyly torments his son in some of the most brilliantly funny scenes in the book. Whereas Alexander calls this figure a "close . . . portrait of Arthur," Selina Hastings, one of Waugh's biographers, seems to put the case more sensibly when she says, "Although Evelyn's dislike of his father may well have given colour to Ryder's dislike of his, there was little in Arthur's emotional nature to compare with Mr Ryder's witty malevolence." In fact, however egregiously he favored Alec, Arthur was never unkind to Evelyn, from whom he actually put up with a great deal.

The same cannot be said of Evelyn and his own offspring, who might justly have dubbed him, too, the Brute. But whereas Arthur's father had resorted to physical intimidation—he tried to cure Arthur of his timidity by creeping up behind him and firing a double-barreled gun a few inches from his ear—Evelyn was terrifying simply by virtue of his gloomy distaste for all but one of the six children he fathered during his second marriage. He unashamedly favored his moodiest and most difficult daughter, and his letters to and about her are full of a rare tenderness. As for the others: "I abhor their company," he wrote to a friend, "because I can only regard children as defective adults. I hate their physical ineptitude, find their jokes flat and monotonous." According to his

diary, his children's presence filled him "with deep weariness and depression," though he avoided them as much as possible and trained them to stay away from his part of the house. When they were home from their boarding schools for Christmas, he looked forward to their departure, he said, more ardently than he had ever looked forward to the end of term during his own miserable school days.

Like many another father, Evelyn was hardest on his sons. James, his second son, he regarded as deficient in a sense of humor, a sin he considered particularly unforgivable. He therefore forced poor James—who had a painful stutter—to tell a joke each day at luncheon, and then sat stony-faced while James stammered his way through an installment of a joke book the child had bought for the purpose. His severest disapproval, however, was reserved for Auberon, his eldest son and Alexander's father. In his diary, Evelyn described the seven-year-old Auberon (always called "Bron" by the family) as "clumsy and dishevelled, sly, without intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual interest." Years later, Auberon himself wrote, "The most terrifying aspect of Evelyn Waugh as a parent was that he reserved the right not just to deny affection to his children but to advertise an acute and unqualified dislike for them." It was his dislike for Auberon that Evelyn advertised loudest. Even when Bron was gravely injured in a freak accident during his army service in Cyprus and was thought to be dying, Evelyn excused himself from accompanying his wife to their son's bedside on the grounds that they had guests coming for the weekend and it would be rude to put them off.

Yet Auberon, after he came to adulthood, was as forgiving as Evelyn had been harsh. Bron revered his father—though he did say Evelyn was the last person he'd want to meet in Heaven—and when he entered the family line of work, his writing was as much an homage to Evelyn's as Evelyn's was a repudiation of Arthur's. He began by writing comic novels but became famous for his anarchically satirical journalism. Although he sometimes seemed to be trying too hard to emulate Evelyn (Bron's invective about the "foul-mouthed, dirty and drunk" working classes wasn't always witty enough to sound anything but childishly nasty, and he even continued the persecution of Cruttwell, long dead by the time Auberon himself started writing), in his most successful pieces, such as those for the magazine *Private Eye*, he developed his own idiosyncratic mixture of fantasy, ridicule, and inspired silliness. As a writer, as well as a man, he was more genuinely merry than Evelyn, even when he was on the attack, as he usually was. He was also kinder and saner, devoid of the cruelty that had fueled Evelyn's brilliance and of Evelyn's streak of real madness. (In middle age, after a long period of excessive reliance on bromides to relieve his insomnia, Evelyn experienced a full-blown paranoid psychosis—or a case of demonic possession—that he immortalized in the heavily autobiographical *Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*.) Auberon always insisted on the ephemeral nature of journalism, but much of his own can still be read with pleasure, and although he, too, was accused of being a snob, it is notable that he chose his targets from all points on the political spectrum. When he died in 2001, A. N. Wilson said of him that "rather than aping his father by writing conventional novels, he made a comic novel out of contemporary existence."

Finally, Bron was a much more loving father than Evelyn, as is abundantly clear from Alexander's book. At times, indeed, Alexander's filial loyalty leads him to try for some blistering invective himself, which never manages to be as mordantly funny as Evelyn's would have been. The only really tiresome passages in *Fathers and Sons* are those in which Alexander, who has kept up the family tradition in his own way by publishing books on God and time, turns sneery about various "wretched" and "humourless" and "self-important" critics of his father. Thus, Mollie Panter-Downes, who was actually a rather distinguished writer but who disparaged one of Auberon's novels, is mocked as "Ms. Pants-Down." (Alexander also seems to think—perhaps because she wrote for *The New Yorker*—that she was American, when in fact she was as English as they come.)

But this is a minor flaw, and a touch of filial zeal that seems wholly understandable in light of everything Alexander tells us about his relationship with his father. Although he and Bron apparently "never, in [their] time together, had a single serious conversation," and despite Auberon's persistent fear that his children would "cock it up," it is obvious that, in his eccentric way, Bron was almost as proud and affectionate a parent as Arthur was to Alec, without ever lapsing into Arthurian maudlin sentimentality.

And whatever happened to Arthur's "Dear Boy"? He, too, became a novelist and too, enjoyed early success. Arthur, his autobiography, devoted a few pages to extolling Alec's work, which goes largely unread now, while hardly mentioning Evelyn's. As a son, Alec remained a model of devotion to the end of his days. His first novel was dedicated to his father in language almost as florid as Arthur's: "In every mood, in every phase of my shifting pilgrimage, I have found you ever the same—loving, sympathetic, wise . . . as in life it has always been. To you first that I have brought my troubles, my aims, my hopes, so in the world of ideas it is to you that I would bring this, the first-born of my dreams." Twenty years after Arthur's death, Alec dedicated the first volume of his autobiography to his father "with a love that the years have deepened." He even made the publication of Evelyn's diaries, published posthumously, delete certain entries that were disrespectful of Arthur.

As a father himself, however, Alec was not so much a failure as a complete washout: failure implies some degree of effort, which he never made. Perhaps he was so wedded to the role of adored son that he couldn't adapt to any other; otherwise, it seems inexplicable that the object of such paternal devotion should have so completely neglected

Continued on p

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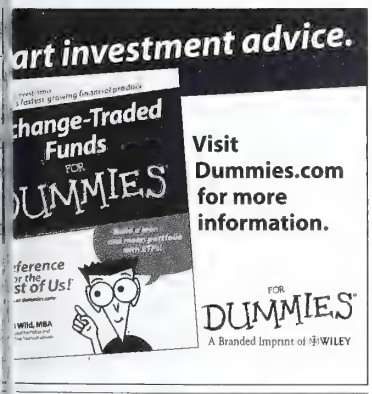
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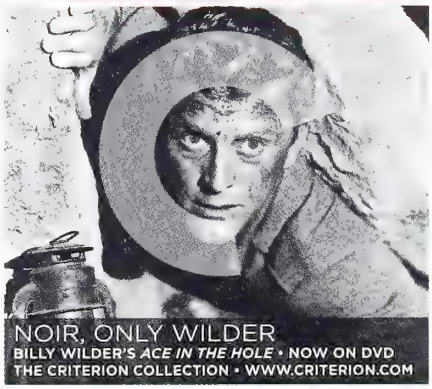
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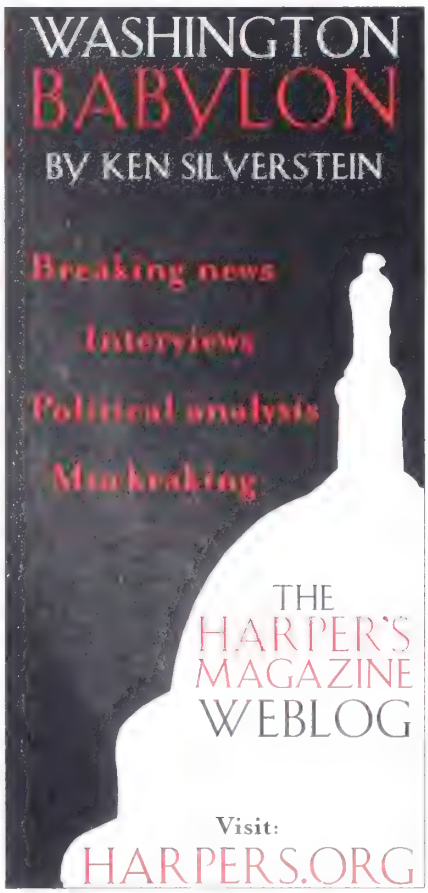
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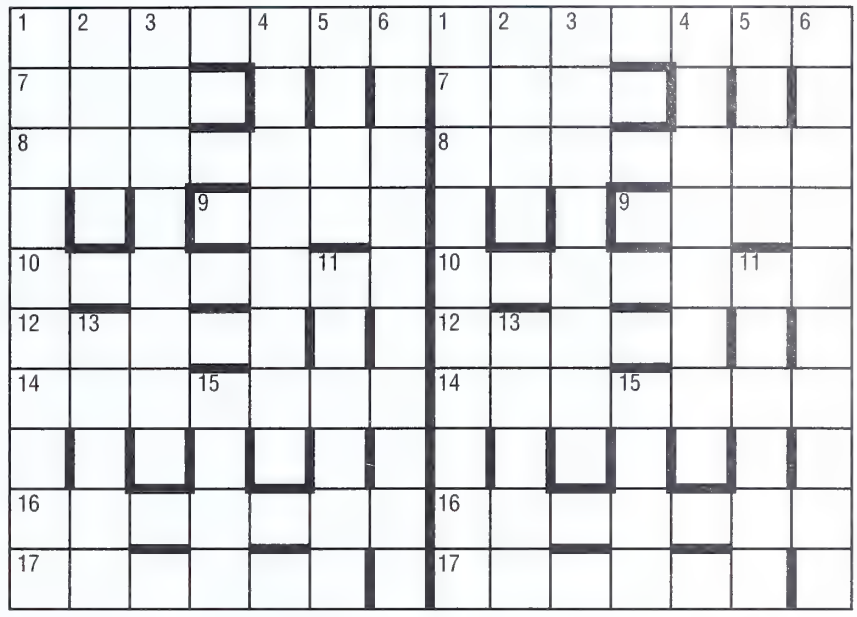
Continued from page 92

ed his own two sons. He spen
little time with them (not th
was any more attentive to his d
ter), preferring to devote hims
ceaseless womanizing and a
ceaseless travel; he never even
in the same house with his ch
for more than a few weeks at a
Nor did he support them fina
ly—fortunately, their mothe
money of her own—or oversee
education, or do anything else
might be expected of a father.
ever derogatory Evelyn was abo
children, compared with Al
looks like a model parent.

In fact, Alexander tells us, "
Evelyn was not avoiding his chi
feeling irritated by them, dying of
dom in their presence, he made
efforts to entertain them. He t
them games, drew pictures for
told fantastic stories of his child
rollicked with exaggerated laugh
their jokes and took them for
and on expeditions to local sites
terest. At Christmas he took th
the pantomimes at Bristol and
and bought 'trashy and costly' to
their stockings." Like Arthur,
endless playacting had annoyed h
much, Evelyn, his beloved dau
Margaret wrote, was "a versatil
tor, [who] played the well known
[of father] in a number of wildl
ferent ways. . . . Sometimes he p
the entertainer and conjuror. He
devise endless jokes both simple
elaborate, play games and inven
tastic stories. . . . But the role I thi
most enjoyed was that of educato
instructor in morals, art and e
thing under the sun."

Years after his father's death,
lyn called Arthur's readings of
authors, so irksome to him whe
was young, "the basis of a gen
education, and of the recogn
that education was something
enjoyed, not the subject for sch
In keeping with that principle
too, read aloud to his child
though without, it must be
Arthur's evident enjoyment.
who was the writer he read
than any other? It was, stran
enough, Dickens.

PUZZLE



NEWS CLIPPINGS

By Richard Maltby Jr.

(with acknowledgments to The Listener)

The diagram represents two pages of a newspaper. Each "headline" is actually two clues written consecutively with no connecting words or overlapping. One answer is to be entered in the left side of the diagram, one in the right, but either may be clued first. The answer to the clue at one across will clearly distinguish which side is which. Disregard category headings in bold, which are included for fun.
Answers include one proper name and one uncommon word at 3 Down. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 47.

ACROSS

1. It's a real clipping! (7,7)
7. **Entertainment News:** RETURN OF E'S *ADVERSARIES* AS FIRST TV SERIES AGES (4,4)
8. **Washington Beat:** HERE'S WHAT'S GOING AROUND: OLD REPUBLICAN NIPPER FAVORING SOMETHING DRUNK WITH ABANDON (7,7)
9. **TV Review:** *MATERIAL FROM THE HEART* ON AGAIN (4,4)
10. **Sports News:** UNIVERSITY IN BOXING RING? JUST THE OPPOSITE! DESTROYING RACE IN QUICK HOUR RECALLS THE RENAISSANCE (7,7)
12. **Medical News:** HEADING OFF ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS, EMPHYSEMA, TUBERCULOSIS, SYPHILIS, AIDS SLOW—NEEDS REORGANIZATION (5,5)
14. **Environmental News:** AVERAGE LOCALE DETAILED! PERSON CLIMBING WATER TANKS TO FIND BLUE SKY IS TAKEN ABACK (7, 7)
16. **Gossip Column:** CALVIN KLEIN'S DRINKING BIG STORY—"AFTER ONE, TO GET CHIPPER, MIX ME IDEAL DRINK" (3, 4; 7)
17. **Fashion News:** SPEEDO REORGANIZES CLASSIC LINES, TRUNKS CONTRIBUTE TO RICHEST SEASON (6,6)

DOWN

1. **National News:** U.S. PRESIDENT CAUGHT IN A LIE WITHIN MEANS G.O.P. CHAIR, E.G., WILL SEE CHANGES OF LANDSCAPE (10,10)
2. **Capitol Hill News:** HESITATIONS VOICED, GOES ASTRAY FOR HOLDING NOTHING UP IN HOUSE COVERAGE (4,4)
3. **International News:** TITLED ELITE YABBER ON, WASTING UNCOMPLETED TIME IN OFFICE AND MISSING NATURAL STOPPING POINT (8,8)
4. **Obituary Page:** DOCTOR, VISCERAL WITH INSTRUMENTS, BURIES FIRST WIFE BETWEEN MOTHER AND FATHER, PERHAPS (8,8)
5. **Nightclub Review:** LENO REPLACEMENT IN HOLIDAY RESORT SITE IS IRRESPONSIBLE PERFORMER, BUT NOT LOUD (4,4)
6. **Advice Column:** RIGHT OFF, FRIEND, AFTER CHANGE OF HEART, UPHEAVALS SWAMP GAY MIRED IN SEVERE DISTRESS (10,10)
11. **Medical News:** DRUNK, AFTER TAKING VITAMIN IN, TURNS UP, DRINKS SPRITES, IN A.A., REHABILITATED, NO TIME IN DT'S (6,6)
13. **Police News:** GROUP OF TARTS PERHAPS CHECK UP ON CHURCH OUTFIT IN UNUSUAL STATE OF PIQUE (5,5)
15. **Food Column:** A *TIMES* EDITOR: "CANNED VEGETABLE HAS NO BODY"—ONE THOUGHT ADDED FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE (4,4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Newsclippings," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "Upwardly Mobile," are Bo Curry, Redwood City, California; Scott Richardson, St. Joseph, Minnesota; and Ruth Sutch, Largo, Florida.



FINDINGS

The J. Craig Venter Institute filed an application to patent a minimal genome, consisting of fewer than 400 genes required to sustain life, with the aim, apparently, of cornering the market in synthetic life-forms designed to produce ethanol or hydrogen fuel. Researchers working on the creation of cyborg computer chips successfully stored information in live neurons for the first time; other researchers unveiled a sensor chip controlled by a slime mold. Scientists came up with a new, relatively easy technique for reprogramming the skin cells of mice into embryonic stem cells, and it was discovered that mouse mothers and fathers are more interested in the distress calls of mouse pups than spinster and bachelor mice are. An Italian doctor used cultivated tissue to create vaginas for two women who were born with Mayer-Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser syndrome. The United States Army said it was developing a robot bear that will retrieve injured soldiers from the battlefield. Scientists at the European Molecular Biology Lab in Monterotondo created mutant mice lacking the serotonin receptor 5-Htr1a, which helps regulate fear. Large flocks of vultures were attacking live animals in Spain.

A federal judge ruled that a small meatpacker must be allowed to test all its cattle for mad cow disease; the United States Department of Agriculture, which insists on testing less than 1 percent of slaughtered cattle for the disease, said that it will appeal the decision because of the high likelihood of false positives, which would harm the meat industy. The European Commission acknowledged that it was funding research on whether to permit the use of animal parts in animal feed, a practice that was banned after the outbreak of ma cow disease. The USDA approved a planting in Kans of "pharmed" rice that expresses human breast-mil proteins, and a Harlem resident filed suit against N vartis, the makers of Boost Plus, because he said the er ergy drink gave him an erection that would not g away and left him partially impotent after he underwer corrective surgery. South Australia banned the use sexual stimulants in prison. Scientists said that Viagr can help with jet lag.

Psychologists revealed that the secret to a happy ma riage is accepting that life without suffering is impos ble. Canadian surgeons encountered a man with gree blood, and scientists discovered that people enjoy pa ing taxes. A school in South Korea was planning to d ploy a robot to protect students from unwanted sedu tions. Japanese researchers unveiled a child-size rob with soft skin and flexible joints. Animal and human t als showed encouraging progress in developing a gen therapy for impotence, though some experts warne that receiving injections in the penis might not be po ular. Mauna Loa, the world's largest volcano, was bulgi and swelling. A new study found that global warmi will cause massive climate change; another conclude that global warming will result in more rain. Marine g ologists found that recent heavy hurricane activity w probably not due to global warming, and North Ame ican populations of crows, blue jays, titmice, wren chickadees, and American robins have dropped signi icantly as a result of the West Nile virus. Testosteron can help prevent brain shrinkage. Sharks are capab of parthenogenesis.

Warten auf die Barbaren (Waiting for the Barbarians), *by Neo Rauch, is on view through October 14 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City. Artwork © 2007 Neo Rauch/ARS, N.Y.C./VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph © Uwe Walter. Courtesy Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig/Berlin, and David Zwirner, N.Y.C.*



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The Coming Fight for the Melting North

By McKenzie Funk

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ifty Years of Blaming America's Educational System for Our Stupidity

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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Our Manners in Washington

Ken Silverstein's July report, "Their Men in Washington," ostensibly written to expose the sleazy side of Washington lobbying, displays instead a stunning lack of ethics in the media. Silverstein lied to get an appointment with APCO Worldwide, printed fake business cards, created a phony website, and made up a story about whom he represented—all to show, evidently, how Washington communications and lobby shops will trip over themselves to get a client.

From APCO he received a polite reception and a straightforward presentation of what we could do for his "client." For the record (which we would have said if Silverstein had had the common courtesy and, more important, the journalistic ethics to ask us for comment), we did the standard due diligence we do before such a meeting: we asked people in the U.S. government for their reaction to our being approached by people from Turkmenistan. They were, in fact, pleasantly surprised that someone was making such overtures and saw it as a positive sign for the new leadership in that country.

APCO has been down this [illegible] before. We are often approached [by] questionable regimes asking for [help]. We will, most times, have a m[eeting] after doing some due diligence. [We] will have further meetings; we [do] more due diligence. We will [be] est with our potential clients. A[nd] after all that we will make a de[cision] as to whether we think the wo[rk] the clients meet our standard. [We] have turned down potential c[lients] after long months of meetings, [be]ing we just can't represent [them]. And we have accepted some c[lients] that at first raised questions. But Silverstein didn't ask us about [any] this, or we would have told him.

Silverstein's charade might [have] been fun for him, but what it rev[eals] not any lapse on APCO's part but [that] we were pursuing business in an [ethical] and straightforward manner. Suffice to say, Silverstein would not make [the] cut to become one of our clients.

B. Jay Cooper
APCO Worldwide
Washington, D.C.

Ken Silverstein's report displa[ys] tawdry side of investigative jou[r]nalism when it is done unethically. [He] created a fake identity, a fake co[m]pany, a fake cause, all in an attem[pt] to uncover the truth about lobbyi[ng] in Washington, D.C. Instead, he exp[osed] himself as a disingenuous repo[rter] while damaging the journalistic [repu]tation of *Harper's Magazine*.

s the trade association represent-
\merica's leading public relations
; (in the spirit of full disclosure,
:O is a member), the Council of
ic Relations Firms encourages
ıbers to embrace their responsi-
ies to foster open dialogue and
sparent behavior. Not only is this
ıe public interest and the right
g to do but it is also critical for es-
shing credibility with potential
ences and constituencies. The
e holds true for members of the
ia. Silverstein's credibility can
fairly be called into question—
by extension that of *Harper's*.
ı need to reassess their current
dards of reporting.

ıy *Cripps*
ncil of Public Relations Firms
/ York City

Silverstein responds:

this were the 1930s, and I had in-
ıted the offices of Ivy Lee, the Nazi
me's P.R. agent in America, one
easily imagine Kathy Cripps and
Council of Public Relations Firms
ouncing my tawdry tactics in ex-
ng the Führer's man. Yes, there is
nitely a party here who needs to
e a good hard look in the mirror.
). Jay Cooper says APCO does rig-
us due diligence and turns down
nts that don't meet its standards.
ould love to know what those
ndards" are. They didn't prevent
CO from working in the past for
nts such as General Sani Abacha
Nigeria, a murderous thief who
neled hundreds of millions of dol-
of state revenue into Swiss bank
ounts. Nor did APCO's standards
vent it from accepting money
n Philip Morris to create a bogus
ıpaign-watchdog group that it ran
the tobacco company until the
e was exposed. APCO's standards
re also flexible enough to allow
to work for Azerbaijan and
zakhstan, Caspian countries that
headed, like Turkmenistan, by
ers with horrible records on hu-
n rights and corruption.
Cooper suggests that, in the end,
'CO would have turned down my
er of a contract to whitewash the
rkmen regime's image. But that is
odds with the vigorous efforts APCO waged to win the deal after my meeting with the firm at its Washington headquarters.

Within weeks of my supposed return to London, APCO senior vice president Barry Schumacher emailed me to ask for an update on where my fake company, The Maldon Group, stood "on potentially retaining a firm here in DC to assist the Turkmenistan government," and to find out if there was "anything else you need from us" before making a decision. Later that same month, after being told that The Maldon Group had still not made a decision, Schumacher emailed again to say that he was soon coming to London on business and that he would be "delighted to meet with you and your colleagues . . . at a time and location of your choice. That way, if there is more you would like to know about us, or if you feel you wish us to be your partner, we could either answer questions or move the effort forward."

I declined his offer (I couldn't possibly meet with him in London, as I had never left Washington) and emailed him the next day to say that my firm had decided to work with another lobby shop. Schumacher took the news badly. "Needless to say, we are disappointed," he replied. And when I sent a final note offering my condolences, Schumacher wrote back to say, "If something changes, please feel free to contact us. We enjoyed our meeting with you and would welcome a future opportunity to assist you." So much for Cooper's claims about tough due diligence and that APCO never really wanted to work for Turkmenistan.

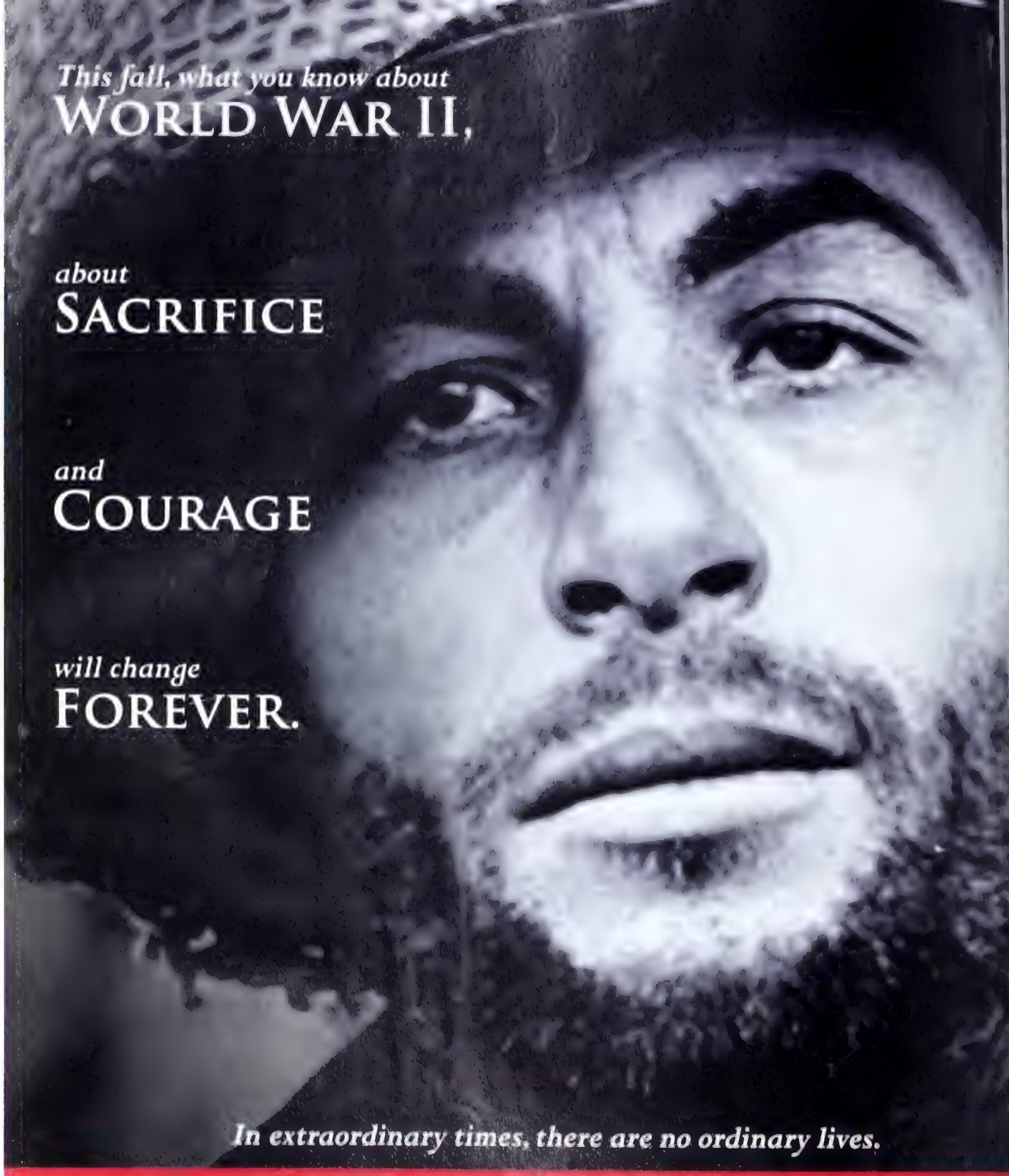
I tricked APCO and Cassidy & Associates, which I openly disclosed to readers of the report, in order to demonstrate just how easy it is for lobbyists to manipulate political and public opinion. The lobbyists, on the other hand, offered to go to work on behalf of one of the world's most heinous regimes in exchange for the lavish fees they proposed to charge The Maldon Group. The lobby shops were blinded by greed, thereby exposing their own shameful ethics as well as the need for lobbying reform. I'm absolutely certain who the ethically compromised party is in this affair—and based on the overwhelmingly positive response the story has received, the public is too.

The Decider

Scott Horton's otherwise brilliant essay "State of Exception" [Criticism, July] rests on a number of fallacious readings of Carl Schmitt as the progenitor of contemporary American lawfare. Horton mistranslates the first sentence of Schmitt's famous text on sovereignty: "Sovereign is he who controls the exception." *Entscheidet* should be translated as "decides," not "controls." Schmitt's point is that the original moment of sovereignty necessarily lies in a decision as to when a norm is no longer valid and, subsequently, what to do about such a situation.

Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* certainly did not embrace "the legitimacy of a process of extreme demonization of political adversaries." On the contrary, his aim throughout the text was to elevate the legitimacy of the political enemy as a way of mitigating his wholesale criminalization. In fact, this theme of criminalization is a concern throughout Schmitt's oeuvre. Schmitt did not "ridicule the law of armed conflict," nor did he desire to place political enemies "beyond the help of law." Quite the opposite. Schmitt argued that it was American and British maritime powers that were judging Germany as the enemy beyond law, and he refused to accept that it was their prerogative to use their value system to set interpretation of the laws of war.

In his main text on international law, *The Nomos of the Earth*, which Horton does not cite, Schmitt demonstrates how the laws of warfare emerged in early modern Europe in order to moderate, humanize, and "bracket" violence—an undertaking largely successful until World War I. Although Schmitt saw conflict as intrinsic to politics, what he most feared was no doubt what we are seeing today: a liberal humanitarian utopianism that wages war, in the guise of ending tyranny, without restraint, and explodes all legal boundaries rooted in the acceptance of the other. Horton's attempt to reduce a complex legal thinker through a series of misrepresentations in order to provide a conceptu-



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kground for the abysmal legal es of the Bush Administration fortunately, the most uncon- ng part of his essay.

nder D. Barder
Spring, Md.

Horton responds:

hare Alexander Barder's view Schmitt is a "complex legal er" and indeed one of the more tant legal theorists to address of international and constitu- law in the past century. It was ny intention to present a ically authoritative interpreta- f Schmitt's writings. As is ap- nt from my essay, I am a itt critic, not a Schmitt fol- . It has also been Schmitt's as with Machiavelli and es, two thinkers in whose tra- he stands—to be widely mis- rstood and used to ends he indeed find horrific.

der presents a view of Schmitt an easily be defended by refer- to his texts, especially *Nomos*, is important to distinguish the broad epochs in Schmitt's ngs: *Nomos* is from the last, ar period, when Schmitt was with his own political rehabili- n. He presents himself as a reli- conservative well within the nes of traditional thought, and thors an able critique of liberal Marxist theories of international ons and law.

t these views are nearly impos- to reconcile with the Schmitt 30–45, whose constructions of national law are twisted con- ably to fit the political ends of tate he served. When evaluat- chmitt, it is important to draw not only his postwar theoreti- ieces but also his writings from ate Weimar Republic and the era. Good examples would be ritings in justification of the t of the Long Knives—which ndeed justify putting political ms outside the help of law— his Berlin lecture from 1934, *tsgefüge und Zusammenbruch des ten Reiches*," which ridicules f-war norms and adopts the ex- ive view of *Kriegsraison* that pushed World War II into the humanitarian nightmare it soon became. For reasons that are readily apparent, Schmitt's modern publishers have consistently excluded these works from anthologies. I read *The Concept of the Political* and the other cited works in a manner consistent with Schmitt's practical advice and engaged writing, and I believe this is the correct approach to understanding them.

True, Schmitt speaks often of "my enemy, my brother," suggesting that demonization is not his objective. But his speeches of the 1930s paint quite a different picture, as does the end of his last published work, wherein Schmitt recalls the final utterance of a dying ruler: "Asked by his spiritual advisor on his deathbed, 'Do you forgive your enemies?' he replied with a clean conscience, 'I have no enemies; I have killed them all.'"

The Human Factor

Rebecca Solnit's essay on the city's decay ["Detroit Arcadia," Letter, July] glosses over the current and future impact of poverty on the lives of Detroiters. Solnit seems content to idealize a post-urban Detroit of abundant organic gardens and fluttering wild pheasants. The eight photographs published with her essay included only one person: a woman holding a shovel, whose back we glimpse as she gazes off into a barren lot under a cloudless sky. A non-Detroiter might wistfully imagine an ecotopia of plump peaches and sunny tomorrows—an urban renaissance.

It pains me to note that Detroit is a long way from a resurrection. A vision of organic gardens is perhaps brilliant, and certainly there are possibilities for renewal amid the city ruins. But attempting to overcome the city's poverty—rooted in decades of racism—must be the first priority, even for the ecotopians. We can, of course, plant trees at the same time, but unless we start to root out Detroit's poverty one tangible life at a time, there can be no arcadia, no renaissance, no New Detroit.

Christopher Cherney
Berkeley, Calif.

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NOTEBOOK

Flies in Amber

By Lewis H. Lapham

I do not know what is true. I do not know the meaning of the universe. But in the midst of doubt, in the collapse of creeds, there is one thing I do not doubt . . . that the faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw away his life in obedience to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign of which he has little notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Addressing Harvard University's graduating class of 1895, Holmes spoke as a veteran of the Civil War who had ridden his horse "toward the blue line of fire at the dead angle of Spotsylvania," heard "the splat of the bullets upon the trees," felt his foot "slip upon a dead man's body" lying in the Virginia mud. The "incommunicable experience of war" he remembered as feeling "the passion of life to its top," and of the young men seated in the stands of the football stadium he asked, "Who of us could endure a world . . . without the divine folly of honor, without the senseless passion for knowledge outreaching the flaming bounds of the possible, without ideals the essence of which is that they can never be achieved?"

In 1895 the question was in tune with the operas of Richard Wagner and the stories of Robert Louis Stevenson. Britain's handsome cavalry officers were carrying the flags of their imperial benevolence across the plains of India and Africa; in America as in Europe the leading voices in the orchestra of high-minded opinion (poets and churchmen together with the schoolmasters, the generals, and the politicians) regarded trials by combat as glorious undertakings certain to provide proofs of selfless virtue and noble character. How could it be otherwise? What else was the history of Western civilization (Achilles before the walls of Troy, Roland in the pass at Roncesvalles, Wellington on the field of Waterloo) if not the romance of war? Man's destiny was battle, war "the father of all things," to Georg Wilhelm Hegel the "terrible" but "necessary" purgative that "saves the state from social petrifaction and stagnation," to William Ernest Henley the "giver of kingship, the fame-smith, the song-master."

The Harvard oration so impressed Teddy Roosevelt that seven years later he appointed the orator to the Supreme Court, and if I quote Holmes at some length it's because he allows me to understand George W. Bush's war on terror not as an act of criminal stupidity but as the work of a man imprisoned in a past tense. I see the president making speeches against a backdrop of flags at the Naval Academy or among high-ranking uniforms at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and I think of a ten-year-old boy reciting the poetry of Rudyard Kipling, or of the youngest deck officer aboard the U.S. Navy flagship in a 1940s Hollywood movie made with the technical assistance of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. When I listen to the debates in Congress about what to do with our army in Iraq, I'm left with a similar impression—of flies preserved in amber of Pleistocene vertebrates trapped for 30,000 years in the La Brea Tar Pits on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. Whether for or against the war (urging immediate withdrawal or proposing unconditional reinforcement), the tribunes of the people don't seem to have grasped the fact that war as the heavyweight instrument of foreign policy didn't survive, either as a technology or as an idea, its tour of duty in the graveyards of the twentieth century.

The disappearance of Holmes's "song of the sword" has been a matter of public record ever since the atom bombs dropped on Japan in the summer of 1945, but if the memo hasn't yet arrived on Capitol Hill or come to the attention of the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, or further has it reached the makers of America's statecraft—a tape deck embarrassingly evident early in the summer at a ritual unveiling of the geopolitical mysteries staged for the crowd of New York bankers at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies. CSIS touts itself as the world's most significant think tank," where "government comes to hear what it needs to hear, not what it wants to hear," and in a showing of its credentials the modern-day equivalent of

Lewis H. Lapham is the National Correspondent for Harper's Magazine *and the editor of the forthcoming* Lapham's Quarterly.

ent Greek oracle at Delphi,
e of its significant trustees
ıry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezin-
ınd Brent Scowcroft) turned up
fund-raising dinner on the
ing of June 14 in the Rainbow
m at Rockefeller Center, the
ation attended by 200 invited
ts and filmed for subsequent
dcast on *The Charlie Rose Show*.
ter the waiters had cleared away
old lobster and the rack of lamb,
seated the three once-upon-a-
national security advisers (to
dents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and
ge Bush the Elder) in a semicir-
f small chairs facing the altar of
evision camera. The arrange-
suggested the placing of marble
es in a Greek shipowner's sculp-
garden, and when Rose was sat-
with the effect, he informed his
ences that they were in the pres-
of men "who had spoken to
, signed the Panama Canal
ty, brought an end to the Cold
negotiated with Israel." Won-
of the age, Rose said, wise be-
the wisdom of owls, their col-
ve knowledge encompassing
00 years of experience." His first
tion he directed to Kissinger,
ing it as a request for guidance
the Lincoln Memorial.
American foreign policy! Are we
special moment . . . ? Are we cre-
a new world order?"
ssinger responded in the slow
ponderous voice consistent with
sound of human speech drawn
a stone.
he international system is in a
d of change," he said. The situ-
ı is very complex.
ne rest of the evening's discussion
eeded at more or less the same el-
ion of significance, Charlie shuf-
his earnest questions around the
of enlightenment, wondering
her America had lost the power to
e the world in its own image,
ing to know if America is weak-
stronger than it used to be, ask-
ow do we disengage from the
der in Iraq. The three statesmen
ed in phrases befitting their per-
e as priests of Apollo. No, Amer-
ıadn't lost the power to shape
ts, but people elsewhere in the
d weren't taking us as seriously as
they once did, which was bad news because everywhere on the horizon there were disturbing signs—restlessness, suicide bombers, "political awakenings," jihadists, turbulence in "the global Balkans" now to be understood as almost all of Eastern Europe and much of what was once the Ottoman Empire. Things were likely to go from bad to worse unless America regained its power to instill fear and inspire respect, but in order to do so, to once again become credible as the hope and strength of the world, Brzezinski, echoing Holmes, said that we must reduce the high cholesterol levels of our "hedonistic, materialistic society," demand "idealism" from ourselves, show some talent for "self-denial and sacrifice."

As to the problem in Iraq, all the oracles agreed that America was "bogged down" in what was beginning to look like the La Brea Tar Pits (clearly a bad place for heavily armored Pleistocene vertebrates), and the time had come "to unbog." Kissinger remembered that it was hard to unbog from Vietnam, and that always it was a "question of what does one mean by 'getting bogged down.'" Brzezinski observed that if we don't unbog, "most of the world will not be with us" and "our global power will gradually be dissipated." Scowcroft seemed as genuinely baffled as the saber-toothed tiger preserved under glass in the museum on Wilshire Boulevard. "It's amazing," he said, this bogging down in a tiny, little country; America's military and economic power is in all respects far greater than was Imperial Rome's, but we can't do what the Romans could do.

We can't do what the Romans could do because, sad to say, much has changed over the course of the last 2,000 years, and war isn't what it used to be in the good old days when Caesar crossed the Rubicon, or when Polish cavalry regiments rode glamorously onward to their deaths in the blue lines of fire coming at them from the Wehrmacht's entrenched machine-gun positions. Scowcroft might find it helpful to consult one or more volumes of military history, among them John Keegan's *A History of Warfare*, and John Mueller's *Remnants of War*. Contrary to the notion

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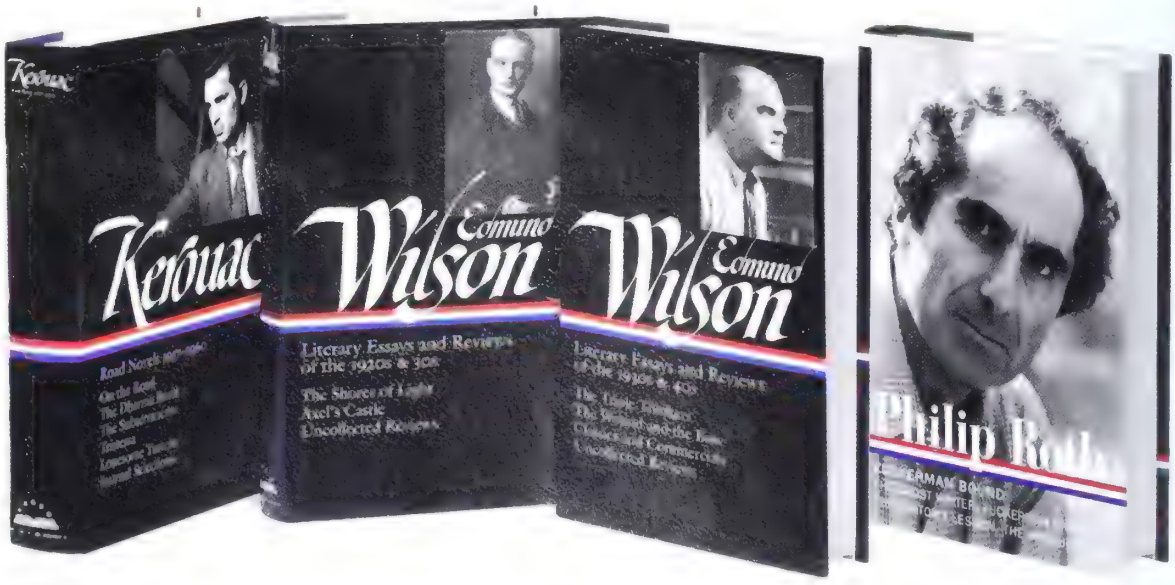
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ar is a continuation of policy
ier means (i.e., the notion ad-
l in 1832 by the Prussian army
Carl von Clausewitz and still
ed as holy writ in the cubicles
IS), both Keegan and Mueller
hat war is a cultural product
than a phenomenon or law of
and therefore subject, like oth-
des of human expression (the
g of togas or powdered wigs, the
g of slaves, the art of cave paint-
the fallings out of fashion. The
thors suggest that war is better
tood as a form of play than as a
of business, that Clausewitzian
collapses into absurdity in the
ce of atomic weapons. No mat-
w one defines policy—capture
itory, defense of homeland, rape
Sabine women, extensions of
—the objective disappears along
verything else within range of
ermonuclear fire. Nothing con-
; victory is defeat.

etween the two books, Keegan's
more philosophical. For many
a lecturer at the Royal Military
my Sandhurst and the author
ong other books, *The Face of Bat-*
Armies in Normandy, and *The*
of Admiralty, he acknowledges
ct that all societies trace their
s to a warrior culture antecedent
inventions of politics. Time pass-
d the primitive instinct, emo-
and irrational, delighting in the
pillage and the arts of murder,
ts to the forces of cultural trans-
ion. Naked aggression puts on
stumes of ritual; men learn to
the collateral damage, to find
ntelligent and cost-effective ways
ning applause and acquiring
tate.

egan considers the idea and
ce of war instituted by non-
ean peoples (the Chinese, the
ols, the Zulus, and the Maoris)
l as the various formations as-
ed under the banners of West-
vilization—the Greek phalanx,
oman legion, the medieval
t-at-arms, the American air-
arrier; equally interested in the
se samurai and in the Egyptian
uks (both of whom regarded
e of firearms as unsporting), he
es that sooner or later even
ardy lieutenants grow up and
come to see, as did Major General Charles Gordon six weeks before making his glorious last stand at Khartoum, in 1885, that when and if "one analyses human glory, it is composed of nine-tenths twaddle, perhaps ninety-nine-hundredths twaddle." After having led his reader on the long march from the deserts of ancient Mesopotamia to the jungles of Vietnam, Keegan arrives at the observation that war serves only itself, itself and those of its devotees for whom it remains a passion and a source of income: "War, it seems to me, after a lifetime of reading about the subject, mingling with men of war, visiting the sights of war, and observing its effects, may well be ceasing to commend itself to human beings as a desirable or productive, let alone rational, means of reconciling their discontents."

Not as tentative in his conclusion as Keegan, Mueller, the Woody Hayes Chair of National Security Studies at The Ohio State University, unlimbers the premise of *The Remnants of War* on page four of the introduction: "The central burden of this book is that war is merely an idea. Unlike breathing, eating or sex, war is not something that is somehow required by the human condition or by the forces of history. Accordingly, war can shrivel up and disappear, and it seems to be in the process of doing so."

Mueller takes account of the tactical reasons (nuclear weapons, asymmetric terrain, the high number of civilian casualties, "the massive shattering of historical precedent" reflected in the fact that since 1945 the developed countries have refrained from waging large-scale, industrial-strength warfare), but the bulk of his argument he directs at the idea that war, although often dull and occasionally unpleasant, is, all things considered, a worthwhile undertaking. Prior to World War I the right-thinking majorities in the world's finest universities and most expensive drawing rooms subscribed to the view presented by Holmes, welcomed by the young Winston Churchill (life is "at its best and healthiest" on the field of battle as one "awaits the caprice of the bullet"), endorsed by the nineteenth-century Ger-

PERCENT OF CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS RELEASED FROM BUILDINGS IN THE UNITED STATES: 48

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general Helmuth von Moltke, ›elieved that "perpetual peace is ım," that "war is an integral part ›d's ordering of the universe," ›ut which "the world would be swamped in materialism."

e romance perished in the trench- "the war to end all wars"; if in or 1913 the harboring of antiwar nents was to be found only at the ns of Western society, among the ›f people apt to wear sandals and the poetry of Rabindranath 'e, over the course of the twenti- ntury pacifism entered the flow of stream thought, not for reasons ological principle but as a matter nmon sense. Despite the highest ›f military mobilization and mor- ever recorded in the history of the idea that war is ennobling hrilling, sometimes even useful rogressive, has been replaced (in inds of most of the world's peo- not in the minds of their minis- state) with the idea that war, in er's phrase, is "repulsive, uncivi- immoral, and futile." He likens ıange in attitude to the revision- nking that discredited the once- a-time "peculiar institution" of y. In 1776 slavery was generally ted, by Thomas Jefferson and by George III, as a standard operat- rocedure blessed with the au- y of Moses, Pericles, and Mo- ıed; by 1876 the idea of slavery ecome revolting. So too with the ›f war.

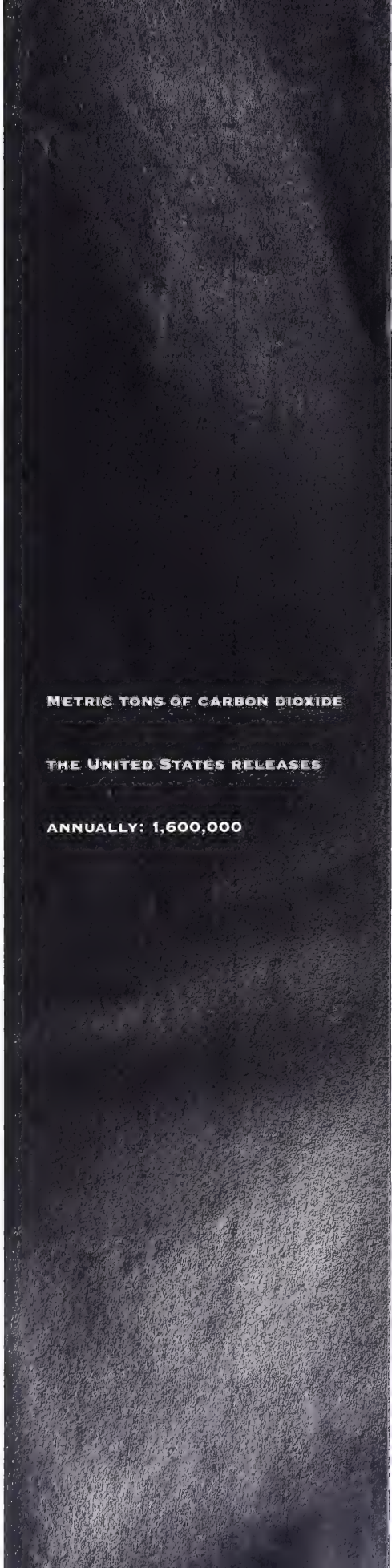
ıich isn't to say that large num- ›f people won't continue to kill nother in "civil wars" compara- › those that have arisen since in Congo, Algeria, Rwanda, and 'o, or in "policing wars" akin to in Chechnya, Palestine, and Both forms of residual warfare er regards as essentially criminal ›rises, occurring in-country, de- ng freelance thugs who come l with rifles and RPGs instead of ›pter gunships, seek to plunder seless civilians, take little inter- ı ideology, follow the flags of rous self-interest that in no way embody or represent a clash of civilizations.

oth Mueller and Keegan asso- the romance of war with the energies and enthusiasms of male adolescence, their thinking in line with Ralph Waldo Emerson's remark that "it is the ignorant and childish part of mankind that is the fighting part."

Which would explain why Othello's "big wars that make ambition virtue" now are to be found, sensibly and exclusively, in the movies and the video-game arcades. As unfortunately for America's military personnel as for the citizens of Iraq, the shift into the twenty-first-century theater of operations seems to have escaped the notice of the world's most significant think tank.

I was reminded of the oversight soon after the Rainbow Room briefing when I came across the Internet game World of Warcraft, said to be played by as many as 8.5 million combatants located at all points of the geopolitical compass who pay $15 a month to pursue their dreams of godlike power in the online world of Azeroth. My guest pass granted access to the kingdoms Mulgore and Durotar, brought with it directions to the battlefields in the Burning Crusade, explained how to spot the differences between a Troll, a Silithid insect, and an Orc, when to beware the Blood Elves in Azshara, where to gather magic spells with which to ring the Scarab Gong or maybe assemble the Scepter of the Shifting Sands. Lost for an hour in the Elwynn Forest among the Murloc Oracles of Crystal Lake, I began to hope for rescue by Kissinger or Brzezinski, operating as the online avatars Bismarck and Maximus, sending reinforcements (in the personae of dwarves and shadow priests) from their computers in Washington.

Here at last was the world in which they could do what the Romans could do, the one manufactured by Blizzard Entertainment drifting in the same orbit as the one imagined by Carl von Clausewitz, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., and George W. Bush. With the small difference, of course, that on earth some of the game players bleed, and it doesn't do them much good to know that Bismarck and Maximus think they're virtual-reality toys battling the warrior monks of Azeroth. ■





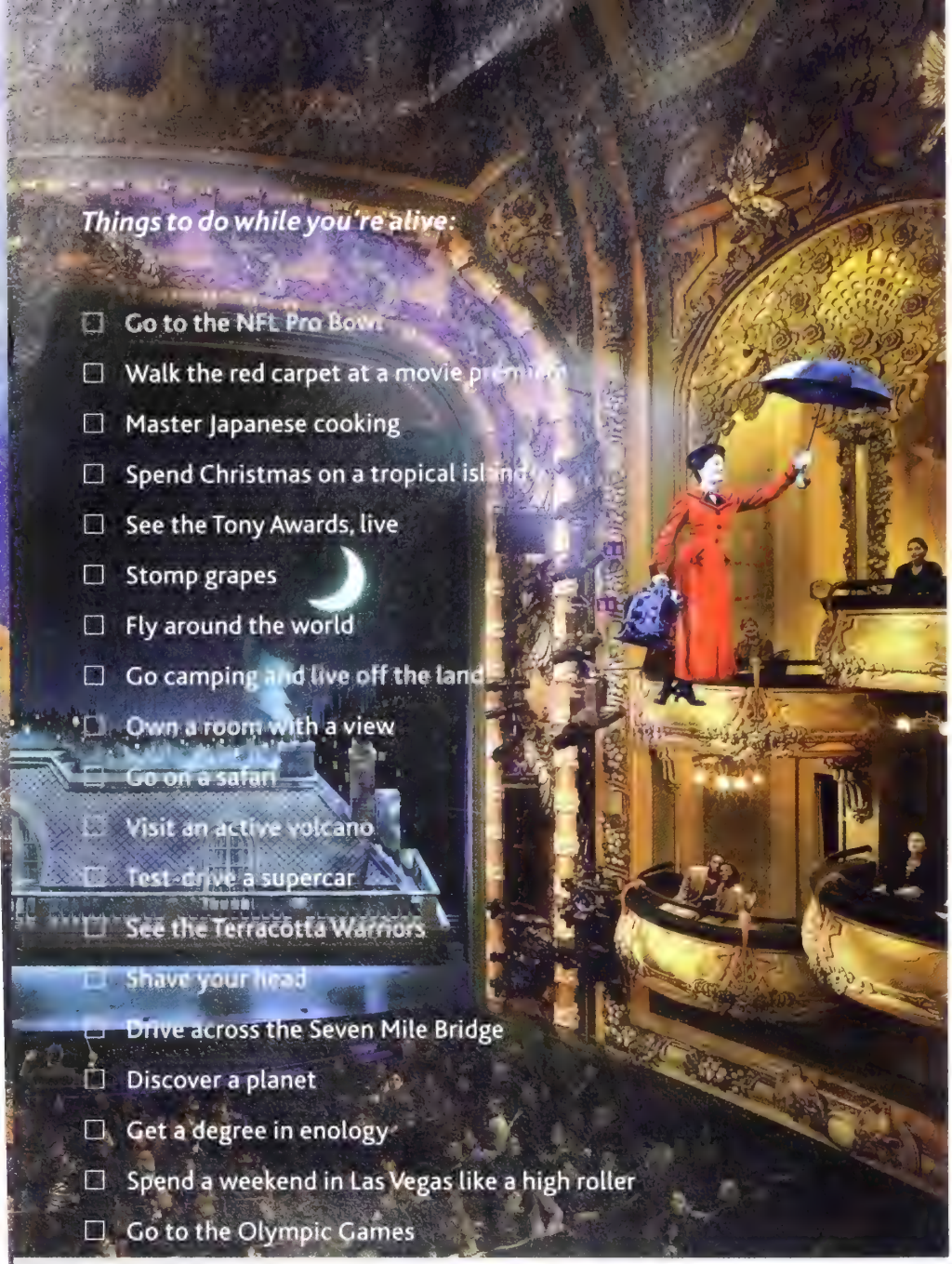
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HARPER'S INDEX

Estimated portion of the world's undiscovered petroleum that is buried under Arctic ice : 1/5 (see page 46)
Year by which drilling can begin under Greenland's northeast shelf, at current rates of warming : 2022
Earliest year, in a 2004 estimate, that China was projected to surpass the United States in CO_2 production : 2024
Year that China is now expected to pass the U.S. : 2007
Percentage change since 1990 in greenhouse-gas emissions from Russia : –29
Percentage change from the United States and Canada, respectively : +16, +25
Estimated number of barrels of oil that lie under Ecuador's largest rainforest national park : 920,000,000
ual amount that Ecuador asked the "international community" in June to pay it for not drilling in the park : $350,000,000
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Chances that a U.S. worker in 1990 drove to and from work alone : 3 in 4
Chances today : 4 in 5
ılue of the gasoline that the American Red Cross is giving to two randomly selected blood donors this summer : $3,500
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Average annual cost of a private intelligence contractor : $250,000
ıber of times FDA officials met with consumer and patient groups as the agency revised its drug-review policy last year : 5
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timated total net worth of the seventeen presidential candidates who have appeared in the party debates : $430,000,000
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ɔjected cost to Medicare in 2030 of treating dementia, expressed as a percentage of the program's total budget today : 98
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Figures cited are the latest available as of July 2007. Sources are listed on page 98.
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HARPER'S BOOKSHELF



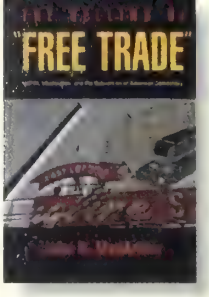
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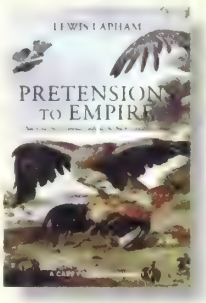




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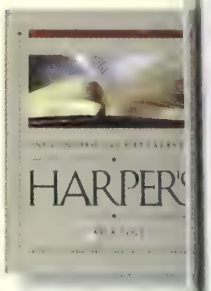
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READINGS

[Memoir]

THE SHADOW FACTORY

By Paul West, from his essay "'Mem, mem, mem,'" in the Summer issue of The American Scholar. *West, the author of more than fifty books of fiction, nonfiction, and verse, was the victim of a stroke in 2003. In its aftermath, he suffered from aphasia, was unable to understand others' speech, and could utter only the syllable "mem." The essay is excerpted from a book West began after his wife, Diane Ackerman, suggested he attempt to write "the first aphasic memoir." West's review "The Novelist and the Hangman" appeared in the July 2004 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

The difference between my own refracted gaze of the world and Diane's is that she sees the world in all its detail, squirming into the needlepoint alleyways that leopards reject, and mine is to look on the offered scene as a species of broadcloth identified mainly through its ribbons and Tam o' Shanters. This sharing the load usually means that between us we cover the waterfront, missing a few mouse holes and locked jaws here and there, but getting the plurality right.

It may not happen that the skills of either of us would often be brought into play, cutting us off in different ways from the charming scene about us, but when you are dealing with something that neither of us has ever seen before, not in bulk, anyway, the situation is profoundly different and likely to fall off the universe for not trying hard enough.

One way of trying extra hard is to imagine one dimension of the universe coated in either black velvet or a blue that no one has reported outside the province of Baffinland. This same needling eye one imagines as bringing reports of blancmange, mince pies, jam tarts, cream pies, chocolate éclairs, Odwalla Bars, chocolate-chip cookies, ice cream, and all manner of other delicacies to the invalid's bed.

However you spell the word "invalid," you are either invalid because not valid, or invalided out. Or you disentangle the least bit of wiry fluff that has been haunting your tongue for half an hour, and assign it to the unwilling project of the human mess. These rank as contributions in some way or other, but the assorted confectioneries are too massive to eat, and the strand of henpecked fluff is too narrow, which makes them both second-rate substitutes and sees them out. What I'm trying to say, in language ever more oblique, is that the human psyche can sometimes see evidence of what is not present to the senses.

"Bosh," one hears you exclaim, "this man is writing about nothing!" But is he? It could be that he is writing about something somebody said to him after he had regained his senses, or that he regained these senses for himself and detected shreds of rabbit fluff here and there. Imagine a man coming round after five days in the human tank that denatures us all and finds no memory worth talking about. I suspected as much from my ten-day immersion in whatever I was immersed in.

I say this in the most tentative manner because there isn't a great deal of difference be-

tween what's roiling and not rolling. You could easily miss it for the whole of the ten-day period. Nonetheless, I think it was there for human consumption, and I am content to identify it—if that is not too canonical a word—as a lump of Lot's wife going nowhere, or what Samuel Beckett, in one of his wilder notions, identifies as Molloy going the unerring rounds on his bicycle, even when he has nothing to deliver.

Clearly we are dealing with shadowland at its bleakest, and should not expect too much. It is not likely to reward us with any vision of something discernible. You always have a chance to say "I saw nothing" or "I saw something." And it is not enough to say "I saw Versed or chloroform," because that would generate far too much reportorial weight. To recognize that we are not dealing with much of the known hardly delights anybody, but just imagine how much of the unknown is out there among the dark clusters of stars and the dark matter of which we know nothing. We may think that we are dealing with the nonstop hodgepodge of daily life, but we are also dealing with the opaque mysteries of the universe itself.

[Poem]

ORPHEUS

By Fergus Allen, from the June 29 Times Literary Supplement. *His most recent collection,* Gas Light & Coke, *was published last year by Dedalus Press.*

Crammed into packing cases, wrapped in plastic,
the limbs of dismembered masculine deities
are out of sight and do not call for tears.
Screaming and bitching fill the olive grove
and everyone is high on triviality.

The offered lips, the immaculate skin—
so you prefer the smell of own-sex sweat
to that of lion, do you? Well, so be it,
but I am dazzled by other illusions,
vision shifted into another clef.

Serialism occupies my thoughts
and I foresee the ivy-berry trance
in which the raving maenads will disjoint me
because I've wept too hotly and too long.
So let it be done quickly, while I dance,

my remains serving to fatten the kites,
while my bare head floats singing down the stream.
You will be one of the caring and sensitive;
there will be many prizes to be won
and enough testicled slaves in the field.

Cabbage served twice means death. So says one of the older Greek proverbs, though it goes no further into the lethal lineage of cabbage. I was becoming accustomed to these devil servings, mainly of the mythic cabbage, as distinct from the real one. But how to divest yourself of the mythic one, when the real thing offers itself up? I long ago decided to opt for both, lest I for some reason lose one or the other, whether bull-rushing into a dead end, or having the real thing played out on my skull for days.

Was it indeed days? Or merely a squawking interim in the full gamut of time, no more than an hour? I settled these and other questions for later on when I had got the better of my bearings. For now, there was the serious business of interpreting my condition, as far as decency would allow. First was the matter of my jaw, affixed to my head in the certain manner of a Greek wrestler and extending right through my head with no give in it at all. Some things were happening not for the first time, and I experienced serious reluctance to pursue the matter further. If a locked jaw was any indication, things had already gone from bad to worse and could not be trusted.

I addressed myself next to my temple, which, seeming in no way to have enlarged, felt for the first time brittle and temporary. Could it be that some of it was missing, obliged by some demented operator with a fretsaw to have given doughty service? Certainly it didn't feel right, and slowly I cruised the surface area, waiting for a mishap, or the plain bald gap where something had been and was no longer. So let us say that between one jaw null and void and the other there was a temple that was highly suspicious, and would remain so for the duration.

I turned my thoughts to the ghostly hand that dangled uselessly at my side, paler than it had been, and with an odd look of failure about it that I had not noticed before. Could it have withered during the process? Stranger things have happened to a victim of a stroke. It was the same inert apparatus, but somehow more useless, as if it had been ratcheted down a peg or two. In the tremendous lusting ovation of the stroke proper, I rapidly formed an adverse view of my jaw, temple, and hand, wishing them all far away and put to the good uses of someone else who was not too proud of what he brought to the human encounter.



COURTESY GALERIE EMMANUEL PERROTIN, PARIS/MIAMI

Tirana, *by Jin Meyerson, whose work was on display last spring at Engholm Engelhorn Galerie, in Vienna.*

There was a bewildering assortment of false starts and incomplete sentences for the mind only. I no sooner thought of something to say to myself than I forgot it, and I was lucky to get beyond the second or third imagined word. Of course, no one in his right mind overheard any of this, the dumb speaking to the silent in a reverse image, so no one was upset. But if this happens fifty or sixty times, one wants a little revenge of some sort. Of course, one was in all probability speaking no kind of written English, so this meant that whatever you said was relevant and you could not say anything irrelevant.

I formed the habit of forcing language back on itself, beyond even its failure to communicate anything at all, to see what was there. Language, at least as we know it, had ended, and I was left there on countless occasions, with something like a white sheet of dental floss or a carnivorous absence. There was nothing beyond. So I cheered myself up by taking as my starting point the notion that all I had to do was pass the zone of no known language and automatically be speaking English once again. These are mental compensations to be sure, but they serve superbly in times of need.

So, groggy, weak, and famished, I take my plight on the chin. Milling around me there are all sorts of verbal alternatives both nonsensical and full of meaning, to some of which I have permanent access without speaking. I wonder if one can safely execute a lifetime using the language of dumb show. I know of one woman in New York who has successfully done it for years. It is a matter of the breaks. I would, of course, prefer to speak the English that I know and revere, but I think I can see past gobbledygook to a pure and vivid English, instead of starting every sentence five or six times, writing sentences that lose heart halfway through in a futile clutter of grossly amalgamated syllables.

[Postmortem]

A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

From a May 21 letter to Dr. Laura Peers, of Oxford University's Pitt Rivers Museum, from Ted Dewan, an author and illustrator of children's books. The museum declined his offer.

Dear Dr. Peers,

I thoroughly enjoyed my night visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum last Saturday. While examining the shrunken heads by torchlight, I entered into a conversation with a friend about their possible repatriation. If the existing collection of shrunken heads is removed, the museum will lose its most awe-inspiring collection of artifacts, one that has filled people, especially children, with wonder and excitement. Including a newly shrunken head could restore this wonder to a headless Pitt Rivers Museum.

Although I'm only forty-six and healthy, I have been musing unsatisfactorily on what I'd like to happen to my remains following my death. As an atheist, I have been bothered by the problem since I was in my mid-twenties. I find burial abhorrent and regard only a very few places in the world as "holy." The Pitt Rivers Museum is very much a holy place for me, a true temple of wonder. Offering my head to the museum so that future anthropology students could have a go at a head-shrinking, perhaps as part of a family-friendly event, appeals to me immensely.

If the policy of the museum is shifting toward a more ethical treatment of human remains, taking into account the beliefs of indigenous peoples, the strongly felt beliefs of those of us who seek solace outside of the organized religions may stand a chance of being valued equally. I have always been inspired by the stories of people who have donated their skulls to the theater at Stratford-upon-Avon for productions of *Hamlet*.

I am in the process of rewriting my will this summer, and it seems a good time to include a mention of my posthumous wishes, should the museum eventually be in a position to accept my head for display. Of course, I would stipulate that adequate funding would be made available from my estate for the shrinking, storage, and maintenance of the head in perpetuity. If you would like to discuss this in some detail, I would be happy to do so. I live in Oxford and frequently take my daughter to see the collection.

[Postmortem]

GET YOUR ASS OFF MY PILLOW

From an interview with Norman Mailer by Andrew O'Hagan, in the Summer issue of The Paris Review. *Mailer's most recent novel,* The Castle in the Forest, *was published by Random House in January. O'Hagan's third novel,* Be Near Me, *was published by Harcourt in June.*

ANDREW O'HAGAN: Do you remember where you were when you heard Hemingway had killed himself?

NORMAN MAILER: I remember it very well. I was with Jeanne Campbell in Mexico, and it was before we got married. I was truly aghast. A certain part of me has never really gotten over it. In a way, it was a huge warning. What he was saying is, Listen, all you novelists out there, get it straight: when you're a novelist you're entering on an extremely dangerous psychological journey, and it can blow up in your face.

O'HAGAN: Did it compromise your sense of his courage?

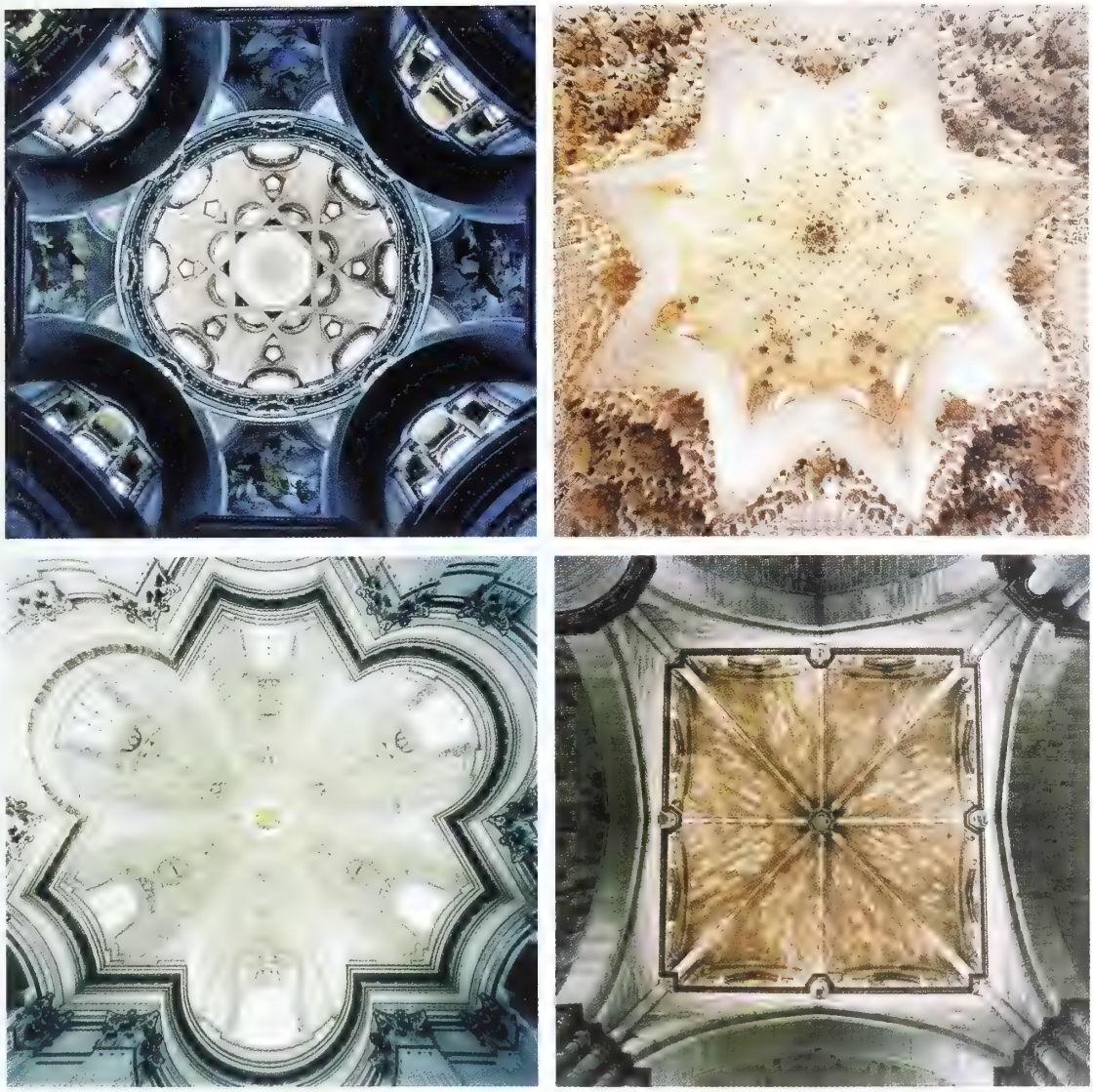
MAILER: I hated to think that his death might do that. I came up with a thesis: Hemingway had learned early in life that the closer he came to daring death the healthier it was for him. He saw that as the great medicine, to dare to engage in a nearness to death. And so I had this notion that night after night when he was alone, after he said goodnight to Mary, Hemingway would go to his bedroom and he'd put his thumb on the shotgun trigger and put the barrel in his mouth and squeeze down on the trigger a little bit, and—trembling, shaking—he'd try to see how close he could come without having the thing go off. On the final night he went too far. That to me made more sense than him just deciding to blow it all to bits. However, it's nothing but a theory. The fact of the matter is that Hemingway committed suicide.

O'HAGAN: Might it be said, in any event, that writing is a sort of self-annihilation?

MAILER: It uses you profoundly. There's simply less of you after you finish a book, which is why writers can be so absolutely enraged at cruel criticisms that they feel are unfair. We feel we have killed ourselves once writing the book, and now they are seeking to kill us again for too little.

O'HAGAN: Let's talk about age, growing old, and let's be precise. How does the matter of growing old affect your vanity as a writer? There is perhaps nothing more damaging to one's vanity than the idea that the best years are behind one.

MAILER: The thing that makes old age powerful is objectivity. You end up with a keen sense



COURTESY JULIE SAUL GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

Clockwise from top left, "Dome #27002, San Lorenzo, Turin, Italy, 1996," "Dome #22302, Sala de los Abencerrajes, Alhambra, Granada, Spain, 1997," "Dome #40806, Catedral, Sigüenza, Spain, 2003," and "Dome #20106, Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, Rome, Italy, 1997," by David Stephenson, whose work is on view this month at Julie Saul Gallery, in New York City.

of what you still have as a writer, and also of what you don't have any longer. As you grow older, there's no reason why you can't be wiser as a novelist than you ever were before. You should know more about human nature every year of your life. Do you write about it quite as well or as brilliantly as you once did? No, not quite. You're down a peg or two there. It's a simple matter of brain damage and nothing else. The brain deteriorates. Why can't an old car do certain things a new car can do? You have to take that for granted. You wouldn't beat on an old car and say, You betrayed me! The good thing is you know every noise in that old car.

O'HAGAN: It was suggested to me that a certain senior American novelist went to see another senior American novelist at the twilight of the latter's life and said to him, Enough now, no more writing.

MAILER: He said to him don't write anymore?

O'HAGAN: Yes. It's one of those stories you hear in New York. If it happened, one might think of it as an act of love. One great and elegant swordsman disarming another.

MAILER: No, I can't believe it. I'll tell you, if anyone ever came to me with that, I'd say, Kidding is kidding, but get your ass off my pillow.

O'HAGAN: Do you think America is a good place in which to practice the arts?

MAILER: When I was young it was marvelous for a writer. It's the reason we have so many good writers in America—most of our literature had not yet been written. English novelists had all the major eighteenth- and nineteenth-century geniuses to deal with and go beyond. What did we have to go beyond? A few great writers, Melville and Hawthorne. The list is very short. For us, the field was wide open. Now we're beleaguered. The movies were bad enough, though American novelists always felt a certain superiority to what was happening in Hollywood. You weren't learning more about human nature from films, you were just being entertained—at some cost to your ability to learn a little more about why we're here, which I think is one of the remaining huge questions. Now people grow up with television, which has an element within it that is absolutely inimical to serious reading, and that is the commercial. Anytime you're interested in a narrative, you know it's going to be interrupted every seven to ten minutes, which will shatter any concentration. Kids watch television and lose all interest in sustained narrative. As a novelist, I really feel I'm one of the elders of a dying craft. It once was an art, and now it's down to being a craft and that craft is going to go. The answer to your question is this: America is no longer a good place to be a novelist, and once it was a wonderful place.

O'HAGAN: Do you still stand by your essay "The White Negro"?

MAILER: I stand by it in that I'm sure there are any number of people—particularly young men—who lead their lives according to the quality of their orgasm. They find a chick who gives them a greater orgasm than another chick, and that's what they follow, that's their idea of love. And who's to say they're wrong?

O'HAGAN: "Marriage is a workable institution," says the narrator in your new book, "especially for dreadful people."

MAILER: The devil was speaking. That's not me.

O'HAGAN: As you prefer. But I still wonder if your marriages have made you a better novelist.

MAILER: Every wife is a culture, and you enter deep into another culture, one that's not your own, and you learn an awful lot from it. And given that marriage is not always a comfortable institution, you chafe in that culture. Suppose you spend ten years of your life in France, and you finally decide to leave. You wouldn't for the rest of your life say, I hate France. You'd say, France has an awful lot to offer. I have my differences with it, but I'm happy I spent ten years in France. Women don't like arguments like that because they consider them denigrating. Oh, here's this man who took my youth and enjoyed me to the hilt and then took off. That's not the way it is. Men are aged quite as much by marriage as women.

[Testimonials]

SHE STILL BELONGED TO HIM

From interviews conducted by the United Nations Population Fund for its recent report The Dynamics of Honor Killings in Turkey.

The boy was only seventeen at the time and the girl about eleven. He assaulted and raped her. Then, thinking he had killed her, he buried her. Her friends found her. The boy was sentenced to fourteen years in jail. After a while, the girl got well. The boy's family went to the girl's family and said, "We will accept your girl as a bride, but you have to withdraw your case against our son so he can get out of prison." The girl's family thought, Who will want to marry her when she gets older anyway? So they withdrew their case. Now the two of them are married. —female, twenty-two

If your wife sleeps with someone else, what can you do? Our traditions do not allow us to tolerate such things. One cannot control himself. You will kill both of them. A man lives for his honor and his dignity. —male, forty-four

The husband went to his father-in-law and said, "Look here, your daughter is pregnant. What does she deserve?" He answered, "This woman deserves to be killed. Whatever you say, I'm on your side." Then they sent the girl to her grave and covered everything up. The lover remained alive. This time, the husband's family killed the man. Then nobody talked about it. The issue was closed. —female, forty-two

Nobody would say hello to this man. He greeted everybody, but no one responded. Why? Because there was such gossip about his wife, yet the man still walked with dignity. But dignity is impossible for him now. He did not kill his wife and clean his honor. —female, thirty

They cut her nose as an example to others. Since she degraded their honor, they would also belittle her. My husband would do the same thing to me. He wouldn't show any mercy.
—female, twenty-nine

The woman was divorced, and she had relationships with other men. People started to provoke her son. The son killed his mother's lover. I was in the room when the police interrogated him. They were praising him, saying, "Good for you. Here, have a cigarette, have a cup of tea."
—male, thirty



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Seven men raped one girl. One of them loved the girl, and when they were together, he was not very careful, so she lost her virginity. The boy, not wanting to carry the responsibility alone, brought over his friends and fooled her into thinking that even if she was with them, she still belonged to him. But afterward, when the girl expected to be married, the boy's family said the girl had been raped by seven men so she was not suitable for their family. They gave money to the girl's family so they would not sue their son. They solved the whole problem with money. —male, twenty-one

My eldest sister ran away with a man. The man's family was not appropriate for us, so we took my sister back and gave her to our aunt's son. Our women are weak with respect to love. There is almost no woman who can't be deceived.
—male, fifty-four

The girl was pregnant with the child of a poor peasant working on her father's land as a wage laborer. When the family learned about it, they tried to make the girl lose the baby by pressing on her belly, but they didn't succeed. If she had lost it, they would have made her marry a relative to cover everything up, but now everything was visible. The girl's father was a strong tribal leader. He wouldn't give the hand of his daughter to a peasant. The man was killed by the girl's brothers. The family also wanted to kill the girl, but she found a way to escape. They are still looking for her.
—male, fifty-five

[Apology]

REHABILITATION

By Daniil Kharms, from a June 10, 1941, notebook entry included in Today I Wrote Nothing, *published this month by The Overlook Press. Kharms, born in 1905, was a Russian poet and performer who died of starvation in 1942 while incarcerated on suspicion of anti-Soviet activities. Translated from the Russian by Matvei Yankelevich.*

Not to toot my own horn, but when Volodya hit me in the ear and spat at my forehead, I grabbed him such that he won't likely forget it. Only later did I beat him with the Primus stove, and it was already evening when I beat him with the clothes iron. Therefore his death was not at all sudden. That I had already cut off his leg in the daytime is no evidence at all. He was still alive then. I killed Andryusha only out of inertia, and I can't blame myself one bit for that. Why did Andryusha and Elizaveta Antonovna get in my way? There was no reason for them to jump out from behind the door. I am accused of being bloodthirsty. They say I drank blood. I did indeed lap up the spots and puddles of blood—but it's a natural human urge to destroy the traces of one's crime, however petty. While we're on it, I did not rape Elizaveta Antonovna. First of all, she was not a virgin anymore, and, secondly, I was dealing with a corpse, so she has no cause for complaint. What of it if she was just about to give birth? Didn't I drag out the child? It's not my fault he wasn't long for the world. It wasn't me who tore his head off—the cause of that was his skinny neck. He was not created for this life. It's true that I smeared their dog all over the floor with my boot. But isn't it cynical to accuse me of the murder of a dog when, one could say, three human lives were annihilated? Well, all right: in all of this (I do agree) a certain cruelty on my part can be discerned. But to consider it a crime that I squatted and defecated on my victims—that is, if you'll excuse me, absurd. Defecation is a natural urge, and thus not a criminal act. So I understand the apprehensions of my defense, but I still hope for a complete acquittal.

[Prophecy]

THE WRITERS IN THE SILOS

By Heidi Julavits, published in Creative Nonfiction: 31 *as part of its forum "Writing and Publishing in 2025 and Beyond." Julavits is co-editor of* The Believer *and the author of three novels, including, most recently,* The Uses of Enchantment.

It requires neither imagination nor acumen to predict that our current conglomerating, lowest-common-denominator, demographically targeted publishing industry will soon achieve its streamlined apotheosis—a single, worldwide, ExxonMobil-owned literary empire offering a list of seven books twice per year. The lists for these two seasons—Holiday Gifts and Beach—will each include one of the following: a Dickensianly sprawling Antarctic thriller; a faux-intellectual, faux-experimental novel packaged with enticingly gimmicky swag (such as a French Existentialist pashmina); a World War II historical novel wherein one or more ex-Nazis,



n of Study Room with Books, Desk and Window (Two Parts), *from The Freud Cycle, by Robert Longo, whose work was shown last* ıg *at Galerie Hans Mayer in Düsseldorf, Germany.*

in the flash-forward sections, live as kindly sausage-makers or residually evil schoolteachers; a winningly bitchy PTA tell-all, written by an overeducated mother of multiple-birth ADD children living in a suburb of eco-friendly prefabs; a spiritual-conversion-after-brush-with-Ebola memoir; an inspiring life-lesson book, written by a long-shot gay pro-life female minority ex-Klan presidential hopeful; and a "quick fire" cookbook for people with intimidatingly professional kitchens and no time, inclination, or skills to cook in them. Books will be compiled by a team of content providers; "the author" will be represented in photos and on tour by genuinely attractive people. Blurbs will be supplied by eBay sellers with the highest approval ratings.

This, we all know, is the inevitable future, but while many have doomily predicted the death of literary culture as a byproduct of this future, few have wrestled with the possibility that deaths—actual human fatalities—will result. Indeed, in this not so distant and inevitable future, people will begin to sicken, and the weaker among them will perish. Initially, a batch of *E. coli*–tainted produce will be fingered as the culprit, but the contagion will eventually be determined to have emanated from a most innocuous source: books. The sick and the deceased, the investigation will show, each read two or more books published during the ExxonMobil Holiday Gifts '25 season. A team of crack scientists in hazmat suits will convene in Houston's Astrodome with box upon box of ExxonMobil text product. While their tests will prove inconclusive—Was the literary DNA of books so tampered with that a viral mutation was unwittingly released? Have terrorists finally perfected the Text Bioweapon, thereby rendering all acts of reading potentially fatal?—the consumer panic will result in a conclusive cultural shift. ExxonMobil's book sales will drop to nearly nothing. In a public-relations recovery attempt, ExxonMobil will assemble the hundreds of content providers who constitute its "authors" for an Inquisition-style trial. But because all work is emailed from afar and hybridized in a central editing location, it will prove impossible to track the source of the con-

tagion, and the content providers will be released without so much as a scapegoat to justify their travel costs.

Suddenly, there will be no new books. Shockingly, this will sadden people and make them yearn for a golden literary era none of them experienced. The actual writers, those few still kicking around, will alight from their surprisingly swank hovels (not writing will have served them well). At first, these writers—mostly buffed, androgynous sorts—will be spotted at farmers'-market stalls, selling clipped sheaves of laser printouts beside the cider-doughnut lady. They will shake your hand, these writers. They will promise that their literary wares are the product of a single, careful mind, unmutated by mass production and untainted by viral collaboration, and since these writers are plain-looking people, even downright unattractive and badly dressed, they will seem instantly more believable and less evil than the glossy actor-authors of recent memory. Soon a slogan will attach itself to this phenomenon—READ LOCALLY—and the new AgriCultural movement will emerge. Writers will begin to form allegiances with small farmers, and every small farm soon will have its own writer. The farmer and the writer will decide that mutual dependency and market diversification are the keys to survival. When the writer produces a less than stellar product, he will be buttressed by egg sales; when the farmer has a poor strawberry yield, he will be buttressed by the writer's pure and homey creative output.

Of course, the success of this system will lead farms to merge, and writers will begin to work in greater numbers on larger farms, and eventually people from afar will want to read the works of writers whose hands they cannot personally shake, and so the inevitable human impulse to slake all desires and improve efficiency (and thus profit) will mean that by the dawn of the next millennium, we'll be right back where we are today. But for a few decades at least—just before the seas rise above the writers' silos and drown us—oh, what a golden age of literature there will be.

[Innovation]

THE HANDMAID'S TOOL

From questions and answers posted on the website of the LongPen, a device invented by Canadian author Margaret Atwood that allows an author to sign books from a remote location using a magnetic pen attached to a computer.

Where did the idea come from?

As I was whizzing around the U.S. on yet another book tour, getting up at four in the morning to catch planes, doing two cities a day, eating the Pringle food object out of the minibar at night as I crawled around on the hotel-room floor, too tired even to phone room service, I thought, "There must be a better way of doing this." With LongPen, the author could make "appearances" in different countries all in one day. The in-store book signing would be enhanced. You could have an event with three different authors: a big one, a medium one, and a local one, in the same store on the same afternoon, one after the other.

How can you have a meaningful exchange with a robot that does signatures?

The LongPen device has interactive image and voice, as well as the ability to sign. The author will be there, in real time. So the exchange is with the author, not the signing device. The device merely places the signature and message on the book page. And the reader for whom the book is being signed can get a video clip of the interaction—what he or she said, what the author said. In fact, it's quite possible that the screen exchange will be more personal than what exists now.

[Fiction]

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AFRICA

By Abdourahman A. Waberi, from a novel excerpted in the Spring issue of The Literary Review. *It will be published in English next year by the University of Nebraska Press. The book opens with "a brief account of the origins of our [African] prosperity and the reasons that have thrown the Caucasians onto the paths of exile." Translated from the French by David and Nicole Ball.*

Now comes the season when leaves have little cracks around the edges, flowers wither, days grow significantly shorter, and the air becomes mild and wet. People rub their hands and say, "Good, it's getting cooler!"

The rain is here. The first mud. The Caucasians are turning over the soil of the yam fields in rhythm. All of them deep in mud. Same step, same sweat. The marsh birds in the Nile estuary count and recount themselves before migrating to the southern tip of the continent, much sunnier this time of year. A fog thick as the fog in Mombasa drops onto the flat country but spares the outskirts of Asmara for the moment. You gulp down your papaya juice as you watch the light gaining on the darkness through the picture window.

With his cap on his head and a bag in his hand, he appeared, one humid afternoon, at the same time as big, woolly storm clouds. He stationed himself there, diagonally opposite the house. Said nothing to anyone. Might not speak the language of the country. Doesn't want to, perhaps. They say he came out from behind the abandoned factory over near the railroad tracks that go off into the rapeseed fields and the blazing yellow of the alfalfa. They say he comes from very far away. He's the one who got off the bus. Who took the wrong line on a stormy evening. Who's been hanging around here ever since. Who's surrounding himself with mystery. Who lives in silence, a silence from God knows where. He's the one who's trying to draw something in the dust with fingers long as eagle feathers. Who hiccups like someone who's had too much to drink.

We rub our eyes. We wonder, we are a bit worried. We know the people in this neighborhood, more or less. They have an address, a face, and a name—unlike him. With his head buried in his shoulders, he looks at his feet. Then he readjusts his cap, pulls himself up, and walks away, proudly. With the confidence of someone wearing an embroidered silk fez. He won't get far. We'll find him in the same spot, or lying on the bench at the bus stop. Is this the end of the road for him? If he died, he would be buried the same day, according to the custom of our lands. Borders are not for crossing, they're meant for very short stays. Fluid thread, human smears.

The man in the dirty cap has bulging red eyes, skin rough as an elephant's. And when he tries to open his mouth, sadness drowns his eyes. Nothing in common with the junk sellers who send old, dilapidated hippos and ancient used kudus to Europe. Nothing to do with the watchmen and apostles of the sects rapidly multiplying everywhere, playing on old fears, vying with one another in proclaiming the advent of a new era. The man without a shadow doesn't do that kind of thing. Not him. The mare of his desires has flown away without a whinny, sucked into other pastures. He whips the silence alone. It's a coat cut to measure for him. He recalls earlier times, when there still

[Hypothesis]

THE RED AND THE BLACK

From "Concerning Arms Shipments into Mississippi," a June 1965 Ku Klux Klan memorandum obtained in May by the Clarion-Ledger.

1. Last summer, a traveling salesman observed the following: At night a number of cars towing tandem trailers, driven by Negro gentlemen, heading from the coast in the direction of central Mississippi. The Negroes were young and "modern"—neatly dressed with closely cut hairstyles. The trailers were closed and locked with padlocks. The observer thought this was peculiar, because Negroes moving furniture and household belongings would not have a sealed trailer but an open one with pots and pans hanging everywhere.

2. A large amount of supplies, tools, and engine parts are being delivered to a Negro mechanic in Eupora. The Negro's business does not warrant the amount of equipment that he is receiving, and this equipment appears to be cases of rifles and ammunition. Also, this Negro is the president of the local NAACP.

3. A former employee of a laundromat in Jackson reported that she observed rifles and ammunition cases being taken to the top story of the building. Her husband reported the matter to the FBI, which went to investigate and found nothing at all. He is of the opinion that someone in the FBI informed people in advance. His wife is positive she saw a known Communist going to and from the laundromat on a number of occasions.

4. A gentleman reports that while visiting a friend at a fish-fertilizer company in Pascagoula, he went to look at a pogey boat. His friend explained that the boat was captained and crewed by Negroes, and that although the Negro captain had long been with the company, he was a day or two late every time he came in with a load of fish, and his boat was having more breakdowns than all the other boats.

These items, though disconnected, may not be coincidental. A very serious situation may be developing in Mississippi; namely, the Communists, by way of Russia or Cuba, are arming the Negroes for the purpose of effecting a Marxist revolution in the South.

was a place for him, over there. He's unshackled but lost in this urban dead end, once a mighty desert with its network of trails and its cohort of enchanting genies. He cracks his joints, feels the weight of his numb muscles, searches his surroundings in quest of a sign, vegetable or mineral, a gecko, a grain of millet, a roofing tile fallen with the last storm. He lives in this absence that is also his space, his identity card, his birth certificate. (The real one was purposely left in a slum in Yalta, or was it Königsberg?) His movements have neither beginning nor end.

One of these days he'll go back inside himself, into the other side of his body. With no thirst and no appetite, he will stay there forever on a sleeping bag of ashes, insomniac embers and chilling winds for companions. His eyes will get covered by an off-white veil reminiscent of the bloom on the purple grapes of Monastir. His skin will become extremely pale, his face crimson. Destiny will have played him like a violin.

The next day, the man in the cap is still rooted to the same spot. He's been looking at his feet for hours. He's alone with his talismans, his amulets, and his bristling chin. Speaking to him would be like speaking to an unplugged computer, you tell yourself, and besides, it may be a good thing he's keeping his mouth shut.

To the permanent dryness of their sky, people here have added miserly hearts and stingy speech. Stifling, strange, shaken by tears, that's what home is like for them. So goes life, around their houses at the edge of the desert, wedged between the garbage dump and the soccer field where the roar of the crowd rises on Saturday afternoons. Here, what you don't say is more important than what you say. The neighborhood simmers in prudery, prejudice, and stuffy insularity.

In living rooms, bedrooms, and above the beds, death invisibly expands and contracts its fleshless arms. Many are those who hole up inside for lack of faith in humanity. At least as many have bodies polluted by khat liquor, which dissolves the cells in a quicklime of ether and reduces them to deadly idleness. What will become of all that fresh energy, all those childhoods, all those sprouting lives, that young sap eager to rise? No animation or almost none in this pocket of green, except for the little electric car of the Federal Post Office coming and going, carrying the mail and African Express packages. More rarely gifts and flowers. The oasis dozes every single day, slowly sliding off. Soon it will be seized by the rigidity of death. We wish it a sound sleep.

[Pulp]

I KNOW WHAT YOU READ LAST SUMMER

By Ursula K. Le Guin, published in July, under the title "On Serious Literature," in Ansible, *an online science-fiction newsletter. Le Guin's novel* Powers *will be published this month by Harcourt. Ruth Franklin is a senior editor at* The New Republic. *Michael Chabon's novel* The Yiddish Policemen's Union *was published in May by HarperCollins. He won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize in fiction for* The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay. *This year the prize was awarded to Cormac McCarthy, for* The Road.

> Michael Chabon has spent considerable energy trying to drag the decaying corpse of genre fiction out of the shallow grave where writers of serious literature abandoned it.
>
> —Ruth Franklin, *Slate*, May 8

Something woke her in the night. Was it steps she heard, coming up the stairs—somebody in wet training shoes, climbing the stairs very slowly—but who? And why wet shoes? It hadn't rained. There, again, the heavy, soggy sound. But it hadn't rained for weeks, it was only sultry, the air close, with a cloying hint of mildew or rot, sweet rot, like very old finocchios, or perhaps liverwurst gone green. There, again—the slow, squelching, sucking steps, and the foul smell was stronger. Something was climbing her stairs, coming closer to her door. As she heard the click of heel bones that had broken through rotting flesh, she knew what it was. But it was dead, dead! Goddamn that Chabon, dragging it out of the grave where she and the other serious writers had buried it to save serious literature from its polluting touch, the horror of its blank, pustular face, the lifeless, meaningless glare of its decaying eyes! What did the fool think he was doing? Had he paid no attention at all to the endless rituals of the serious writers and their serious critics—the formal expulsion ceremonies, the repeated anathemata, the stakes driven over and over through the heart, the vitriolic sneers, the endless, solemn dances on the grave? Did he not want to preserve the virginity of Yaddo? Had he not even understood the importance of the distinction between sci-fi and counterfactual fiction? Could he not see that Cormac McCarthy—although everything in his book (except the wonderfully blatant use of an egregiously obscure vocabulary) was remarkably similar to a great many earlier works of science fiction about men crossing the country after a holocaust—could never under any circumstances be said to be a sci-fi writer, because Cormac McCarthy was a serious writer and so by definition incapable of lowering himself to com-

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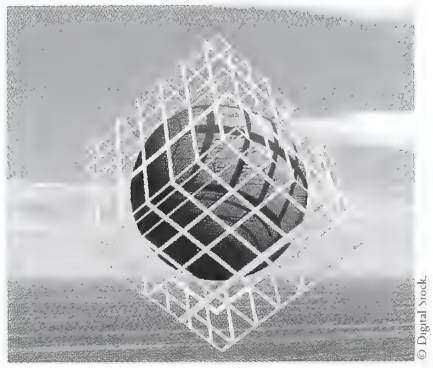
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non-mathematicians. He is Professor of Mathematics and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. Professor Starbird has won several teaching awards, most recently the 2007 Mathematical Association of America Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo National Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, which is limited to three recipients annually from the 27,000 members of the MAA.

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mit genre? Could it be that Chabon, just because some mad fools gave him a Pulitzer, had forgotten the sacred value of the word "mainstream"? No, she would not look at the thing that had squelched its way into her bedroom and stood over her, reeking of rocket fuel and kryptonite, creaking like an old mansion on the moors in a wuthering wind, its brain rotting like a pear from within, dripping little gray cells through its ears. But its call on her attention was, somehow, imperative, and as it stretched out its hand to her, she saw on one of the half-putrefied fingers a fiery golden ring. She moaned. How could they have buried it in such a shallow grave and then just walked away, abandoning it? "Dig it deeper, dig it deeper!" she had screamed, but they hadn't listened to her, and now where were they, all the other serious writers and critics, when she needed them? Where was her copy of *Ulysses*? All she had on her bedside table was a Philip Roth novel she had been using to prop up the reading lamp. She pulled the slender volume free and raised it up between her and the ghastly golem—but it was not enough. Not even Roth could save her. The monster laid its squamous hand on her, and the ring branded her like a burning coal. Genre breathed its corpse-breath in her face, and she was lost. She was defiled. She might as well be dead. She would never, ever get invited to write for *Granta* now.

[Transcript]

WHY DON'T YOU CHANGE YOUR LIFE?

From a recording presented as evidence in February at the murder trial of Michael LaSane. The forty-six-minute recording was made secretly on a microcassette by Kathleen Weinstein after her car was hijacked in Toms River, New Jersey, in 1996. LaSane, who was convicted of the carjacking and of murdering Weinstein, was sentenced to life in prison.

KATHLEEN WEINSTEIN: You're scared. You're running from something, but that doesn't got nothing to do with me.

MICHAEL LASANE: I can tie you up.

WEINSTEIN: How are you going to tie me up?

LASANE: With some rope.

WEINSTEIN: You've got a gun. How do I know that you're not going to kill me?

LASANE: I'll promise you.

WEINSTEIN: Show me you have a gun.

LASANE: Kathy, do you want me to use it?

WEINSTEIN: No.

LASANE: It's not like I'm goin' to let you see it.

WEINSTEIN: If you want to go somewhere, why don't you just drop me off?

LASANE: I don't know. Why don't we both just chill out? I told you, don't be scared.

WEINSTEIN: How can I not be scared? What if somebody grabbed you, pushed his hands over your mouth, forced himself in the car, told you he had a loaded gun, almost broke your jaw—wouldn't you be scared?

LASANE: You're just gonna have to—

WEINSTEIN: Trust you—

LASANE: I didn't say anything about trust.

WEINSTEIN: Why didn't you just push me out and take my car? What good am I gonna do you?

LASANE: It's not like you got hurt.

WEINSTEIN: You don't think we're here on this earth just for what happens materially, do you?

LASANE: Oh no.

WEINSTEIN: It's a bigger purpose.

LASANE: Oh yeah.

WEINSTEIN: But you're the one who controls what happens by the decisions you make. Why don't you just start all over again, not take the car, let me drive you somewhere. So you can be safe and so you don't have to be in trouble. If you leave me with my car, then you didn't take it.

LASANE: I understand that. Is this the book you're studying?

WEINSTEIN: Yeah. It's about motivation, about why people do what they do. And what is it that motivates you? You need a car, right? You want to get away in a car. You have your needs and your values, like Maslow's theory.

LASANE: Are you gonna show it to me?

WEINSTEIN: This is Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. It talks about self-actualization. See, down here is what you need. If you don't get your needs met, then it's gonna take you longer to get to self-respect, achievement, confidence, and finally up here, to self-fulfillment. That's the highest one.

LASANE: So, like drive, self-development?

WEINSTEIN: Mm-hmm. And you need faith and security before you're ready to be in a good relationship, and be in cultural activities, and not be in a gang. Were you ever part of a gang?

LASANE: Who is this Maslow?

WEINSTEIN: He's just a very well-known psychologist or philosopher. A common misconception about his theory is that one need must be highly satisfied before the next level of needs emerges. Did you have a bad childhood?

LASANE: Bad childhood.

WEINSTEIN: How bad was it? You weren't treated very good. That's for sure.

LASANE: Are you hungry?

WEINSTEIN: Victim of circumstance. Yeah.

LASANE: Want my soda?

WEINSTEIN: No, I think I'd be sick right now. I'm

too upset. You look to me like you're about thirteen—like you shouldn't even be driving.

LASANE: Seventeen.

WEINSTEIN: You know, my husband and I are set up to be foster parents. We signed up for classes.

LASANE: My brother is a foster child.

WEINSTEIN: My son's six, and I had four miscarriages. I tried to have kids, and it didn't work, so maybe we'll help some foster kids. I didn't have my son until I was thirty-nine, and then the older you get the harder it is to have kids.

LASANE: I want to be a parent someday.

WEINSTEIN: Listen, you've got to give something back. I grew up in a family with eleven kids, and my father was very strict. He beat me and my sisters and brothers.

LASANE: Where did you grow up?

WEINSTEIN: Staten Island.

LASANE: I lived in Alaska.

WEINSTEIN: Did you? What made you come here?

LASANE: I had no choice. My mom and my father were both in the Army.

WEINSTEIN: Why don't you change your life?

LASANE: Huh?

WEINSTEIN: Did you finish high school? Did you go to college or anything? Or think about it?

LASANE: Oh yeah, I thought about it. I just learned you had to have a certain something to get in.

WEINSTEIN: You can get in if you work hard enough. I'll help you get in. What can I do to help you? What if I got you a plane ticket?

LASANE: What if?

WEINSTEIN: Yeah, right now. If you could have things be exactly like you wanted them to be right now, what would you do? You've got your whole life. I would do anything to go back and be seventeen and know what I know now. I'm a Christian.

LASANE: I am—

WEINSTEIN: A Christian? Then you need to pray and ask in your heart, ask God what He wants.

LASANE: I believe in God.

WEINSTEIN: But the thing is, if you don't exercise the choices that go along with that, then you are not going to be one of the people that Jesus takes with Him. Eternity is what counts.

LASANE: Maybe I know.

WEINSTEIN: You can have peace. You can. You can make a prayer to God and say, God, just let me start over. You got a girlfriend, Michael?

LASANE: Huh?

WEINSTEIN: Well, then why don't you make a plan? You'll have to feel committed to your goal, and a start is to believe in God.

LASANE: I do.

WEINSTEIN: But if you do, there are a lot of puzzle pieces and things He has happen.

LASANE: I've always been lucky in my life.

WEINSTEIN: Yeah? How come?

LASANE: Because I always took chances.

[Travelogue]

AUTONAUTS OF THE COSMOROUTE

By Julio Cortázar and his wife Carol Dunlop, from a memoir to be published in November by Archipelago Books. Cortázar, who emigrated from Argentina to Paris in 1951 and died in 1984, was the author of several novels, including Hopscotch. *The book documents their 480-mile trip in 1982 from Paris to Marseilles in a camper they called Fafner. Without exiting the highway, they stopped at each of the sixty-five rest areas on the route at a rate of two per day. Translated from the Spanish by Anne McLean.*

WHERE IT WILL BE SEEN THAT DEMONS DO NOT SLEEP

It's always like this: you gradually enter a zone of pleasure and security that dissipates the feeling of precariousness always latent on the street, in the car, out in the open, and in crowds. Maybe that's why—we should have kept it in mind—the Devil's attack is more horrible when it happens in the midst of celebration, when evil chooses to infiltrate good's territory and strike.

It happened shortly after we arrived, when we wanted to toast our first motel of the autoroute and looked in the minibar for the two ritual bottles of whiskey and ice cubes. I filled a glass for Carol, prepared mine, and we sat down to drink and smoke after the hot bath we'd so badly needed. When I tasted my whiskey, I knew instantly that I'd fallen for the old, oft-repeated trick. Only at that moment did I realize that my minibottle had opened easily, while Carol's had resisted as all properly sealed lids do. My drink was the same color as whiskey, but urine can be that color too.

I'm not a bad guy, I don't think, but I never deny myself a just revenge, even if it's only mental. I think it's possible simply to project a desire and somehow it will be fulfilled, just as Keats says in one of his letters that it's always good to make prophecies because they find a way of making themselves come true later. I thoroughly desired that the perpetrator of the prank would crash somewhere on the freeway, that his car would end up like Juan José Mosalini's bandonion when he wraps it around his knee on the last chord of a tango, and that the driver would not suffer any serious injuries. No serious injury, but later the doctors would diagnose an irreversible hypouricemia that meant he could piss only drop by drop, drop by drop, into one of those tiny sample bottles the doctors would need to analyze the laborious dose of urine daily and decide that in any case it was not Johnnie Walker Red Label.

Eight days on the freeway now.

No: the freeway is precisely what's lacking. For us it's nothing more than a background noise that habit reduces day by day, that we've effortlessly likened to an agreeable echo of the Caribbean Sea in Martinique or Guadeloupe. There are the same intervals of silence, the approximation and crescendo of the next break, that diastole and systole of a waving, breathing, sometimes unbearable resounding volume such as we've known on Martinique's beaches and in the rest areas.

So, as seems clearer and clearer, our expedition is first and foremost a navigation of this archipelago of parking lots. Little by little we become pleasantly convinced that our expedition is leading, like that of Columbus, toward a totally different outcome from what we expected. The admiral was looking for the Indies and we for Marseilles; he found the Antilles and we found Parkingland. For us, Parkingland is a world of liberty. If the rules of the game oblige us to explore two provinces per day, we're not going to leave the country because of that, and our duty does not deprive us of the feeling of doing whatever we like. The conduct of the Parkinglandians does nothing but multiply this feeling of liberty, because it must be said, alas, that the poor things proceed in a way that—while we hesitate to pour scorn on anyone—can only be classified as idiotic. One or two might carry in their hearts the seed of freedom, and then we regard them with respect, we're ready to strike up a dialogue, to lend a can opener or chat about the weather. But almost everyone comes into the parking lot looking like they have full bladders or empty stomachs, and these looks don't seem to be replacing intelligence or sensitivity. They pee, they eat (almost always standing up, almost always sandwiches), and flee as if the rest area were full of crocodiles and snakes. Do they suffer from Parkingson's disease?

OF THE TITANIC STRUGGLE THAT THE EXPLORERS UNLEASHED AGAINST AN ENEMY WHOSE WEAPONS ARE SILENCE AND PINCERS

We would never presume that this expedition, no matter how many risks and vicissitudes might arise, could be comparable to the one Werner Herzog imagined (or put into images) in *Aguirre: The Wrath of God*. Here there are no Indians or arrows dipped in curare, much less monkeys; there aren't even any Spaniards, only English people, followed closely by Germans and Belgians, apart from the natives who somehow give the impression of being washed away by this international deluge. The natives we meet in the rest areas don't seem like they could even discover a café in the Latin Quarter. Our slow advance from north to south proceeds without wicked ambushes, deadly traps, untimely appearances of leopards and serpents, or any other of the many calamities that drove Lope de Aguirre to kill everybody, including his daughter, before disappearing into the Orinoco, covered in mosquitoes and monkeys. Granted, but now maybe it is time to talk ants.

As everyone knows, the ant is a charming little creature when found meandering over a table or trying to scale your aunt's ankle. You'd have to be pretty despicable to take pleasure in tormenting an ant, who will bite only if you try to squeeze its head between your fingers. There is no one I appreciate more than an ant, paradigmatically laborious insect. The only problem is that, like Nazis and rock fans, ants never come alone but rather in overwhelming multitudes, and the charm of the individual dissolves into the horror of the brutish mass, exactly as happened to us last night when, as we were getting ready to rest in Fafner's warm and welcoming belly, we discovered that the industrious insects in question had climbed up the tires to invade every nook and cranny of the dragon, and that while 740 of them tried to finish off a stick of butter, several thousand proliferated beside the salami, the salted crackers, and the six bananas bought that very day with the intention of making a robust rice *a la cubana*.

I don't know if Carol let out the half-anguished, half-outraged cry that is standard in these cases, and whether I seconded it with one of those curses I've been famous for since way back when; I do know that we launched into a choreographed number next to which Fred Astaire's best would have seemed like inane stamping, and that in a few minutes we'd beat the hell out of the majority of the evil attackers. I hardly need add that as soon as we'd slipped into bed, we began to feel in regions rather prone to itching the pincers of five or six ants indignant to find we were dislodging them from the white steppe where they were wandering in full Siberian autosuggestion. Killing them was easy, but Carol, around three in the morning, discovered that along the plastic edging that bordered the little window beside the bed, the ants had initiated a procession that was perhaps religious but no less unsettling insofar as they were marching toward the part of the bed where we had our feet. Sweet and discreet as ever, Carol did not wake me; her sense of sacrifice combined with her insomnia made her spend two hours with one finger in the air, letting it fall gently upon each new ant that crossed the ledge, until the procession lost its mystic drive or she fell asleep. In the morning we found a few individuals who devoted themselves to tracing erratic hieroglyphics on the floor, ceiling, or pillows.

As you can see, the freeway is no bed of roses; had we not reacted in time, the police who circulate in the rest areas might have had the hor-



da VI, *by Luis E. Camejo, whose work was exhibited last year at the Havana Biennial.*

rendous surprise of finding our skeletons, not to mention the butter, entirely devoured.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF DREAMS ON THE FREEWAY

Accustomed as we are to telling each other our dreams as soon as we wake up or whenever they decide to release their flashbacks, we kept on doing so here without noticing conspicuous changes. But four or five days after leaving Paris, we started to feel a growing increase in acuity. We're dreaming ever less Rembrandt and ever more Van Eyck or Rogier van der Weiden. We wonder what can be causing this sometimes unbearable sharpening of our dreams. Among various hypotheses, we have to take into account the novelty of the stimuli: the presence, lights, and noises of trucks, as much in terms of the permanent traffic on the freeway as of their arrival, departure, and parking in the rest areas where Fafner shelters our sleep. We spend very little time on the freeway, as our dear reader knows, but once in the parking lots we begin to see and listen to the trucks that come, as do we, to rest awhile or spend the night. Strange ephemeral cities that form at night in some rest areas, where ten or twenty heavy-goods vehicles, not to mention cars with trailers or camper vans like Fafner, mingle license plates, languages, smells, and sounds from many countries. Enclosed in the capsule of Fafner, with his expandable canvas roof receiving the moving beams like a permanent magic-lantern game, while the mechanical noises are like the more articulated foreground of the continuous clamor of the freeway, what stimuli never before concentrated around us unleash this different activity in the dream theater? And why does this stimulation, unprecedented in our usual lives, outline so sharply the silhouettes of our dreams, why does it focus rather than blur them?

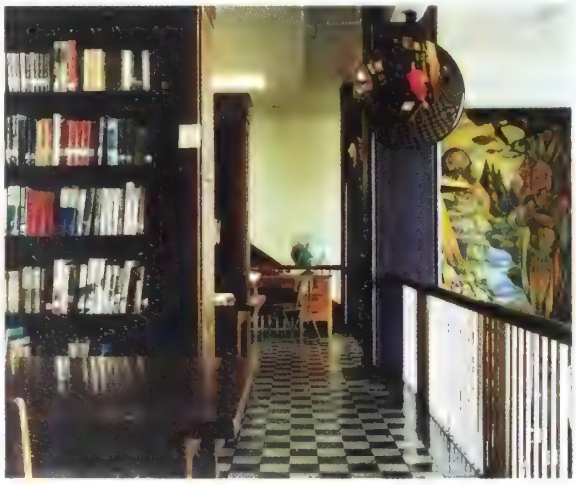
Unanswerable questions, but meanwhile we dream in a different way and we like it, we like it more and more even if we dream the horrors that befit any normal being. No need to add that as soon as we return to Paris we'll be attentive to what happens in the familiar atmosphere of our home; if dreams let us down, as we fear, we'll have to think up new expeditions. The world, after all, is full of rest areas where perhaps await dreams of such richness that they'll be worth all the outbound journeys and even, one of these days, a journey of no return. ■

SCHOOLHOUSE CROCK

Fifty years of blaming America's educational system for our stupidity

By Peter Schrag

In 1951, when historian Henry Steele Commager first observed that "no other people ever demanded so much of schools and of education as have the Americans," he couldn't have dreamed how much more would be demanded. Win the Cold War; beat the Germans and the Japanese in the battle for economic supremacy; outduel the Chinese and Indians in the training of scientists and engineers; Americanize millions of children not just from Southern and Eastern Europe, which Commager celebrated, but from a hundred Third World cultures he thought little about; make every child "proficient" in English and math; educate the blind, the mentally handicapped, and the emotionally disturbed to the same levels as all others; teach the evils of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and premarital sex; prepare all for college; teach immigrants in their native languages; teach driver's ed; feed lunch to poor children; entertain the community with Friday-night football and midwinter basketball; sponsor dances and fairs for the kids; and serve as the prime (and often the only) social-welfare agency for both children and parents.



Some of those things were on Commag[er's] Many others are responses to more rec[ent] mands and stresses, particularly the rapidl[y] ing gaps in e[ach] between th[e] rich and [the] everyone els[e] en the mand[ate] it any wond[er] so many Am[eri]cans think the s[chools] are lousy?

The wate[rshed] moment was O[cto]ber 4, 1957. [A] half-centur[y] when the S[oviet] launched Sp[utnik] the world' f[irst] Earth-orb[iting] satellite, thu[s] ing the U[nited] States into a[n] That event more than any other began the p[ro]cess of *nationalizing* the task of the schools. Phy[sicist] Edward Teller, the patron saint of the H-b[omb] called it a defeat worse than the attack on P[earl] Harbor. With it, declared the best-selli[ng] ence-fiction novelist Arthur C. Clarke, "the[Unit]ed States became a second rate power." It w[as] Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson of Was[hing]ton (one of the nation's preeminent Cold W[ar] riors, sometimes known as "the Senator fr[om] Boeing"), "a devastating blow to the prest[ige] the United States."

The long shadow of Sputnik injected n[ew] gency into America's embryonic space[-]

Peter Schrag is the author, most recently, of Final Test: The Battle for Adequacy in America's Schools *(New [Y]ork) and* California: America's High-Stakes Experiment *(University of California Press).*

Photographs by [Su]

—more money for rockets and satellites, stablishment of NASA—but its greatest ct was on our educational system. Sputnik orced prior attacks on the alleged academic iness of American schools, and especially ild-centered progressive education, and it ed the beginning of a half-century of uninpted school-reform efforts that continue to day. If the country couldn't shape up its ols and produce more, and better, scientists engineers, the Russians, who were said to raining scientists and technical personnel pace four times our own," would beat our is out. In this way the Sputnik crisis bold, even sanctified, the belief that the ols were the answer to virtually every major rican problem and added maintenance of the nation's international supremacy to the agenda.

rulent criticism of the schools and demands ll-purpose educational remedies were hardw, even in 1957. For half a century progresshad battled traditionalists over matters of l rearing and schoolhouse instruction. In , four years before Sputnik, historian Arthur or Jr. of the University of Illinois had pubd his influential *Educational Wastelands: The eat from Learning in Our Public Schools*. In came Rudolf Flesch's best-selling attack on ressive education, *Why Johnny Can't Read*; to day, there are those on the fringe who assert progressive education was a socialist plot to e Americans stupid.

putnik greatly intensified the attacks. "Our y great race with the Soviet Union," said Admiral Hyman Rickover, the "father" of atomic submarine, in 1959, "is in educa. Unless we in the United States can solve educational problems, we will have difficul solving our other problems. . . . I searched nd wide in Russia and Poland and could find a single drum majorette. Nor did I of a single school where the principal was x–athletic coach." It also sparked the pas of NDEA, the National Defense Educa Act, in 1958, which called for $900 mil (then a sizable sum) to beef up math, nce, and foreign-language teaching in erican schools and colleges—it would, said senator, "add vastly to the strength and se y of the United States in the Cold War." ess there was "a true revival of learning," Senator J. William Fulbright, the country ld be headed for "national disaster." Thus in the escalating federalization of kinderen through twelfth-grade education.

he upshot of Sputnik and the various eco ic, political, and social crises of the succeedears—real or perceived—was (and is) an uninterrupted string of American educational reforms, what Stanford University's Larry Cuban and David Tyack have called a "tinkering toward utopia." The list is long: new curricula like the SMSG (School Mathematics Study Group) program (i.e., the "new" math), PSSC (Physical Sciences Study Committee) physics, plus similar programs in chemistry, biology, and the social sciences, nearly all devised by academics at Harvard and MIT in the late 1950s and early 1960s; compensatory education programs for disadvantaged students; Head Start; magnet schools; "computer-assisted instruction"; "open schools"; team teaching; class-size reduction; new programs for special education; bilingualism and Ebonics; calls for bigger high schools; calls for smaller high schools; more homework; less homework; laptops for all students; constructivist math; Discovery Learning; Direct Instruction; merit pay; voucher plans; "Whole School Reform"; Success for All; charter schools; KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools; Edison Schools; Accelerated Schools; school accountability; adequate yearly progress; high-stakes testing for promotion; exit exams; plus an alphabet soup of similar programs. Most Americans have probably been exposed to at least three or four of them.

Along the way there have been endless battles over the power of teachers' unions, creationism and "intelligent design," "secular humanism," sex education, and, of course, school prayer. And there have been countless declarations from politicians, official commissions, business organizations, foundations, editorialists, and academics—what John Mockler, a leading California education consultant, has called "the schools suck industry"—that our schools are failing us. Most prominent among them was the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, issued by the Reagan Administration's National Commission on Excellence in Education, which warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity." Americans had better shape up their schools, it said, or the Germans and the Japanese would beat our economic brains out:

> If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.

But if the time and the source of the competition were different, the national crisis metaphors were, and to this day remain, precisely the same.

A lot of the touted reforms of the past half-century have been discredited, abandoned, and forgotten; according to Chester Finn, who was himself an assistant secretary of education during the Reagan Administration, many were "irrelevant and probably harmful." Others are currently in their third or fourth incarnation. What's almost certain is that many of the things educators, scholars, and politicians thought they knew for sure in the 1950s—such as the wisdom of former Harvard president James Bryant Conant's 1958 recommendation that small high schools be consolidated because they couldn't offer a rich enough program—have since been turned on their head. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has spent millions to create *small* schools, because small schools are friendlier and give students, principals, and teachers a chance to know one another. Phonics, which replaced "look-say" readers like the "Dick and Jane" series, was replaced by an emphasis on "whole language," only to be replaced again by phonics. The certainty that additional university course credits and advanced degrees made for better teachers, an idea on which billions have been spent, has been followed by the belief that they make no difference at all.

In the 1960s, following the precedent set by the NDEA, came NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the testing program now referred to as "the nation's report card." In 1965 came the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Title I, which has directed billions of dollars to school districts with large numbers of low-income children. This was eventually followed, in 1980, by the creation of a separate Department of Education. In 1989 came the first President Bush's America 2000 Program (under Bill Clinton it became Goals 2000), which, among other things, called for a 90 percent graduation rate, and vowed that U.S. students would be first in the world in math and science by the end of the century. No Child Left Behind (NCLB), President George W. Bush's even more ambitious education act, was signed in early 2002. It requires all students to be tested in the elementary grades, requires schools to get all children to "proficiency" in math and reading by 2013–14, and, in theory, was supposed to have put a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by 2005–6. Schools

SCORES FOR EACH MAJOR ETHNIC SUBGROUP HAVE INCREASED, BUT T
ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN WHITES AND OTHERS, AS ALMOST EVERYBO
KNOWS, HASN'T COME CLOSE TO BEING ELIMINAT

didn't meet the goals would be sanctioned
increasingly severe measures, including, i
treme cases, replacement of the entire staf

Has any of this made a difference? The
answer falls somewhere between not sur
not much. American schools do try to se
far wider spectrum of students now with
programs and, in the view of some exp
though hardly all, are (probably) better
they were fifty years ago, but they are cert
not good enough, nor are they as go
schools abroad. "Europe and Asia are g
ahead," says Jack Jennings, the former st
rector of the House Education and Labor C
mittee who now heads the Washington-
Center on Education Policy. "The U.S. i
maintaining its national advantage." Som
percent of Americans, according to a G
poll in 2006, would give the nation's p
schools a C or a D. Only 22 percent give

an A or a B. Tellingly, however, they rate
own children's schools much more highly.

But most of the wise men and women i
field will inevitably give you more ambiguity
clarity. Even the most knowledgeable among t
aren't sure what's worked and what hasn't. N
given the radically changed demographic
school enrollment, the increasing percentag
minorities and immigrant children who
school speaking little or no English, the h
tech global economy and escalating deman
higher levels of education, the evolving co
sition of the workforce and the vastly greater
portunities for women in professions other
teaching or nursing—is it an easy question t
swer. The nation, as Ellen Lagemann, the for
dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Ed
tion, says, has altered its conception of the purp
of schools: "Now we're trying to tak
students to high levels."

In the late 1950s American schools were
segregated, and a lot of children in the So
forced to work in the fields, didn't go to sch
at all between April and October. Just ten
before Sputnik, nine black children, protec
by federal troops and braving the jeers
taunts of a white mob, integrated Central H
School in Little Rock, Arkansas. There w
still good industrial jobs at that time for se
skilled workers. The word "dropout" was har

l. As recently as 1972, nearly 78 percent of ıation's schoolchildren were non-Hispanic e; by 2004 that level was at 57 percent. e 1972 the percentage of Latino children in rican schools has more than tripled, to 20 nt. The nation, as Chester Finn says, now a steeper hill to climb. We've always done at the top. . . . Now we're trying to expand op." Many more students are now taking anced Placement and other high-level es. But, Finn wonders, "are we cheapening

scores for seventeen-year-olds have remained flat, despite the large increase, since 1992, in the number of high school students taking advanced classes and earning higher grades.* At the same time, scores for each major ethnic subgroup—whites, blacks, and Hispanics—have increased. It's the growing percentages of black and Hispanic students in U.S. schools, most of whom do less well academically, that have retarded the growth in *average* scores. As a consequence, the achievement gap between whites and others has



currency?" Even at mid-level colleges like ie in the California State University sys-, half of all entering freshmen, having preably completed the required college-prep ses in high school, nonetheless are made ake remedial instruction in English or h or both.

ı the three-plus decades since the beginning AEP, one of the few available hard (and supdly objective) indicators of academic achieve-t, math and reading scores for nine- and thir--year-olds have increased. On the other hand, been reduced, but, as almost everybody knows, it hasn't come close to being eliminated. "We're doing better on college prep," Stanford's Larry Cuban says, "but in the lowest quartile the situation is no better."

A roughly similar picture emerges from the decline in the scores on the SAT, the entrance exam required by most of the nation's selective

* *To be fair, NAEP, which tests only small samples of students and is distinctly low-stakes—meaning that students have no incentive to do well—may be itself an imperfect measure.*

colleges, which show a small gain in math since the mid-1960s but a large drop in reading. Given the changing composition of the college-bound population and thus the growing number of students who don't come from the social and academic elites, the significance of those numbers is also subject to dispute. What may be more troubling is that the *absolute* number of high-scoring students, those with scores over 600 (out of a possible 800) on the verbal part of the test, declined by nearly 25 percent from 1973 to 1990. (Because in 1995 the test was "recentered"—by lowering the scoring scale so that it corresponds to the performance of today's students—more recent comparisons aren't possible.) That decline is often cited even by educational centrists like Christopher Cross, the former director of the Council for Basic Education and a former assistant U.S. secretary of education, as evidence that American schools haven't gotten any better. As for the federal programs, he says, "By most reports federal grants have not made great progress in solving the problems that prompted them."

Conservatives like economist Eric Har
at the Hoover Institution and Frederick H
the American Enterprise Institute are abs
ly certain that despite large new investm
our schools are no better and probably
Like other conservatives, Hess cites in
tional data showing that while the nati
tripled its educational spending since 196
spends more money per pupil on schools
Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, I
Japan, and many other nations,

> The United States ranked fifteenth amo
> thirty-one countries that participated in the O
> [Organisation for Economic Co-operation a
> velopment] 2000 Program for Internationa
> dent Assessment (PISA) reading exam. Ir



Iceland, and New Zealand were among those t
outperformed us while spending far less per pu
The results in math are equally disquieting: on
1999 Trends in International Mathematics and S
ence Study, the United States ranked nineteenth
thirty-eight participating countries. Most troubl
is that America's standing actually deteriorates as s
dents spend more time in school.

nushek, in a similar vein, argues that al-
gh the United States once had a quantitative
ntage over its economic competitors—a
r percentage of people going to and gradu-
from college—even that advantage is evap-
ng. He also contends that reduction of class
in the United States, which ranks high
g both parents and teachers on the list of de-
e school policies, and which has seen class-
s go from an average of twenty-seven pupils
50 to seventeen in the 1990s, has produced
no discernible improvement in
educational achievement.

Amid the cacophony of values and objectives
rent in the many tasks that our schools are
charged with, these negative verdicts are
y unanimous. Richard Rothstein, of the lib-
Economic Policy Institute, insists that "things
gotten much better than they used to be."
e are pre- and after-school programs, small-
sses, and better special-education programs.
, of course, "the schools are integrated, at

IE MILITARY-STYLE READING AND MATH DRILLS PROMPTED BY PRESIDENT SH'S NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND PROGRAM HAVE PUSHED OUT HISTORY, MUSIC, ART, D PHYS ED, AND MAY IN FACT BE DESTROYING AMERICAN SCHOOLS

in theory. Claims that they're the same are
wrong." But those are measures of input, not
ut. And, like many other liberals, Rothstein
sure that the last few rounds of test-based ac-
tability reforms, Bush's mandatory No Child
Behind test program in particular, haven't
e things worse. Because the military-style
ing and math drills that NCLB has prompt-
re pushing out the teaching of history, mu-
rt, and phys ed, Rothstein says, NCLB may
ct be "destroying American schools."
iane Ravitch, author of a critical history of
ressive education and perhaps the nation's
most educational historian, has arrived at a
lar conclusion by a different route. She's
ain that children learn more now than she
in Houston a half-century ago: "I'm aston-
d at what fourth graders learn." But she
says that "in history and literature we've
e backwards." In the Fifties "teachers had a
mon idea of literature," and classroom
ing anthologies contained a lot more clas-
literature. Now "that's gone." This same
ook has prompted E. D. Hirsch, of the
versity of Virginia, to create a whole net-
k of "core knowledge" schools that empha-
the teaching of names, dates, places, ideas,
other common cultural referents of edu-
d people.

What makes the likelihood of success, and the measurement of outcomes, even less certain is that these reforms tend to come in cycles of contradictory trends: The initial post-Sputnik attention was on elites—the training of scientists and engineers. By the mid-1960s the emphasis had shifted to poor and minority children—to equality of educational opportunity, ethnic and cultural identity, and self-esteem. Then, with the economic readjustments of the late 1970s and 1980s—principally away from rust-belt industries toward high tech—the focus again turned to national competitiveness. These changes, most dictated by state legislatures responding to what they saw as yet another crisis, have famously generated an endemic cynicism among teachers and administrators—(a) a certainty that they understand schools better than the politicians do and (b) a near-certainty that whatever the latest passion in Albany or Sacramento, this, too, shall pass. "Schools are conserving forces," says Henry Levin, a professor at Columbia Teachers College, who's tried a lot of reforming himself. "They tend to conserve existing practices. Even in charter schools, parents choose traditional stuff." The longest stretch on earth, it is sometimes said, is the distance between education policymakers and what goes on in the heads of kids.

Now the warnings that followed Sputnik and rang through *A Nation at Risk* are ringing again—this time not about the Soviets, the Germans, or the Japanese but about the Chinese and the Indians. A report issued in February 2007 by two strange bedfellows, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the liberal Center for American Progress, again talks about a "looming educational crisis that—if not addressed promptly and effectively—risks undermining the economic prosperity of future generations of Americans." The condition of our public-education system is for a vast majority of our students, according to John Podesta, Bill Clinton's last chief of staff, who heads the Center for American Progress, "intolerable." Sounding like a classic conservative, and citing a familiar "steady decline in the performance of American students in relation to students in other countries," he concludes that everything the country has done over the prior half-century has come to naught:

> Years of well-intentioned—but ultimately insufficient—reforms have been unable to improve overall academic performance in the nation's schools. . . .
>
> Despite steps to increase per pupil spending, decrease student-teacher ratios, strengthen standards and recruit a better-prepared teaching force, student test scores have remained stubbornly flat over the past 35 years. By international standards, the U.S. spends far more than other nations on education—and has smaller class sizes—yet receives far less value in terms of educational outcomes.

In fact, a lot of such international comparisons lack context and are therefore debatable. Because of the relative paucity of social services in this country—as opposed to the universal preschool, health care, and similar generous children's services provided in other developed nations—our schools are forced to serve as a fallback social-service system for millions of American children. In addition to teaching a far greater diversity of children than is the case in other nations, our educational workers must address countless medical, social, and family problems before they can even begin to think about teaching math, reading, or history. A recent United Nations Children's Fund report ranked the United States next to last among twenty-one wealthy nations in such criteria as material well-being, health and safety, and family well-being. And as Gerald Bracey, the nation's leading critic of the "schools are failing" critics, points out, tests that make American schools look bad tend to get a lot of attention; when the results are positive, they are generally ignored. Bracey also argues that many of the students tested in other nations on the widely cited TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study) were two to three years older than the American high schoolers with whom they were compared and had often—at age twenty or twenty-one—taken more physics and math courses. As should be self-evident, "proficiency" is an arbitrary term.

None of this means that American students are doing particularly well. Against the large and growing number of technically trained people being produced in the Far East, even marginally better public schools may not be good enough. And considering that a rapidly increasing proportion of American students are coming from disadvantaged populations, and that we're not yet training enough people to replace the skills of the baby boomers [illegible] they retire, as they soon will, the picture [illegible] from rosy.

Yet if the reformist Sturm und Drang [illegible] past fifty years should have taught us any le[illegible] it's that, when the assignment is national [illegible] fense or beating foreign economic competi[illegible] the schools are but one factor in our arsenal—[illegible] not nearly the most important. We won [illegible] Cold War despite our supposedly lousy sch[illegible] Our economy prospered while the Japanese [illegible] tered a decade-long depression despite the[illegible] warnings of *A Nation at Risk*. As nearly all [illegible] ible research has demonstrated, social, econ[illegible] ic, and family background is a far more impo[illegible] predictor of academic success tha[illegible] the schools themselves.

Schools do make a difference. The st[illegible] of the Hoover Institution's Hanushek and [illegible] colleagues in the Texas schools, and [illegible] William Sanders and June Rivers in Tenne[illegible]

MONEY IS HARDLY THE ISSUE: FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS NEVER BE[illegible] HIGHER. BUT NEITHER HAS THE NUMBER OF TASKS CHARGED TO THE SCHOO[illegible] WHICH, IN THE HOPE OF GETTING *MORE* MONEY, THEY HAVE EAGERLY TAKEN [illegible]

show that when disadvantaged students h[illegible] good teachers they gain, in Sanders's [illegible] Rivers's words, "an extreme advantage in te[illegible] of attaining higher levels of achievement." [illegible] students with such teachers for five years [illegible] more, Hanushek says, and they can overco[illegible] their handicaps. Nonetheless, it's no se[illegible] that schools serving primarily poor and mi[illegible] ty kids have fewer qualified teachers, fe[illegible] counselors, shabbier facilities, and inadequ[illegible] materials. The dropout rates at these sch[illegible] are unacceptably high, and college attenda[illegible] rates of African-American and Latino stude[illegible] are disproportionately low. College complet[illegible] rates are even lower. Nor is the importance [illegible] extra-school conditions to academic succes[illegible] legitimate excuse for unprepared teachers a[illegible] administrative indifference.

But the lesson still holds. More so than o[illegible] er modern societies—and after a generation [illegible] conservative attacks on our social-welfare p[illegible] grams—the United States tends to act as if [illegible] schools can do it all. Yet children who co[illegible] to school hungry, or with vision problems, [illegible] with toothaches, and who pass through me[illegible] streets to get there, can't possibly be expect[illegible] to learn as well as healthy kids. Kids witho[illegible] engaged parents, or with only one functio[illegible] parent (if that), are almost certain to be l[illegible] engaged in the classroom. Money is hardly t[illegible]

: funding for public schools has never higher. But neither has the number of charged to the schools, which, in the of getting even more money, they have ly taken on.

1848, Horace Mann, articulating an es- al element of the nation's newly Roman- ırsuit of perfection, declared that educa- "does better than to disarm the poor of hostility toward the rich; it prevents be- ɔoor." For many contemporary Ameri- conservatives particularly, schools have

an echo of *A Nation at Risk*, warned about the competition from low-wage Indian and Chinese engineers and called for the development in American students of "a deep vein of creativity that is constantly renewing itself." To achieve the required "high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history and the arts [that] will be indispensable for everything that comes after for most members of the workforce," the report recommended that we tear the existing school system apart and have school districts



ıis spirit become the surrogate for all oth- ɔcial programs: progressive taxation, the ed- income-tax credit, subsidized housing, ersal health insurance, community ser- s, and so on. If there is want, change the ɔols. If there is unrest or inequality, ıge the schools. And if the schools can't he job, create a new structure that will: a ket in which schools—private and public, lar and religious—might be free to com- for customers.

December of 2006, the New Commission he Skills of the American Workforce, a p that included a number of former highly ed federal officials, issued a report that, in

hire independent private contractors—"many of them limited liability corporations owned and run by teachers"—to administer the schools and give parents and students choices among the different schools. In effect this would constitute a complete privatization of American education.

The feasibility of the proposal is as dubious as its logic. "What secret," asks Ravitch, "do private organizations have that has not been shared with the nation's educators? What is the logical connection between privatization and quality education?" Neither Bestor nor Rickover nor even Reagan's "excellence commission" ever suggested privatizing the schools, but

perhaps more troubling is the commission's absolute confidence that if only the schools were run right we would be able to compete, through sheer "creative work," with nations whose wages, even for high-tech jobs, are a fifth of what they are here. In that respect, this report is no different from every other warning we have received these past fifty years.

• • •

> The concepts of progressive decline that have dominated discourse about educational reform distort the actual development of the educational enterprise over time. The ahistorical nature of most current reform arguments results in both a magnification of present defects in relation to the past and an understatement of the difficulty of changing the system. Policy talk about the schools has moved in cycles of gloomy assessments . . . and overconfident solutions, producing incoherent guidance in actual reform practice.
>
> —Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*

It is the fashion among ed-policy wonks to complain that American parents are too satisfied with their children's schools, and the work their children do, even as these kids lag far behind students abroad, whose parents are much less satisfied with both the schools and the schoolwork. But is it just possible that, notwithstanding the mad suburban scramble to place their children in prestigious colleges (much of which also has more to do with social status than with high academic achievement), American parents might understand something that the politicians and businesspeople seemingly do not: that academic achievement is only one element in the future success of their children, that the good life depends on much more than high grades?

To say that the large and growing gaps between the very rich and everyone else in this country are simply the result of uneven academic achievement is just plain fatuous. Even as the incomes of the very rich soared, the median inflation-adjusted household income earned by college graduates was lower in 2005 than it had been five years earlier. According to census data, even people with professional degrees were earning less in 2005 than they were in the early 1990s. As Berkeley economist Brad DeLong points out in the web journal *The Economist's View*,

> The big rise in inequality in the U.S. since 1980 has been overwhelmingly concentrated among the top 1 percent income earners. . . . I tend to attribute this pattern to a rise in the premium salary earned by the well-educated in return for the skills their formal education taught them. Such a rise in the education premium would produce a smoother rise in relative incomes among the winning tenth of the income distribution.

College graduates, it should be obvious, earn more on average than high school dropouts. But that doesn't begin to explain our rapidly growing income disparity, particularly the gap between the top 1 percent and everybody else, or why that gap is so much larger in the United States than it is in Europe. "Wage inequality," as Jared Bernstein and Larry Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute wrote, "is driven by a slew of factors, of which differences in education are but one." In 1967, according to a recent study by MIT economists Frank Levy and Peter Temin, first-year Wall Street lawyers earned 14 percent more than individuals with other degrees; by 2006, the difference had increased to 135 percent. Additional schooling cannot account for such a change; nor can the pervasive belief that education is birth medicine to every American right and wrong—a belief long embraced by Clinton Democrats as readily as by Reagan and Bush Republicans—be defended by the honest person as anything more than a distracting illusion.

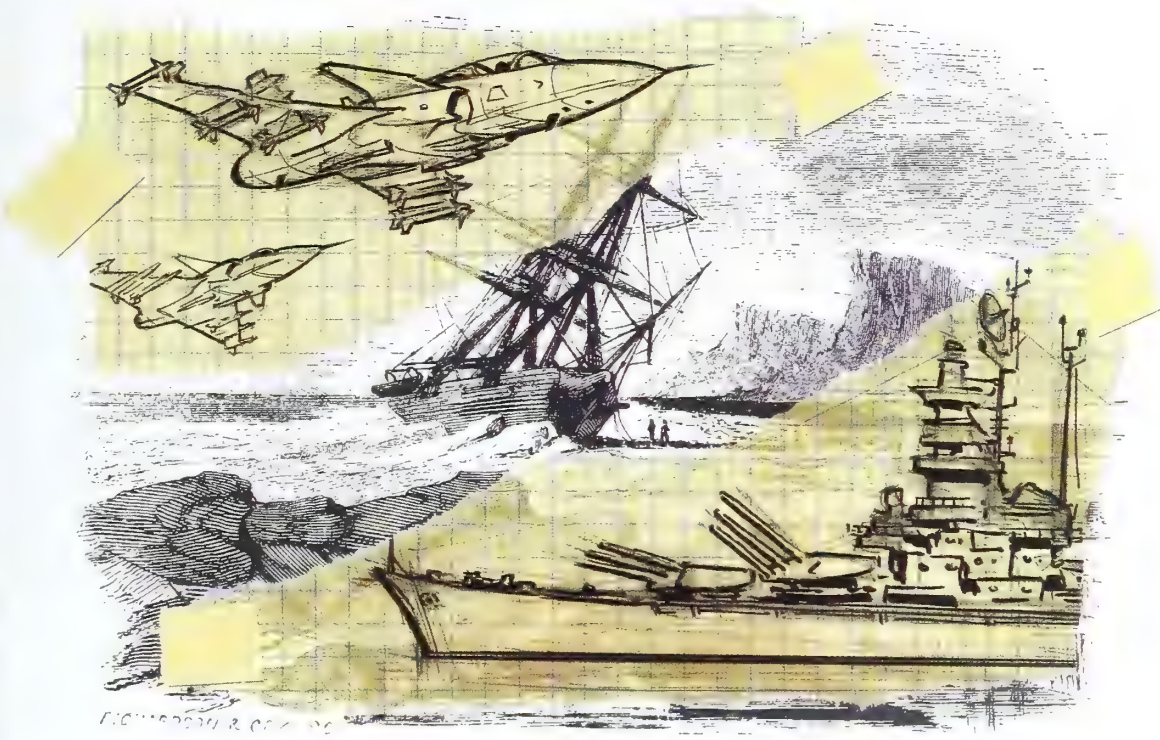
Both left and right have been obsessed by the centrality of schools, the former because it is beholden to the teachers' unions and, in many case, honestly wants more resources for schools, the latter because of its dislike of social-welfare programs and, lately, its privatization agenda. That's also led to profound confusion not only about the quality of the schools—which has blessed us with all those interminable arguments about high-stakes testing programs—but about what their basic objectives should be. As Tyack and Cuban put it, "the public schools need to do a better job of teaching students to think, not just in order (supposedly) to restore an ailing economy but to serve broad civic purposes as well."

Americans are far too hung up on the notion that in some past golden age the schools were better. When was there ever such an age? The people who blame the schools for today's ills were themselves products of schools that were under attack for similar failings a couple of generations ago. Are the schools good enough? Of course not. But then, they never were. And as long as we expect schools to solve every cultural and economic challenge the United States faces in an ever-evolving world, as long as we continue to tinker with them as if they were training facilities for warriors in cold wars still to come, they never will be. Perhaps it is time we thought of schools as places where our children might simply learn something—not just for our benefit, not just for the nation's, but for their own.

COLD RUSH

The coming fight for the melting north

By McKenzie Funk



On the first full day of the sovereignty operation, the captain slowed the frigate and we took out the machine guns and sprayed the Northwest Passage with bullets. It felt pretty good. The sea was foggy, and the unpolluted water turned as we polluted it with lead. There was no life we could see, and few waves. The wind was cold, the Arctic Ocean was lab green. There wasn't any ice. But if there had been ice, we would have shot it.

McKenzie Funk's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"I Was a Chinese Internet Addict," appeared in the March 2007 issue.*

The guns were C7s—American M16s but rechristened, like many Canadian weapons, with a patriotic "C"—and most of the shooters were camo-clad teenagers from Quebec's celebrated 22e Regiment, who are known as the Vandoos, from *vingt deux* ("twenty-two"). The Vandoos lined up three in a row on the back deck, each of them held in place by a sturdy navy man, and fired away in the spirit of joint-operations camaraderie. They went from semi-automatic to fully automatic and shot more. They switched to pistols and then shotguns and shot until the deck was littered with shells. When they finished, they kicked the shells into the sea. There were journalists on board, and the Arctic was warming, and the Canadians—a peaceful people, a people who take immense pride in their own decency—were trying their hardest to seem violent, dangerous, prepared. They were baring their teeth.

The frigate was named the *Montréal*. It was the length of two city blocks and painted warship gray, packed with two-dozen torpedoes and nearly 250 people. There were sailors, Vandoos, and Mounties. There were Canadian wire-service reporters and photographers

Illustrations by Christopher Serra. Engravings from "Who Discovered the Northwest Passage?" a story in the September 1854 issue of *Harper's Magazine*

sent at least two in-flight magazines. There were Inuit dignitaries and observers from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the pseudo-governmental Inuit corporation that had negotiated the 1999 creation of its people's own 800,000-square-mile territory, Nunavut. Our cruise speed was 15.5 knots. Our fuel stores were at 125 percent. With diesel taking the place of water in the auxiliary tanks, our showers were capped at two minutes. We were steaming north, farther north than the Canadian Navy had gone in decades.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper himself had made the long journey to Iqaluit, the former U.S. military base that is now the capital of Nunavut, to kick off the operation. In the previous months he had sparred publicly with the American ambassador over ownership of the Northwest Passage, the storied, still mostly frozen shipping route from the Pacific to the Atlantic across the top of the continent. The military had been referring to the passage as the Canadian Internal Waters, and Harper had promised to build new heavy icebreakers, a new Arctic warfare and training center, a new Arctic deepwater port, and a new Arctic network of undersea sensors and aerial drones. Now, as the north melted and Arctic shipping promised to become viable well before the century was up, he was putting boots on the ice.

There had been sovereignty operations before, including Exercise Narwhal Ranger in 2002 and Operation Nunalivut (Inuktitut for "the land is ours") in 2006. For Exercise Frozen Beaver, in 2005, Canadian troops helicoptered to Hans Island—a kidney-shaped, half-square-mile rock near Greenland claimed by both Denmark and Canada—and planted a supposedly windproof steel flag and flagpole that the wind toppled almost immediately. They also confiscated a Danish flag, which the government then delivered to Denmark's ambassador in Ottawa. Despite assurances by a spokesman that Danish pastries would still be served in the cafeteria of Canada's foreign affairs ministry, Denmark nearly sent a warship to Hans in retaliation.

Today's was the largest such operation to date, however, and it was occurring on the hundredth anniversary of the Northwest Passage's first crossing (which was by a Norwegian, though no one dwelled on that). Its name was Operation Lancaster, and its stated goal was to "project a credible size military force over a broad area of the Eastern Arctic." It would last twelve days in all. The *Montréal* would lead a flotilla of two navy warships and two coast guard icebreakers into Lancaster Sound, the eastern entrance of the passage, and patrol back and forth as the skies buzzed with Aurora surveillance planes and Griffon helicopters. Meanwhile, the Vandoos—accompanied by Inuit reservists, there to ensure that no one was eaten by polar bears—would take the smaller ships to shore and set up observation posts on both sides of the sound. To the north, on rocky Devon Island, would be Observation Post 1. To the south, on glaciated Bylot Island and the adjacent Borden Peninsula, would be Observation Posts 2 and 3. The troops would hold the high ground for most of a week, scanning the Northwest Passage for invaders.

THE CANADIAN TROOPS WOULD HOLD THE HIGH GROUND FOR MOST OF A WEEK, SCANNING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE FOR INVADERS

But all of this would be preceded by a bold display of Canadian resolve: a mock interdiction. After watching the machine guns fire and the Maple Leaf flag flutter, I strolled up to the bridge and stood next to the *Montréal*'s head officer, Commander Paul Dempsey. He and his crew had donned green helmets and green flak jackets. The radio crackled, and a Canadian approximation of the voice of a California surfer filled the bridge. It was the supposed captain of the *Killer Bee*, which in actuality was the *Goose Bay*, a 180-foot Canadian coastal-defense vessel that the war gamers had decided would be a rogue "American" merchant ship.

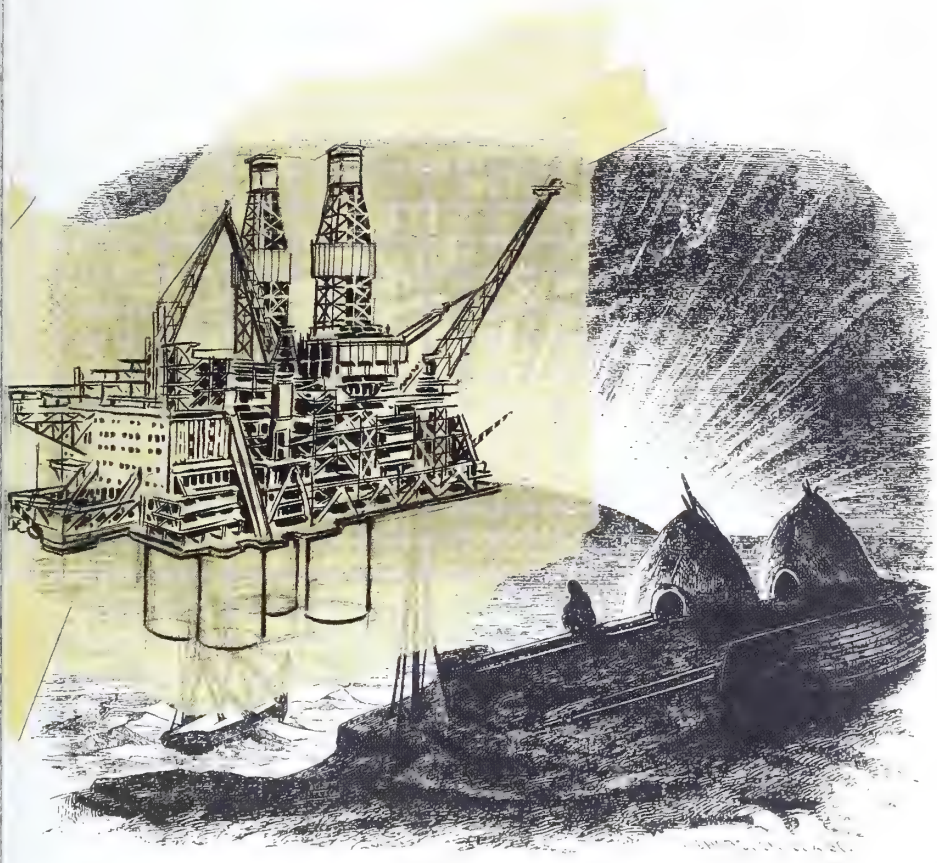
The *Killer Bee* was four miles away in the fog, sailing a course that would intersect with ours in an estimated fourteen minutes, forty-two seconds. It would not say where it was going. It would not say what was in its hold. "Merchant vessel *Killer Bee*, what is your cargo?" our radioman asked. T
is Warship 336. Again, what is
cargo?" The *Killer Bee*'s answers
brief, rude, American in their
save for the occasional slipup: "V
aboot forty miles off the coast, w
constitutes international waters
you sure you have the authority
questioning me out here? Can yo
tell me again why I'm being asked
questions? You guys are the alm
Canadian government, so I'm sur
can access this sort of inform
somewhere else."

Dempsey passed a message t
colonel running Operation Lanc
Christine Whitecross, asking for
ance to send over a boarding
and, if necessary, to initiate "disa
fire." The sailors on the bridge p
into the mist off our port side. W
formed the *Killer Bee* that we w
be boarding it, and its ca
replied that he wouldn't be
down with that." The en
churned. We began to clos
gap: 700 yards, 600 yards,
yards. The ship appeared, an
aimed our 50-caliber machin
at it. "Bullying your way ar
the ocean is not a way to fost
operation between our two count
the voice told us. Dempsey took
the radio, commanded the *Killer B*
remove all personnel from its
decks, and directed a barrage of
er fire 1,000 yards off its bow.
smell of gunpowder wafted thr
the bridge. The next barrage was
yards off the bow. Finally, our
millimeter cannon swiveled to
the *Killer Bee*. There were five
booms in quick succession, five pu
smoke, and then, seconds later, a s
round. The ocean in front of the *K*
Bee erupted. Its captain relente
thought Canada was a nation of pe
keepers," whined the faux-Ameri

For the next 500 miles, we
only water and fog and an occasi
glimpse of the chutes and pinna
of Baffin Island's peaks. It wasn't u
10:00 A.M. on the operation's fo
day that a much-awaited annou
ment came over the loudspeaker:
bergs ahead. We rushed to the port
deck where the officers normally g
ered to smoke. We were at seve
two degrees north, and there were t
of them: two- and three-hundred-

s that towered over the frigate. cebergs' walls were riven by small rfalls, and chunks of ice were g off into the sea. The bergs were ng south toward the Atlantic, d for warmer waters where they d soon melt into nothing. The Vandoos leaned over the railing and snapped photos.

his was the year that drought-d camels rampaged through a vil-n Australia, a manatee swam past



sea Piers in New York City's Hud-River, and the Netherlands an-nced that its famous Elfstedentocht kating race might have to be post-ed forever. Armadillos reached heast Arkansas. Wolves ate dogs laska. Fire consumed 50 million s of Siberia. Greenland lost a hun-l gigatons of ice. The Inuit got onditioning units. The polar bear ned toward the endangered-species India's Ghoramara Island was ly lost to the Bay of Bengal, Papua Guinea's Malasiga village was tly lost to the Solomon Sea, and Alaska's Shishmaref village decided to evacuate before being lost to the Chukchi Sea. Canadian scientists reported that the forty-square-mile Ayles ice shelf had broken off Ellesmere Island and formed a rapidly melting island of its own. A European satellite showed a temporary crack in the ice pack leading from northern Russia all the way to the North Pole. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration announced that last winter was the warmest since it began keeping records, which was in 1880. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announced that eleven of the last twelve years were the warmest in human history.

This was the year that we began to believe in global warming—not in the abstract science of the prospect, which most people could already passively accept, but in the fact that there was money in it, power to be won and lost, scraps to tussle over, profit to be wrung from crisis. We stopped wondering whether climate change was real and started grappling with the consequences.

In April the issue of global warming went before the United Nations Security Council. The discussion was led by Britain, which houses its climate-change office, the Hadley Centre, in its Ministry of Defence, and which had recently asked its chief economist, Sir Nicholas Stern, to conduct a review of global warming's likely effects on world markets. Stern's findings were dire: The cost of unchecked greenhouse-gas emissions will be the equivalent of losing 5 percent or more of global GDP a year, every year, forever. We are on the brink of an upheaval on the scale of the two world wars and the Great Depression.

Tropical Africa is expected to see a 9 to 14 percent rise in exposure to malaria by around 2050, a 5 to 10 percent drop in crop yields, and up to 250 million more people affected by drought. Nearly 200 million South and East Asians will be threatened by sea-level rises resulting from collapsing ice sheets, and nearly a trillion dollars of regional GDP could be lost. In South America maize production will fall by 15 percent in fifty years and the desiccating Amazon will be pushed toward collapse, its forest replaced by savanna.

"What makes wars start?" British foreign minister Margaret Beckett asked the Security Council. "Fights over water. Changing patterns of rainfall. Fights over food production, land use."

But the future did not seem universally dark. At the margins of the crisis, some saw opportunity, especially in the wealthy nations that are causing climate change in the first place. In the short term in Europe, Russia, Canada, and America, rain will still fall, growing seasons will extend, agriculture will expand, and wheat, rice, and soybean crops will be bolstered by the "carbon-dioxide fertilization" effect: The higher the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide, which is a key building block for plant growth, the higher the yields.

Farther north, in the Arctic, the "ice albedo feedback" effect—the fact that sea ice, which reflects 85 to 90 percent of solar radiation, melts to become seawater, which absorbs all but 10 percent—is expected to keep temperatures climbing at twice the current global rate. This will speed up the melt, and the melt may speed up northern economies. More than a fifth of the world's undiscovered oil and liquid gas—175 billion barrels, according to one estimate—is thought to be hiding in the Arctic. The less ice there is, the more oil there is within reach. Meanwhile, the Northwest Passage, along with its counterpart across the top of Russia, the Northeast Passage, could someday cut 5,000 miles out of the shipping route between northern Europe and East Asia, 10,000 miles out of the trip around Cape Horn for ships too large for the Panama or Suez Canal, and a thousand dollars out of the cost—$1,500—of sending a container to Japan.

The $49 million grossed by Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* may have been global warming's first true financial windfall, but a new mentality is taking hold. Reports by Citigroup, UBS, and Lehman Brothers have recently advised investors on how to wring a buck out of global tailspin. Citigroup's report, "Climatic Consequences: Investment Implications of a Changing Climate," released in January, is particularly helpful. It highlights investment opportunities at seventy-four companies in twenty-one industries in eighteen countries, including Aguas de Barcelona (drought-afflicted Spain's "leader in water supply"), Monsanto (drought-resistant crops), and John Deere (more tractors needed in America as drought wipes out Australia's wheat exports). It shows a graph of the six top natural-gas-producing countries in the world. Four of them—Russia, the United States, Canada, and Norway—are Arctic nations.



My bunkmate on the *Montréal* was a man I'll call Sergeant Strong, a tall Canadian in his forties who had a thick brown mustache and a runner's build and wore a dark beret with a gold crest. He had killed people in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and places he would not specify, and every time I pulled out my camera, he stepped out of view. He did not want me to use his real name. He was a patriot and a lifelong soldier, and recently he'd become a reporter for *Canadian Army News*. He roamed the ship with a pair of Nikons slung from his shoulders. We first met on the back deck, near the helicopter hangar, and he immediately asked who I thought owned the Northwest Passage. I said I wasn't sure. "It's ours," he told me. "It's fucking ours." Then he shared his solution for the territorial dispute over Hans Island. "We should just nuke Denmark," he said. He was kidding, of course. Canada has no nuclear weapons. His real solution was more typically Canadian, and it revealed him as a believer in the basic boots-on-th premise of Operation Lancaster put a trailer on the island," h "Two guys, two months at a time them TVs and VCRs. And guess Problem solved."

The sergeant had a partner, M Corporal Bradley, a giant vide pher with whatever the opposit Napoleon complex is. Bradley's tache was gray and waxed into d barbs, and he wore noise-can headphones even when he w filming. He walked like a hunch through the bowels of the *Mont* constantly hitting his head on d ways. The three of us, it turned would be part of the landing t forming Observation Post 1 on D Island. We would be joining e Vandoos and four Inuit—reser outfitted with red cotton hoodies known as Canadian Rangers—t ashore at Dundas Harbor, a sha fjord where the Royal Canad Mounted Police had manned its outpost in the 1920s. Back then, constables had been lost to s inflicted gunshots to the head: first, a suicide; the second, an ap ent walrus-hunting mishap.

wo days before our "insertion," h is what everyone insisted on call- ur mission to Devon, we were al- d to take a tour of the *Montréal*'s ations room—a cave of damp air lit by radar and sonar screens and low lights. Inside we met the ship's rwater-warfare officer. "Could you ct a passing submarine?" I asked. ould not. The ship couldn't drop ir rays in the water without ΓO permission. "They'd wonder we were asking," he said. "And if id detect something we'd say, 'Hey, ound your sub,' and the Americans ld say, 'No you didn't,' and we'd Yes we did.' It's a touchy subject." ed about the relative size of the navies. "The Americans, jeez, I t count how many ships they have. y have 60,000 people working in folk alone. On one base. That's as y as we have in our entire ed forces. They have massive s. Massive. And we're obvi- y, you know, small." Our tour le interjected: "But we can ch above our weight class." officer agreed. "Yeah, we ch above our weight class." ne deck below the ops room the lower-ranks mess, and I went e one afternoon to hear Commis- er Ann Meekitjuk Hanson, the for- head of Nunavut, address the ps. She told them about her child- d speaking only Inuktitut, her forced cation to Toronto for schooling, her Canadianized life in journalism politics. "I have to disabuse south- rs of their igloo notions," she said, d explain that there's more to us drumming and throat singing." A or named Roberts, one of perhaps black people on the entire ship, d how climate change was affecting Inuit way of life. The commission- aid that autumn was getting no- ably later, and that they were hav- difficulties forecasting weather and conditions; now there were only six ons rather than the traditional eight. showed us slides of her homeland put a cassette into a boom box to some throat-singing music for us. fter Commissioner Hanson fin- d explaining how her culture was ng wiped out, I walked down the and found Sergeant Strong in our mess, once again promoting his plan for Hans Island. "It could be something as simple as putting a couple of guys up there with a trailer," he told a reporter from one of the in-flight magazines. "How much would that cost? The problem would just go away."

Last October, I traveled to Vancouver to meet Michael Byers, the former director of Duke University's Canadian Studies Program and an expert on Canadian security and sovereignty. Byers, who is a young-looking forty years old and has two days' worth of beard every day, had recently returned home, surrendering his U.S. green card to a border guard in a burst of patriotism. He had taken a position at the University of British Columbia, and I was invited to sit in on his graduate seminar on climate change, a ten-person class held in a corner room with tall windows looking out on tall fir trees. When I walked in fifteen minutes late, a lanky student named Ryder McKeown was delivering a PowerPoint presentation called "Climate Change and National Security." He wore jeans and glasses and Puma sneakers that happened to be red, white, and blue.

"WE SHOULD JUST NUKE DENMARK," HE SAID. HE WAS KIDDING, OF COURSE. CANADA HAS NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

"Given the choice between starving and raiding," one of McKeown's slides read, "people raid." He wasn't talking about refugees from the tropics—at least not just them. The United States has a worsening water shortage, he said, and Canada has 20 percent of the world's freshwater. He described "fantastic schemes" to export it across the border in bulk, including one proposal to divert Canadian rivers to run southward rather than northward. In another plan, fjords in British Columbia would be dammed at one end and filled with freshwater; tankers would arrive, top up, and chug south to Los Angeles. "We have it," he said. "They want it."

Byers jumped in. "We are talking about 300 million people with the world's largest military and with a desperate need for water," he said, "and to some degree the constraints of international law will fade into the background. But luckily water conservation is much cheaper than enormous engineering projects. They'll find it hard to justify the expense."

The discussion turned to the Northwest Passage, where the United States has twice enraged Canadian nationalists by sending ships through without asking permission. The 1969 voyage of the S.S. *Manhattan*, an ice-strengthened supertanker that tested the frozen route's viability for transporting North Slope oil (the verdict: not yet), led to 1970 legislation in the Canadian Parliament that asserted Ottawa's right to control Arctic traffic, which in turn led to failed eleventh-hour maneuvering to forestall the new law by Henry Kissinger and the U.S. State Department, then to a retaliatory cut in U.S. imports of Canadian oil. The 1985 crossing of the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* led to more uproar and the negotiation of an informal "don't ask, don't tell" policy: Before making any transits of the passage, the Coast Guard now notifies Canada (without exactly asking); Canada agrees never to tell its neighbor no. As the ice melts and the world's oil deposits dry up, it's a policy few believe will hold. American submarines already use the passage to travel between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and I had heard unprovable tales of Inuit hunters mistaking those subs for whales and shooting at them, only to have their bullets bounce off.

"We are talking about moving from a country that, in practical terms, had two coastlines, to one that now has three coastlines," Byers said. "And we're being told that our new third coastline isn't subject to full Canadian jurisdiction—that it's the wild, wild West." He said that drug smuggling, gun smuggling, illegal immigration, and environmental damage could go unchecked if Canada didn't take control.

McKeown suggested there was a deeper threat as well. As divisive as the Northwest Passage may be, he said, Canada and the United States are drawn together in times of crisis—not

pulled apart. He rattled off examples of cross border cooperation: the Permanent Joint Board on Defense in 1940, NATO in 1948, NORAD in 1958, the Smart Border Declaration in 2001. In the mid-1950s, the Distant Early Warning Line—fifty-eight Soviet-facing radar posts—was built with mostly American money on mostly Canadian land. If climate change is truly as disruptive as both world wars, might Canada be drawn into an inescapable embrace with America?

McKeown was running out of time, so he raced through his last slides, laying out a climate-change scenario designed to "stretch our way of thinking": First, rising seas flood Bangladesh, Mumbai, and Shanghai. Refugee applications then flood Canada. A terrorist group based in Canada soon attacks America. The United States closes its borders. In retaliation, Canada ceases water exports. But then, as immigrants sneak in from the Arctic and Russian and Chinese subs cruise the Northwest Passage, Canada asks for America's help. It offers unfettered access to its resources in return for security. "Canada," McKeown concluded, "remains an independent country in name only."

Byers let that sink in. "If we're in a Mad Max world, when things are increasingly dangerous and it's survival of the fittest," he said, "it's not implausible to argue that our future is bound to the United States." He was playing devil's advocate. It worked. The class erupted. "Integration is a slippery slope," said McKeown. A student on the far side of the room agreed. "We could lose our central-banking independence, our monetary independence, our social democratic Canadianism," he said. "Our sovereignty is us, right? Without it we lose independent policy all over the board."

"Has anyone here been to Puerto Rico?" Byers asked. "Is it part of the United States?" The students answered that it was a commonwealth, a protectorate. "They're American citizens—sort of—but they can't vote," one said. "They don't have minimum-wage standards," said another.

"There are a lot of people who support greater integration with the United States," Byers concluded, "and they're all under the assumption that we would become the next California—that we would become a
But someone once told me th
Canadians need to pay more atte
to Puerto Rico." A student si
across from me spoke up. "They
definitely never give us the vote
said. "They don't want thirty m
more Democrats."

The class burst into laughter,
was short-lived. "The United St
no longer a democracy at the fe
level," someone said, "and I don't
to see us becoming subjects of a
totalitarian military state. The
question is, What are our alternat
I think an alliance with Europe w
make a lot of sense for us." I w
minded of a Canadian radio co
some years ago in which listeners
challenged to come up with a na
al slogan equivalent to "as Americ
apple pie." The winning entry:
Canadian as possible
der the circumstances.

Our insertion onto Devon I
began with a frenzy of packing and
reading and sorting through foo
tions in the helicopter hangar. A
ladder was soon thrown over the si



Montréal, and we put on black life ts and climbed down to a Zodiac hat was pitching on six-foot seas. Vandoos' sergeant, Dany Saleh, first. The surprisingly graceful ey, all 300 or so pounds of him, last. We filled the front of the ıc with rucksacks and ration packs veapons, and then we zipped across ocean until the *Moncton*, a small hip just shorter than a hockey rink upposedly better than the *Montréal* ıdings, appeared out of the haze. caled its ladder and formed a buck- igade to unload the gear. The *cton* was homey—its crew consist- forty reservists—and so tight on that the Vandoos had to set up n the hallways. Most of its sailors as new to the Arctic as we were. known Devon Island only as the f NASA's Mars on Earth project, nich investigators attempt to live rocky, frigid, arid analogue to the Planet, and I was surprised by its ty when we approached the next It loomed large even from thirty s out, its glaciers pouring down desolate 3,000-foot peaks. The vas gone, the sun was high, and icebergs kept floating past. The water was milky, glacial. An Aurora surveillance plane appeared and made a triple pass above us, plumes of smoke trailing behind its four props.

We sailed in from the east, and as we turned the corner into the fjord, we were surprised by a ship sneaking up from the west: the Russian-flagged, Australian-chartered, 6,600-ton *Akademik Ioffe*. It was a tour boat. I recognized it from the watchman's picture book, in which its photo was sandwiched between images of Danish warships and surveillance aircraft. The *Ioffe*'s ice pilot radioed over. "Good afternoon, Warship 708, this is the *Akademik Ioffe*. We are a small passenger ship, an expedition ship. We have many Canadians—myself included—onboard." His voice had a slight tremor to it. "It looks like you'll be into Dundas Harbor before us, so we'll be sure to stay out of your way." The officers on the *Moncton* snickered and rolled their eyes, pleased at the fear they generated. "You're damn right," one said. "I can't believe he called us before we called him," said another. It was reminiscent of the confrontation with the *Killer Bee*, only this time with a real, albeit Canadian, foe.

Our warship surged past the tour boat and arced a dramatic right turn into the fjord. We then slowed to a crawl. Our fifty-year-old charts, it turned out, couldn't tell us how deep the harbor was, and the captain was worried that we might run aground. We took depth soundings and peered into the silty water. The charts said it was thirty feet deep. Our sonar said it was more than two hundred. Best to stay put. We dropped anchor a mile offshore and began the slow process of readying the Zodiacs. The *Akademik Ioffe* steamed past us and anchored a half-mile closer. As Sergeant Saleh and others put on orange survival suits and the crew of the *Moncton* put on baby-blue helmets, the *Ioffe* put boats in the water. "They're beating us!" someone yelled. A hundred tourists made it to shore before our dozen soldiers were off the ship.

The Canadian Forces reached the narrow, rocky beach just as the *Ioffe*'s tourists were finishing their stroll. The tourists were white-haired and frail and dressed in matching blue-and-yellow Gore-Tex jackets. They had paid as

eandwarm

It is what makes incubators, baby bottles and car seats possible. It is chemistry.

[illegible] $5,545 apiece to see the vast, empty Arctic. Cameras and binoculars hung from their necks. They seemed confused. The Vandoos shouldered their hundred-pound packs and struggled mightily up the beach, grunting, assault rifles in hand. They proceeded across the soggy tundra, their boots sinking into the mud with every step. One of the guides from the *Ioffe*, a man from Seattle with a bushy beard and a brown fedora, interrupted this long march to remind us to "leave no trace"—Devon's environment was fragile. Sergeant Strong looked at the American. "A lot of us have spent a lot of time in the north," he said. "We're actually here to protect it."

A month after visiting Michael Byers's class, I decided to travel to Washington, D.C., to see what Canada was so afraid of. I found a capital that was awakening to the security risks posed by global warming, and also awakening, perhaps, to the idea that northern riches could be ours—yet barely connecting the dots between the two. No one really seemed to think that Canada would get in our way. No one really seemed to think that it would come to blows. No one really seemed to think about Canada at all.

In the United States, studies linking global warming and security date at least to 2003, when futurist Peter Schwartz released a groundbreaking report commissioned by the Pentagon, "An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security." In 2004, the National Intelligence Council included global warming in its Global Briefing, a twice-a-decade look at future flashpoints. In early March of this year, Schwartz released a second report for an unnamed agency, and three days later a special committee on global warming was formed in the House. The Senate's Global Climate Change Security Oversight Act—legislation that would require the sixteen main intelligence agencies to produce a National Intelligence Estimate on the topic—was introduced later that month. The study "National Security and the Threat of Climate Change," produced by eleven retired generals and admirals assembled by the government-financed Center for Naval Analyses, was released a few weeks later. The Pentagon's fears, Schwartz told me, could be boiled down to a single word: Mogadishu. "Massive drought led to famine, which led to the collapse of Somalia, which led to the U.N. intervention, which led to the U.S. intervention, which led to a military disaster," he said. "They see a string of Mogadishus rolling off into the future."

The only Arctic link I dug up was an outdated website from an April 2001 Navy symposium, "Naval Operations in an Ice-Free Arctic." In a bakery on the west side of Farragut Square, I met Dennis Conlon, the former head of the Office of Naval Research's Arctic program and the organizer of the symposium. He told me that the fifty participants—military officers, civilian ice captains, scientists—had determined that sonar function would improve as the ice melted but that charts and GPS coverage would fall short, and that submarines would need to find a new place to hide. They role-played future conflicts: a fight over fishing rights in the Chuckchi Sea, a special-operations strike against "environmental terrorists" who had seized oil facilities in the Svalbard Archipelago, a "Freedom of Navigation Operation" to loosen Russia's grip on the Northeast Passage, which experts believe will become ice-free decades before the Northwest Passage. Yet by the time the symposium's report was ready, the Pentagon and the World Trade Center had been hit, and its findings were lost in the fog of 9/11. "We couldn't even brief the thing," Conlon said. He mentioned that he drives a Prius these days. He is also out of a job. The Navy, which spent in the neighborhood of $30 million a year on polar research in the mid-Nineties—when fears of a Soviet attack from the north were still fresh—phased out its Arctic program in 2003. But, Conlon told me, there was good news: a follow-up symposium would take place this summer.

In Washington, Canada experts were hard to find—a measure, perhaps, of Canada's status as a strategic non-entity. I lunched with two of the few—David Biette of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Christopher Sands of the Center for Strategic and International Studies—on back-to-back days, and I listened [illegible] each framed the dispute over the Northwest Passage as a dispute over freedom of navigation everywhere.

The United States, it turns out, does not disagree that the Northwest Passage runs through Canadian waters. Its [illegible] is that the passage is an international strait like Malacca, Gibraltar, Bab Mandeb, the Dardanelles, and the Bosporus—a waterway that should be open to container ships and oil tankers from all nations. The European Union shares America's interpretation, as does China—another country with much to gain from an open passage—recently signaled its thoughts when its 550-foot icebreaker *Snow Dragon* appeared in the Arctic and the captain nonchalantly landed passengers at the Canadian settlement of Tuktoyaktuk. "It isn't just to stick it to Canada," Biette said. "This is a global position."

Sands didn't talk about protection from Canada because he was too busy discussing protection *of* Canada. Although he did not use the precise phrase, he suggested that the U.S. presence in the north was a kind of modern white man's burden. "The defense of the continent against traditional military threats such as incoming missiles or bombers is really up to us," he said. "The Canadians aren't going to do it, the Mexicans aren't going to do it, and we can't do much to stop them from being free riders."

I went to American University, where I met with Robert Pastor, a professor and longtime adviser to Democratic presidential candidates who is often denounced by Canadian nationalists for advocating what he calls the North American Community—a sort of supersized NAFTA, this continent's answer to the European Union. Shared security, he told me, would be part of the deal—the borders between Canada, the United States, and Mexico would open, and the one surrounding all three would be beefed up. But for the most part his proposals were economic: that we knock down all trade barriers and together fill our wallets with "ameros."

The more people I talked to, the more it seemed that America was looking north out of fear of a warmer future. Insofar as it was looking at all,

as to see how much money it
d make: an invasion by the
thy for the wealthy that had lit-
o do with survival.

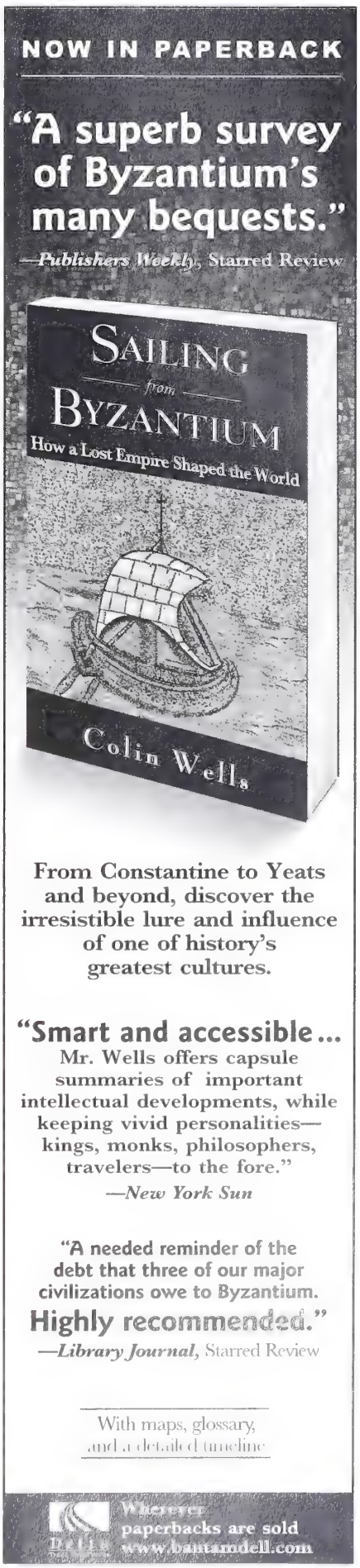
ter four days in Washington, I fi-
visited the Canadian Embassy to
Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas Mar-
he affable man behind the website
adianAlly.com, which is designed
mind Americans how much their
bor is and wants to be their friend.
embassy sits directly between Con-
and the White House. "Great
for a peacekeeper, eh?" Martin
He acknowledged the strained po-
l ties between America and Cana-
ce his country declined to join the
ition of the Willing in Iraq, but he
ed me that our economic ties were
ong as ever. Canada is the biggest
partner to thirty-eight of the fifty
s. It provides 85 percent of our
ral-gas imports. It supplies us with
e oil than any other country.
ericans have lights on in their
es because of Canadian energy,"
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ed out of the embassy with a fold-
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uranium we could mine from
atchewan if we need it, the oil
s in Alberta, the turbot fishery in
avut, the hydroelectric complex-
es in Quebec. Martin was
speaking our language.

Our campsite on Devon Island was
t patch of high ground at the base
reddish hill of scree. In front of us
the Northwest Passage; to our side
the fjord that was Dundas Harbor;
below us, a few hundred yards away,
the weather-beaten wooden build-
of the abandoned Mountie post.
re were a few bergy bits in the bay,
w patches of yellow grass around
cabins. The greenest thing in sight
the Vandoos' lineup of A-frame
s, which had been set up one next
nother in a very military row. Our
v of Inuit Rangers, two men and
women who had arrived earlier by
copter, were zipped inside a nearby
e tent, playing cards. They kept
ting into laughter because one of
n kept farting. I was wedged in my
green tent along with Sergeant Strong and Master Corporal Bradley, who had been told, incorrectly, that they would be provided shelter.

There was little to do. The first evening, Saleh, the Vandoos' sergeant, spent hours trying to make contact with the *Moncton* and the two observation posts across the sound. Sergeant Saleh received mostly static, even after his men restrung the wire antenna a few times. "Eeny stay-shun, eeny stay-shun?" he called into the void. "Thees ees Thir-tee-One-Bravo ... Say ageen? Say ageen? Say ageen?" One of the Inuit, who, unlike the Quebecer, had learned proper Canadian English in his school for natives, took over, with scarcely better luck. Four of the Vandoos, apparently bored, ran off and climbed the hill behind camp, returning only after their superiors yelled at them. I counted icebergs. There were fifteen in sight, including two ship-size giants and two halves of another iceberg that the Rangers had watched break apart earlier that day. The ice was moving, but so slowly that you had to look away for a moment to detect any change. The sun tried but never really set. Night at seventy-four degrees north, if you could call it night, was a three-hour period of darker-than-normal gray.

We learned that the electric fence we'd been allotted to fend off polar bears didn't work. Our bear protection consisted of two .303 shotguns and four Inuit, so the Rangers' sergeant had the entire camp huddle around his laptop to watch a bear-safety DVD. Advice: Poking it in the eyes won't work. He said that the .303's first three rounds would be "bear bangers"—firecracker-like shots meant to spook polar bears—and the last was a slug of lead. Under Canadian law, only Inuit were allowed to kill polar bears, and there were no exceptions. But we should all be ready to use the lead slug if it became a matter of life or death. We should aim for the bear's neck or just below its shoulder, where we would have a chance at piercing its heart.

More tourists invaded on the second morning—ninety-two of them, all in matching yellow Gore-Tex jackets—and streamed toward our tents. "It looks like the march of the penguins, eh?" said Sergeant Strong. An old woman with a beret and a tiny backpack arrived and fixed her gaze on him.



"And you?" she asked.

"Who are *you*?" asked the sergeant.

"I'm from the boat," she said. She is an American from Chicago. Her friend, who was Portuguese but lived near Canada in upstate New York, joined us. The conversation turned to sovereignty. "The Americans are essentially greedy," the friend said. "If there's oil up here, they'll be here. That's what all these wars are about." She mentioned Hans Island, and Sergeant Strong lit up.

"I think the simple solution for Hans Island is to just put someone there," he said. "You've just got to keep people there year-round."

The woman made a face. "But then the Danes would just send someone there too," she replied.

The pair walked off, and we stood there in camp, our hands in our pockets. "That woman has an opinion about everything," the sergeant said. "She was way out of whack," Bradley said. "It's just silly to talk about a fight over oil. We're producing so much and sending so much south that you guys don't need to come up here and take it—we're selling it to you freely."

We watched the tourists return to their ship in a flotilla of Zodiacs. As soon as they were back onboard, one of the Rangers grabbed his rifle and shot a three-foot-long Arctic hare—a bullet between the eyes from 200 yards away. He'd spied it earlier but hadn't wanted to scare our visitors. He skinned it and chopped it into chunks and left it on top of a plastic bag in the middle of camp, where it began to dry in the sun.

To the extent that America has had an Arctic policy since the Cold War, it is the doing of George Newton, a mustachioed former nuclear-submarine captain who spent fourteen years on the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, many of them as its chairman. When he and I met in Washington, he had just stepped down, and we sat in what I took to be his former office. I hoped he could tell me what we were really after in the north. He had large wire-rimmed glasses and spoke in emphatic tones, downing cup after cup of water as we talked.

I asked him first about the Northwest Passage. "Why should we be the ones negotiating with Canada over it?" he exclaimed. "Shouldn't Japan, which has a large fleet, take the lead? Or Maersk, the big shipping company in Denmark? Shouldn't Denmark be in on this?" Newton explained that the right of "innocent passage" through active straits is also enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea—the so-called Constitution of the Oceans, a treaty signed by 155 countries as of July. (The United States, despite having drafted much of the law in the 1970s, is not yet among them.) But he granted that legal arguments on both sides are complicated by the ice: The passage is frozen, so it's difficult to call it an active strait. And it's equally difficult to say it will never become one. The treaty's language regarding ice-covered areas hurts the U.S. position as much as the language regarding international straits helps it. Still, Newton was confident that the rhetoric could be toned down, that we could all act like adults about this. The economics of the thing made an agreement inevitable.

Ratification of the Law of the Sea treaty had been the Arctic Research Commission's greatest goal under Newton, and it remains its greatest goal today. This has hardly anything to do with the Northwest Passage, though, and almost everything to do with oil. The treaty, which establishes navigational rules and sets forth nations' rights to the fish and minerals 200 nautical miles off their coastlines, also allows them to claim further territory based on the undersea extent of their continental shelves. This latter provision, Article 76 of the Law of the Sea, will allow America to get its share of polar oil. It is the rule under which the five nations with Arctic Ocean frontage—Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States—will carve up the Arctic. It is the terms of engagement for the last great imperial partition.

The Law of the Sea turns the world, especially the top of the world, into a different place. In terms of sea it could someday own, the United States, with its borders extended and each of its island holdings surrounded by an oversize doughnut of sovereign waters, would grow by 4.1 million square miles. It would surpass China, Canada, and Russia, with their own expanded holdings, to become the world's largest country.

The key to all of this is provin[g] far your landmass extends under[the] process that requires collecting d[ata] bathymetric and seismic data. [The] findings inevitably would be co[n]ed, but the United States could cla[im] estimated $1.3 trillion worth [of] sources, some $650 billion in petro[leum] in the Alaskan shelf alone. An oi[l] no matter how wary of internat[ional] agreements, should love this law. President Bush has said as recen[tly] mid-May that he intends to sign [it] spite conservative opposition.

"Our need for oil is not going [to] away," Newton said. "We're goi[ng] need every bit we can get our hand[s] Even if we don't use as much in [cars] and trucks, we're going to need pl[astics] and fertilizers, and all these [other] things essential to daily life. The [key] oil that's tied to us directly, the [oil] that comes in a pipeline or in a [ship] trip in U.S. waters, the better o[ff] are." Canada's Arctic archipelag[o], said, was the next "oil elephant,' [but] that's not all: An estimated 21 bi[llion] tons of coal sit on Ellesmere Isl[and] and methane bubbles up everyw[here] through the Arctic's melting [per]mafrost. Methane, as a greenhouse [gas] is at least twenty times more dama[ging] than carbon dioxide. On the upsi[de] has energy potential. Inuit hunte[rs] ready poke holes in the ground [and] light them for warmth.

Newton had watched Russi[a], which recently announced plans [for] special army to guard oil rigs [and] pipelines—get rich off its northern [pe]troleum fields. "Look at how that co[un]try is digging itself out of a quagmi[re]," he said. "They're getting up, flex[ing] their muscles, feeling like big boy[s]—people gonna pay respect. That's [all] thanks to the Arctic."

In late June, Russia's *Komsomolsk[aya] Pravda* newspaper printed a large m[ap] showing a Russian flag flying over [the] North Pole and a supposed new ad[di]tion to the nation's territorial holdi[ngs] 460,000 square miles of Arctic Oce[an]. Russia's first Article 76 claim to [the] pole, in 2001, was rejected for lack of [da]ta, but a team of scientists had retur[ned] from a six-week expedition by nucl[ear] icebreaker saying that they had got [all] what they needed. The 1,100-mile-lo[ng] Lomonosov Ridge, an underwa[ter] mountain range that bisects the A[rctic]

along with the region's 10 billion of gas and oil reserves—would be a's, they said. Although the Unitlations has yet to evaluate the n, Russia celebrated. It was a reler that our allies, no matter how y times we invite them to Kenkport, aren't waiting for Ameri sign the Law of the Sea. The race eady on.

anada signed the treaty in 2003, nark in 2004. Despite remaining ons over Hans Island dustups such xercise Frozen Beaver, the two tries are now working together to e that the Lomonosov Ridge is in connected to Canada's Ellesmere d and Denmark's Greenland. Opng from the Canadian militaryligence outpost of Alert at eighty-degrees north, their scientists use opters and ski planes to lay nets of sensors: a seismometer every neter, packs of explosives every n kilometers. Canada is expected ain 310,000 square miles, Den- 62,000 square miles—an area ly four times the size of Denmark . As for Norway, it made its Ar- 76 submission late last year. lding bathymetry collected by its oleum directorate, it claimed 00 square miles of ocean, and it red the right to claim more later.

he United States, meanwhile, has quietly scanning the Arctic seabed multi-beam sonar since 2003. The t, led by Larry Mayer of the Uniity of New Hampshire, is publicly wn. What hasn't been public is the e Department–led apparatus be- it. The working group that also lves the Coast Guard, Navy, and erals Management Service ramped s meeting schedule last December, $8 million was slipped into Bush's 3 budget to fund the program. Subps have formed. Submarines and icebreakers have been discussed. A ping strategy has been laid out. "A f seismic work will be necessary," a or State Department official told For an entire month this summer, *Healy*, the United States' one fulperational icebreaker, which costs 0,000 a day to operate and is shared he entire science community, will dedicated to Mayer's bathymetry k. Treaty or no, the last piece of pie is being filled in. Within a decade, five nations could own all of the Arctic Ocean save for two small holes of water too deep to be claimed, and oil exploration—helped along by the coinciding meltdown of the ice cap—could lead to a true oil boom.

At the observation post later that second day, the *Montréal* appeared in the sound, with the smaller *Moncton* trailing it like a baby elephant. They floated past. We observed them. Sergeant Saleh fiddled with the radio and sang ballads in French-accented English: "Are you lonesome tonight? Do you miss me tonight? Are you sorry we drifted apart?" The Inuit stared at him. "Elvees," he said. "You dunno Elvees?" Later, he led a handful of soldiers on an unsuccessful fishing expedition. When they returned, they stripped and dove into the Arctic Ocean, staying in long enough to wash their hair with a bottle of Pert Plus shampoo.

We combed through the rations—unwanted items got thrown in together in a cardboard box—and I goaded Sergeant Strong about the previous day's fedora-wearing American, an invader who dared tell Canadians how to treat Canadian soil. The sergeant was too Canadian to enjoy the irony. "That's okay," he said. "He was right. We do need to be careful about the environment up here." His earnestness affected me. It will be a shame when the tankers start to spill their oil up here. Crude gets trapped under the ice, retention booms are difficult to deploy, and chemical dispersants fail in cold temperatures; one of the most successful cleanup methods has been to simply light the oil on fire and watch it burn away—just what an already collapsing ecosystem needs.

The radio started working, and from across the sound we heard accounts of what had happened to the other observation posts. The men and women of Observation Post 2 had landed in heavy seas—the navy boatmen had ignored the Rangers' recommendation to use an easier beach—and two Zodiacs were swamped by waves. The soldiers had to use their helmets to bail out the boats. Some returned to the *Montréal* just to get warm, while the rest made a rough camp at the bottom of a steep slope. In the morning they learned that their goal, an abandoned scientific research station, was still six kilometers away. They had to be flown there in helicopters. They arrived to find one of the Air Force's Twin Otters, which was meant to be running support, stuck in the mud of an airstrip. Their satellite phone couldn't get a signal and their radio barely worked. At Observation Post 3, troops were almost eaten by a polar bear. Waiting for a helicopter lift, they had taken down their bear fence and removed the ammunition from their shotguns, standard procedure before a flight. The bear was slinking up a ravine, and it was fifty yards away when the helicopter pilot spotted it. He had to dive-bomb it with the chopper to scare it off. Compared with the monotony of Devon, this all sounded rather appealing. But it was our job to observe, and that we did. It was our job to be a presence, and that we were.

A fog rolled in, and the world became spectral and gray. When it had passed, Sergeant Strong and I explored the Mountie outpost together. The front door was coated with faded red paint. Inside we found a sewing machine, a rusted fuel drum, and a wooden table stacked with books: *Two Black Sheep, The Astounding Crime on Torrington Road, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. On the wall, someone had posted an inventory from the summer of 1945: two dog corrals; one flagpole, one fire shovel, one kitchen table, four kitchen chairs, one coal heater, one forty-five-gallon water barrel, two blubber tanks. The graves of the two Mounties who died here were just up the hill. "If I had a warm cabin to come back to," the sergeant said, "I could do it. I could do a winter here."

We had three days to go. We built a fire. We stayed up later and later. The hours passed without tick marks. One night, I stood alone outside my tent, looking out at the sun that never set. The two youngest Vandoos—a sixteen-year-old and a seventeen-year-old—had been given the first watch. I saw one take out his video camera and start walking around the tundra, filming very little. His partner sat facing the Northwest Passage, raising his rifle and pointing it into space, then lowering it, then raising it, then lowering it. ■

THE SUMMER OF OUR DISCONTENT

An ode to sleepaway camp

By Rich Cohen

Whatever the world is going to do to
him
it has started to do....
Everything
that's been done to him, he will now do
—Sharon Olds

From the ages of six to eleven, I spent summers at Camp Menominee in Eagle River, Wisconsin. I hiked, played baseball, softball, and tennis, sang camp songs, shot arrows and rifles, and performed in skits, but what I remember best is the bird man. I spotted him the moment he came on the bus, his sad face, one lazy eye, one crazy eye, hair full of cowlicks. He walked the aisle looking for a seat, but the only spot was next to the driver. The other kids had already formed cliques, and maybe that was the whole problem: he came four minutes too late.

I watched the kid as we traveled. I had been going to camp for a few years already and the memory of my own first day was terrifying, so I was curious to see how he took it. He stared out the window as we went through the suburbs north of Chicago, then his head fell in his hands. By the time we passed Racine, he was crying. He disappeared when we reached camp but was back, in a bunk next to mine, before dinner, determined to try again. But another kid, a kid I later came to think of in all capitals as THE BULLY, made this impossible. THE BULLY sensed a trigger in the bird man: it taunted long enough, the training of his teachers and parents fell away and his face contorted and his skin turned red and he went into a dance. By lights-out, everyone knew the kid with the crazy hair was prone to spaz attack.

That summer, we pressed the bird man harder and harder, more and more, again and again—assaults led by the aforementioned BULLY, whom I can picture, but not clearly enough to identify. In my mind, his face, as it slips away, stands for all that is chaotic in the life of boys. He was in charge that day in August when things escalated. We were playing baseball on the Senior Diamond. I was at third. The bird man was up. The taunts grew so fierce that, by the third pitch, he began to shake. Then the trigger was pressed and he dissolved, stomping and moaning. He flung his bat over my head into the outfield. He ran screaming over a hill. When we went to our cabin, we heard cooing, then spotted him in the rafters. That's when he got the name. *Hey, look at the bird man.*

We tried to coax him down but couldn't. We called our counselor and he threatened the bird man. Then the director came out of the big house and walked in the fields and stood with arms folded, looking up. He promised root-beer floats and pizza. A few heavies from Maintenance came with a ladder and carried the kid away. They put him in a truck. I watched it go
the road. It turned left on Highw
That was thirty years ago, and I
did see the bird man again. I di
think about him for many years
when I did think about him I
not stop thinking about him. I w
ed to go back to camp and fin
name of the bird man and the na
THE BULLY. I could do this by loo
at old records and photos. I coul
amine the sidewalks where, at the
of each summer, we wrote our n
in wet cement. Once I knew
names, I could track down the
man and THE BULLY and find out
actly what happened. Then every
could forgive and be forgiven an
would be as it had been in
beginning, before the
stepped on the bus.

Eagle River is a vacation lan
lakes and rivers. In the summer,
water is covered with boats; in the
the woods are filled with hunter
you order fish in a local supper club,
waitress will ask if you want the l
mouth, the small-mouth, or the w
eye. The surrounding forest, a spu
the great Northwoods, is the
wrecked remnant of forest explored
French traders in canoes. Wisconsi
filled with camps. There is Menomi
and its sister, Marimeta, also Lut
Point Bible Camp, Lutherdale Bi
Camp, Needlepoint/Daypoint ca
for diabetics, Nicolet for Girls, No
Star for Boys, and Menominee's riv

Rich Cohen is the author of five books, most recently Sweet and Low: A Family Story.

aga. When a bus from one of these
os pulls into town on a lazy August
noon, the kids, mostly from sub-
n Chicago, hit the pop stands like
rs on shore leave.
enominee covers sixty-five acres
ıe shore of Sand Lake, a few miles
Eagle River. It was once the sum-
estate of Charles Comiskey, the
ɣ owner of the Chicago White
. His players used to visit the
nds and exercise in the fields.



nnants of the estate can be seen
he old owner's lodge, which had
n Comiskey's home; the theater,
which had been his barn; the infir-
mary—where I almost died—which
had been a guest cottage; and the
fence on Highway D, which was
brought from the original Comiskey
Park—not this one, not the last one,
but the one before that.

In 1947, Menominee moved to Sand
Lake from its original, near-mythic lo-
cation—a land of dinosaurs, which
founder Nate Wasserman and his broth-
ers had cleared by hand, felling trees
and blowing stumps. The Wassermans
emigrated from Russia at the beginning
of the twentieth century and lost both
their parents in the flu epidemic that fol-
lowed World War I. In the 1920s, Nate
started the camp as an extension of his
work as a teacher and coach, a way to
get kids out of the city in the
stifling months of summer.

In building Menominee, Nate Wasserman was part of a trend: in those years, the explosive growth of camps was changing the nature of summer. The history of camp is entwined with the history of the country. In moments of fancy, historians of camp—which, like major league baseball and slavery, is a peculiarly American institution—trace its origins through millennia. In her *History of Organized Camping*, the definitive work on the subject, Eleanor Eells says that "many writers refer to camping as old as man himself, and recalling the wanderings of the children of Israel; or Athens and Sparta educating the youth in the fields." Others start with religious camps staked in the wilderness in the early days of settlement, clearings where preachers conjured an angry God. These were not the well-mapped forests of Europe but a primitive wilderness filled with spirits and savages. In a sense, the ghost stories of summer camp can be traced to the sermons of Jonathan Edwards. The Holy Spirit might be on the pulpit, but the Devil is in the shadows beyond the campfire. It makes me think of the Nathaniel Hawthorne story "Young Goodman Brown," which, even in my freshman year of high school, reminded me of hiking away from Menominee in the evening:

> The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveler, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn.

It's like that at camp still—cabin lights on a dark hillside, wilderness beyond. In 1673, George Fox, the Quaker from England, held a tent meeting on the Chesapeake Bay. A thousand

ration by Steven Dana

ple stayed in two hundred tents, including Lord and Lady Baltimore. Later, during the Chautauqua movement of the late 1800s, people attended lectures outdoors in the dread days before TV. In an article published in *The Regional Review* in April 1940, a description of a Methodist campground, built in 1838, offers an early glimpse of summer architecture: "The camp is a clearing in a pine grove. In the center is a large 'arbor' or auditorium, a sideless building with a capacity of 1200 people. All around it are rough board huts used as sleeping quarters. At intervals are pumps furnishing drinking and cooking water. In the circle between the cabins and the central buildings are a series of 'flambeaus.'"

The first modern summer camp was started in August 1861 at the request of students from The Gunnery school in Washington, Connecticut, who wanted to show support for the Union soldiers fighting in the Civil War. Eleanor Eells suggests that they were inspired by the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," specifically the line, "I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps." Frederick Gunn, headmaster of the school and the man known as "the father of organized camping," led the boys on a forty-mile hike to Welch's Point on Long Island Sound, where, for two weeks, they sat by fires and lived like soldiers. This remained a regular Gunnery school trip until 1879. Gunn inspired the young men who went on to found the first generation of American summer camps, most of them in the Northeast, most of them religious, most of them named for the very Indian tribes that had been pushed aside to allow for settlement of the land.

There was Camp Chocorua, founded in 1881 on an island in Squam Lake, New Hampshire, by Dartmouth sophomore Ernest Balch, whose aim was to reform the "miserable existence of wealthy adolescent boys in the summer when they must accompany their parents to fashionable resorts and fall prey to the evils of life in high society." There was the North Mountain School of Physical Culture, founded in 1876 in the Pocono mountains by Joseph Rothrock, M.D., whose aim was to strengthen the sickly: "I had the happy idea of taking weakly boys in summer for camp life in the woods, and under competent instruction, mingling exercise and study so that the pursuit of health could be combined with the acquisition of knowledge." The locals marveled "that the boys could sleep out in tents on the mountainside in all kinds of weather and live primitively with 'no colds or ill effects.'" These locals must have visited in the first and second months of camp—in the third month, two thirds of the campers contracted typhoid fever. There was Camp Keewaydin, founded in 1893 by A. S. Gregg Clarke, a graduate of The Gunnery. *Keewaydin* is the Ojibwa word for the northwest wind, which is said to bring good luck. Clarke probably learned the word not from the Indians but from the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem *Hiawatha*. That is, the founder experienced the culture that gives his camp its name by way of Romantic poetry. Keewaydin thrives still—a proving ground for the sons of the elite. It was the subject of *Camp*, the book by Michael Eisner, the former CEO of Disney, who makes the case that all he learned of value in life he learned at Keewaydin.

And there were others: the YMCA camps, the first of which was founded in 1885 in Newburgh, New York, by Sumner Dudley, the son of a Brooklyn merchant; camps for girls, such as Greylock on Raquette Lake in New York, a camp where, on Sundays, the girls had to read and discuss the *New York Times*. Or Camp Sea Rest, dedicated by Ulysses S. Grant in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in 1874, which aimed to get working girls out of the city. There were trade camps, such as Camp Mechano, where kids learned to build engines; Communist camps, such as Camp Wo-Chi-Ca in Port Murray, New Jersey; camps for Jews, such as Schroon Lake Camp, founded by Rabbi Isaac Moses of Manhattan, Camp Cobbossee, founded in 1902 in Winthrop, Maine, and the unfortunately named Camp Swastika. In 1905, *The World's Work* magazine listed 700 private camps in the United States. Charles Eliot, president of Harvard from 1869 until 1909, called organized summer camp "the most important step in education that America has given the world."

Why did the movement boom?

Because the cities were cro
and dirty and parents wanted
their kids away; because ther
nothing for urban youth to d
ing the long summer vacation t
had been designed to let farm k
help in the fields; because the
of America had grown soft fro
life; because industrializa
trapped people inside their h
because the frontier had close
adults still wanted kids to e
ence the adventure of pionee
because in America even the
mer is a country that must be
quered and settled.

But that's on the general level,
everything is driven by machin
the particular level, where
Wasserman is blowing tree stump
birth of a camp is always driven
will of a single man: the founder. I
care how old a camp is or how lo
founder has been dead—you w
ways find his DNA imprinted i
rituals and routines of camp. Th
something tyrannical about the
director. He has a rage for order
jones for control. He designs th
perience of his campers down t
smallest detail and exercises more
trol within his borders than the
energetic dictator. What are such
if not the founders of nations,
monarchies where th
in permanent rule?

In the early 1900s, camp wa
made by the growing love fo
American Indian, which blosso
once the actual Indians had
pushed safely out of the way. It
movement led by visionary y
naturalists who wanted to rep
the European creed with an A
can religion in which God woul
nature personified by the Native
the down-and-out Indian in
union hall but the Indian as a
bol, the noble red man in the p
ings by Frederic Remington and
in movies by John Ford. By adop
ancient rituals, these natura
hoped to create a hybrid, an A
can boy who could both do a
metic and disappear in the tall g
The movement was led by Er
Thompson Seton, painter, thin
and author of nearly 400 maga

les and sixty books, including
; *of Game Animals* and *Wild Ani-*
I Have Known.
eton was born on August 14, 1860,
urham, England. His father, a
owner who had lost his money,
ed his family to a town on the
of the Canadian wilderness, then
oronto a few years later. The young
n spent many hours in the woods.
r time, he came to reject his own
ure, in its place creating a coun-
it, folkloric past. He spoke of ad-
ures with Indians, sketched ani-
, and wrote stories. His painting
mph of the Wolves was exhibited
e 1893 World's Fair in Chicago as
entry from Manitoba.
eton met Robert Baden-Powell,
Boer War's "hero of Mafeking,"
a trip to England. Baden-Powell
nded the Boy Scouts soon after,
a chapter in the United States.
en-Powell said he got his idea for
Scouts while watching the African
iers attached to the British Army
ng his campaigns in the Transvaal,
Seton believed many of the ideas
ally came from him. In fact, Seton
founded his own Scout-type or-
ization a few years before: the
odcraft Indians, which grew out of
les he had written for *Ladies' Home*
nal. In these, Seton argued for the
ortance of Indian lore in American
and began to detail the nine prin-
es of Woodcraft. These included
MAGIC OF THE CAMPFIRE: "The
pfire, then, is the focal center of all
nitive brotherhood. We shall not
to use its magic powers." HONORS
TANDARDS: "The competitive prin-
e is responsible for much that is
. We see it rampant in our colleges
lay, where every effort is made to
over and develop a champion,
le the great body of students is ne-
ted. . . . In our non-competitive
s the enemies are not 'the other
ows,' but time and space, the forces
Nature. We try not to down the
ers, but to raise ourselves." A HERO-
DEAL: "The boy from ten to fifteen,
the savage, is purely physical in his
als. I do not know that I ever met
y that would not rather be John L.
livan than Darwin or Tolstoi.
refore, I accept the fact and seek to
p in view an ideal that is physical,
also clean, manly, heroic."

Woodcraft, the Scouts, the Sons of Daniel Boone—little Masonic lodges in which boys, at the instruction of fathers as well as strange nature-loving bachelors, received the secret knowledge of the campfire. These men, and it was always men, were reacting against the life of the cities by making a religion of the forest. It was a nostalgic movement, a quest for authenticity. Among Seton's supporters were Mark Twain, Theodore Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, and Leo Tolstoy. (The red man of Seton was not much different from the peasant of Tolstoy.)

Seton merged Woodcraft with the Boy Scouts in 1910, bringing to the new organization the rituals he invented in the woods near his parents' house. For five years he was chief scout. This is when many of the features common to most summer camps emerged: the war dance, the merit badge, the medal, the campfire, the bull session, the powwow. In 1915, Seton broke with Baden-Powell; he said the Scouts had become too militaristic. During World War I, the Scouts did in fact incorporate military elements like rank, uniform, gabardines—all standard for a British soldier in the colonies. Seton was especially disturbed by the motto "Be prepared," which he considered a call to arms. He continued to write and lecture, and later changed his name to Black Wolf and married Julia Buttree, author of *The Rhythm of the Redman*, before retiring to New Mexico, where he built a castle on a hundred acres of scrub.

The militarization of American life, an understandable outgrowth of a century of war, changed camp forever. By the middle of the century, eight weeks in the woods had become an experience that readied you for the barracks. The bugle call, reveille and taps, the folding and unfolding of flags, the system of rank, the new campers hazed as plebes and silenced by seniors, who were as godlike as the boy-captains of West Point. The big events of summer were war games. At Menominee, we fought a contest called Army versus Navy and another called British versus Americans. The British were armed with squirt guns filled with red dye. The Americans, in white T-shirts, had to cross

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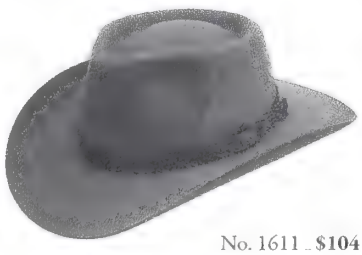
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the fields and forests of camp without getting hit. The dead were gathered on the shuffleboard court.

Such rituals remained frozen for decades, but of course life at camp was changing—the nature of the kids and counselors, the very sense of what camp should be about. In the 1800s, it was about religion; in the early 1900s, it was about preserving a spark of frontier spirit; in the mid-1900s, it was about the barracks and preparing a generation for the coming war; now it's about preparing kids for school and work, speeding them through the meritocracy. "Be prepared" could still serve as the motto. Only it's no longer about Flanders or the Somme; it's about Harvard or Microsoft.

There are 12,000 camps in the United States, attended by around 10 million kids each year. Increasingly, these camps cater to niche markets. Summer camp has followed the path of the national magazine and the TV network, forsaking the general for the particular. There are now camps for computer programmers, for photographers, for filmmakers. The rule of the metropolis, from which camp was once seen as an escape, has remade life in the woods.

The length of summer has also changed. Camp used to mean eight weeks. It took that long just to shed the lazy habits of home. In the past few decades, camps have begun marketing shorter sessions. In response to consumer demand—that's how the camp directors put it—even the oldest camps now offer a four-week program. It's not the kids making these demands, of course—it's the parents. They can't stand to be away from their kids for two months. And these kids are now more in touch with their parents than ever before. Once upon a time, you were allowed neither to make nor to receive phone calls at camp. Even at traditional camps, kids are now allowed at least one call a week. At Camp Lenox in the Berkshires, where my sister sends her kids, counselors take dozens of pictures of the campers each day. These are uploaded to the Internet, and parents spend hours studying each photo. It's Kremlinology, the smallest turn of [illegible] examined for meaning. *Does he look unhappy? Who is that with the mustache? Is that a counselor? Look at this kid, with the scowl. Is he the bully?* Summer camp is a reflection of everything else, and as such its life follows the big fact of modern life: There is no getting away.

Whenever I think of Al Wasserman, I start with his square-toed orthopedic shoes standing on our front porch, square legs, square body, a briefcase in his left hand, an 8-millimeter film projector under his arm. He was a camp director raised by a football coach, so he had something of the coach about him too. Polyester shorts, whistle around his neck, slogans: "It must be jelly, 'cause jam don't shake like that!" He had taken over from his father, Nate. Menominee was his life. He lived there all summer and spent winters hunting Chicagoland for campers, sitting in living rooms, drinking pop, explaining. He came to our house in the manner of an Army recruiter scouting my brother, Steven, who was eleven years old.

We gathered in the living room my parents, my brother, myself. I was six. I sat there like a visiting psychiatrist observing a session. Al showed pictures and pamphlets. He talked about Color War and Twilight Softball League. He set up the projector, pushed a button, and a beam of light crossed the room and a world appeared on the wall. The woods were so green they were blue; there were cabins on a hill, piers, motorboats, water-skiers, baseball players; then, as the soundtrack played "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," everyone in camp—a hundred kids, say—crowded onto a patch of carpet, in an effort, said Al, "to set a world record!"

When the lights came up, Al turned to my brother and asked, "Well, what do you think?"

"Looks fun," said Steven, and left the room.

Al asked me what I thought. I said it looked like the greatest place in the world. These words alone were enough to sign me up, at age six, for eight weeks in the woods. Probably I said what I said because I thought my brother would go and I wanted to do whatever he did. But when I talked to him that night and said something like, *Looks like we'll be going to camp together*, he said, *That place looked like it was filled with losers.*

And just like that I was on th[illegible] with my parents getting smaller [illegible] window. All I remember is n[illegible] homesickness, and fear. I recently [illegible] across a book called *The Summer [illegible] Handbook: Everything you need to [illegible] choose, and get ready for over[illegible] camp—and skip the homesickne[illegible]* much of this book, co-writt[illegible] Ph.D.'s (Christopher A. Thurb[illegible] Jon C. Malinowski), deals with [illegible] sickness that I have come to thi[illegible] it as the defining condition of c[illegible] The book gives parents examp[illegible] what *not* to say to kids in the wee[illegible] fore camp.

These include:

> Overnight camp is a good idea, bu[illegible] is the first time you've been away [illegible] home. I sure hope it works out.
>
> Three weeks sounds perfect, but t[illegible] a mighty long time. I sure hope yo[illegible] make it that long.
>
> I loved camp when I was a kid, b[illegible] God was I ever homesick.

The book lists some things th[illegible] *not* fight homesickness:

> Sitting around doing nothing.
> Giving up.
> Wishing that things were differer[illegible]
> Doing something to try to get [illegible] home on your own.
> Doing something angry or mean [illegible] to get sent home.
> Spending time by yourself.

In other words: *Stop hoping! E[illegible] one here says they're innocent!*

The book suggests exercises [illegible] might help prepare campers. He[illegible] my favorite: "Practice walking ar[illegible] your yard or house at night with a f[illegible] light. Wear shoes or sandals, just [illegible] you will at camp."

The bus ride took an entire d[illegible] eight hours staring out the win[illegible] The towns got smaller as we m[illegible] north and the cow-pig-and-hick co[illegible] try between the towns got bigger. [illegible] stopped by the side of the road an[illegible] sandwiches that were soggy from [illegible] coolers. There were water towers [illegible] grain elevators. Big roads led to s[illegible] roads, which led to smaller roads. [illegible] trees were so thick the sun made pa[illegible] es on the pavement. We turned o[illegible] a gravel drive and went past a sign [illegible]

MENOMINEE. The buses parked on rass. We went to the rec hall, a emade into a theater. Al Wasser- sat onstage in a turned-around like a gym teacher. As soon as he d to talk, I knew this was not the man who visited my house in the er. That was cold-weather Al, to fool parents. This was warm- ner Al, floating like a sun above omain. I tried to meet his eyes, but ance went over me. He was talk- o the masses. He described the ions of camp, its rules and bound- He said, *Menominee is the great- mp in the Northwoods!* He said, *at Menominee, you will learn to* He said, *When you are babies, you nd your mother comes to you, but are no babies at Menominee!*

nen I was in my cabin, unpacking ight, bug spray, comic books. The s were arranged in rows. There toilet and a sink below a web of s. The walls were covered with ti, nicknames of campers from ous years, the remains of those had come, harassed or been ha- d, gone. These names were like its coming through static on AM . Once upon a time, these people been like us, but where were they ? Where was Flea? Where was er? Where was Little Wave?

as Little Wave the same only old- was he gone?

over the mirrors, because Little Wave id!

had many bunkmates over the , but just a few have stayed in my ory. There was Steve Kanefsky, at eight, looked exactly like the rles Bronson of *Death Wish*. He sed like a kid and needed to be d like a kid, but he had the same re jaw, the same square face and as Bronson. The demeanor too: , no nonsense. Each day, I half cted him to come into the cabin a pistol and blow us all away. e was Eric Stelzer from Ohio, a kid sidekick ambitions, no higher. (I his parents years later. They in- uced themselves. I told them how h I liked Eric and asked what he doing. Eric's father told me Eric died. They did not tell me how hen. I did not ask. They stood e for a moment, then left.) There Bobby Friedman, a monkey-faced boy with a lisp, a childhood version of a yes-man, a yes-kid, ready to swell a mob or dive into the lake when there was blood in the water. (I think I saw him when I was twenty-two. I was with a date in the beer line at Ravinia, a bandshell in Highland Park, when I spotted him behind the counter, working the taps, same monkey face, not an inch taller, like a circus curiosity, a mini-man, something kept in a jar. I started to say hello, looked at my date, then thought, *Naaah.*) There was the bird man, the kid who had shown us his weak spot, the button that made the bells chime and the screen flash TILT. He had crazy hair, wild eyes, and was skinny, all knobs and joints, with the intensity of a method actor. And THE BULLY, whose face I cannot picture but whose presence I know by the way the other kids act, as an astronomer knows the presence of a planet, even when it can't be seen, by the behavior of the star it orbits.

On a flowchart summer camp would follow a strict, corporate, hierarchical structure: age group succeeding age group, each with a little more freedom and a little more power, each in a bunk a little farther up the hill, culminating at the top of the hill in the senior cabin—a society based on the authority of age, how much more an older boy knew and had seen, how much harder an older boy could hit. But it was not age alone. In fact, the real currency of camp was canteen—the name of the treasure house that held the candy and pops that were doled out to campers, a ration a day, every night after dinner. In common parlance, "canteen" referred to one ration and was used in this way: "I bet you two nights' canteen I beat your ass blue." It was used as an ante for card games, in wagers, and in exchange for services, much as cigarettes are used in the big house.

The process seemed to run itself, kids dealing with kids, but the director was there too, operating in the shadows, controlling the flow and quality of that sweet crude. As a special privilege, seniors got an extra ration, and it was this—as well as their age, knowledge, and slugging ability—that let them run the machine. For the most part, their power manifested itself in a manner I have since come to regard as gay or homoerotic, not San Francisco bathhouse gay, but gay in the way of sailors too long at sea in the works of Conrad. There was no fondling or circle-jerking, at least as far as I know, but there was an awful lot of massaging and backrubbing. I was constantly in and out of the cabin at the top of the hill, working like a geisha, sitting astride the back of some senior, rubbing away the knots that accumulated during the canoe race, or using my fingertips to give "the chills," whoring myself out for canteen. One night, in my cabin, a senior asked if he could give me a backrub, an unheard-of inversion of protocol. He rubbed my back for a few minutes, then said, "Turn over and I'll give you a front rub."

I ran.

Each night, before evening entertainment, which usually consisted of a movie, a skit contest, or an event such as horse-race night, I would wander over to my synagogue, the canteen, and test the door to see if it was locked. I did this in the manner of a bum checking the return slot of a pay phone. It was a ritual, a prayer. It gave me the illusion of participation in my fate. I like to think of it as a protest against the system that had me selling my services like a two-dollar hooker, but I know I just wanted that candy. Then one evening in my third summer, the knob turned, the door opened, and the wealth of the canteen was before me.

I glanced over my shoulder, ducked inside. All that candy seemed to breathe around me in the dark, the kind of silence only a hundred chocolate bars can make. Chuckles. Runts. Pop Rocks. Jujubes. Atomic Fireballs. Slo Pokes. Goo Goo Clusters. Sugar Babies. Good & Plenty. Whoppers. Good 'n Fruity. Bit-O-Honeys. Clark bars. Baby Ruths. 100 Grand bars. Dots. Nerds. Bottle Caps. Lemonheads. I just stood there taking a moment, as a bank robber might take a moment inside the vault. Then I went to work, going for the favorites first, Kit Kats and Butterfingers, filling my tucked-in shirt until I looked eight months gone with child.

I crept back to my cabin. As my bunkmates talked, played cards, or

read letters, I began hiding the loot. I put candy under my mattress and pillow, in the pockets of my poncho and shorts. I stuffed a handful of chocolate bars in my ice skates, hung on a hook behind my bed, brought to camp on the off chance we went to the rink in Eagle River. I went back to the canteen two more times, until, by the third trip, I was taking stuff I did not even like.

I decided to tell a friend about the door. What's the point of being rich if you can't be generous? I told Eric Stelzer, then said, "Go, try it for yourself. Wet your beak." Arnold Rothstein, that pioneer of organized crime in America, the man rumored to have fixed the 1919 World Series, once said, "If one man knows something, it's a secret. If two know it, eleven know it. When three know it, a hundred and eleven know it." Well, this was the proof: I moved back and forth from the canteen in secrecy for an hour, but as soon as I told Stelzer, he told someone else, then everyone knew and the entire camp was jammed in there, tearing the place apart. To break the mob, Bob Bender, the acting director of camp that year, a rangy, red-haired man serving as the strong arm of Al Wasserman, had to get a gun from the rifle range and fire shots in the air—or at least that's how I remember it. When the canteen cleared, the candy boxes were empty, nougat was waffled into the cement, and soda pop fizzed on the sidewalks. It was like a scene on TV. Because freedom is messy. Because stuff happens.

A massive investigation was launched. One by one, every kid at camp was marched into Bender's office. There was a steel filing cabinet, a set of golf clubs, a picture of Bender holding up a walleye pike. You sat in a metal chair as he paced, pursuing some esoteric line of questioning he probably picked up from a police procedural: "What's your favorite candy?" "Do you think rules are meant to be followed?" "Do you believe in God?" You might be questioned, then brought back the next day for another round during which Bender tried to exploit some previous inconsistency. "You say you like jelly candies, but Bobby Friedman tells me your passion is chocolate." The man wanted answers—it was part of the obsession that caused camp staff to police candy from the outside so zealously: a Tootsie Roll sent from home in a letter, butterscotch candies sewn into a stuffed animal. You might receive a letter that had been ripped open and searched, the contents confiscated. If asked, Bender would say it was a matter of preventing infestation. Bugs. But if that's so, why did counselors give cookies, Chips Ahoy!, usually, as a reward for obedience at bedtime?

No, it wasn't about bugs. It was about control. The candy was currency, and outside candy was counterfeit. If you lose control of the candy, you lose control of the camp. That's why Bender was obsessed. Stelzer sat in that office for two hours, but he never gave me up. It was the perfect crime, but also not perfect. For I was like the man who has stolen the *Mona Lisa*. Where can you hang it? The sight of me eating an unaccounted-for Kit Kat would set off alarms. So I sat on my loot, and the days went by, and I forgot. Then, one morning in the fall, as I was dressing for hockey tryouts, I pulled on a skate and my left foot went into a half pound of chocolate. There are no clean getaways.

Whenever I had a free hour, I would walk in the woods. I liked walking in the morning, when the lake was covered in mist, and in the afternoon, when the cabins and fields shimmered behind a veil of trees, and in the evening when you came upon a clearing in the woods, a sunny spot amid the gloom, as inexplicable as civilization itself. But I liked sneak-outs the best, late nights when your counselor woke you with a whisper and told you to follow him outside and the stars were so close you could reach up and make the heavens ripple like a reflection in a pond. Leaving camp, we followed Old Counselors Road, which we had been told was the burial place of the Meat Man, a kitchen worker who had gone crazy years before, killing with a cleaver. The counselors formed a hunting party and searched the woods and shot him down on Old Coun[illegible] Road. *See that mound of dirt? I [illegible] buried there, but the grave was n[illegible] deep enough, and he still haunts t[illegible] est at night.*

We followed the road to the [illegible] way, then walked along the sh[illegible] until we reached a tavern, the W[illegible] Lodge, lit like a ship at sea. We [illegible] pop and ate pizza as townies dran[illegible] and played pool. What I love[illegible] was not the woods or the pizza b[illegible] freedom of getting away. For a fe[illegible] ments, I had slipped off the ra[illegible] Bender. I was out where no one [illegible] touch me. Then one afternoon S[illegible] ran into our cabin, sweating, ta[illegible] fast. "I was just in Bender's offic[illegible] said. "I went to look for the six [illegible] inch softballs. I saw his schedule [illegible] sneak-outs, all the sneak-outs, th[illegible] on his schedule. They're planne[illegible]

It was a thunderbolt. It mean[illegible] freedom had been an illusion—w[illegible] a lie. Just another activity like ar[illegible] or crafts. We had never made i[illegible] yond the grounds after all. I later h[illegible] legends about unapproved sneak[illegible] led by counselors who also want[illegible] escape Bender, but I did not bel[illegible] them. I had been fooled. I was cyn[illegible] I said, "Show me the tunnels."

Then one night, hours after [illegible] we were woken by the PA syste[illegible] was Bender's voice, like a voice [illegible] dream, saying, *Scott Simons, repo[illegible] the director's office. At once. Imm[illegible] ately. As in, Right now!* Every[illegible] knew Scott Simons. He was tw[illegible] but looked eighteen, with l[illegible] curly blond hair, big arms, bug e[illegible] and a rubbery face. He wore br[illegible] and had giant teeth. He was six [illegible] tall and wore tank tops and co[illegible] crush smaller campers without [illegible] trying. A flashlight crossed our c[illegible] in. It was Stelzer. He said he [illegible] going to get the story. Then B[illegible] der's voice was back: *Scott Simo[illegible] report to this office immediately!*

Stelzer returned.

"Cabin Fifteen is empty," he s[illegible] "They're gone, all gone."

"Sneak-out!" someone whispere[illegible]

The Cabin Fifteen counsel[illegible] were the coolest counselors in can[illegible] One was from Scotland. I can't [illegible] member his name, but I do reme[illegible] ber some of the things he could [illegible] with a soccer ball—how he cou[illegible]

it jump from foot to foot or go
ıp in the air then land gently
e back of his neck. But when I
picture him, I keep getting the
›f James Doohan, Scotty from
Trek. The other counselor was
d Bruce Warshauer. He had a
ead and brown hair and was
/, with a space between his
teeth. He was from Fort
ıe, Indiana. He had a running
with Bender. I don't think
were specific issues involved.
s more just a clash of world-
:. Bender represented the old
/estern idea of adulthood. He
for no monkey business and
uspicious of fun. He was one of
old guys who, when he grips
›y the tendon that connects
shoulder to your neck, you real-
surprisingly strong. Bruce was
bout fun, being young and
:ing rules, because, no matter
happened that summer, he
l be back at college in the fall.
split came into the open one
ıight when Bruce and his disci-
eworked "London Calling," the
anthem by The Clash.
ıow went:

ıder's calling
›m the faraway lodge
t out of your beds
u crazy slobs
nder's calling . . .
/e by Managua

laybe they got lost in the woods,"
Eric Stelzer.
laybe the Meat Man got them,"
Bobby Friedman.
ır counselors told us to shut up
go back to sleep, and we tried,
he news kept coming: how Bruce
asked Bender permission to take
ampers on a sneak-out and how
ission was denied; how Bruce de-
d to take them anyway, after
ts out, down Old Counselors
l; how Bruce ordered pop and
at the Wautosa Lodge, but some
e campers asked for alcohol; how
t Simons, because he was so big,
served several beers; how, in Illi-
a blood vessel burst in the brain
cott Simons's grandmother or
dfather—no one was clear on the
ils; how Scott Simons's mom
d camp to arrange for Scott's re-

turn for the funeral; how Bender went to Cabin Fifteen and found it empty, then got on the phone with the grieving parent and made excuses, then went looking for the campers; how after much searching Bender decided to wake the camp with the PA system (*Bender's calling/From the faraway lodge*); how fifty-eight minutes after the call, the campers emerged from the woods, Simons reeling from tree to tree, pausing on occasion to vomit; how Bender called the grieving mother and said her son had been found and how she demanded to talk to him; how Scott got on the phone with his mother and slurred and said, "I love you, man," and "What do you mean I sound funny? *You* sound funny." How Bruce and the Scotsman were told to vacate the grounds immediately.

By morning, everyone knew everything and camp was divided into enemy factions—those shocked by the drunken camper, those shocked by the firing of such cool counselors. We stood in silence at flag raising. When we turned to leave, a young counselor lowered the flag to half-mast. Bender returned the flag to the top of the pole. As he walked away, the flag was again lowered. This went on and on. Finally, Bender removed the flag and folded it lovingly and in its proper way. It was like watching the ceremonial last act of a dying empire.

In the mess hall, the campers chanted:

Bender Sucks!
Bender Sucks!
Bender Sucks!

Bob Bender stood, looked across the room, then walked out. I still see him crossing the floor, planks creaking, campers breaking into a cheer. Is this what it's like in a Third World country when the people come to know their power? It felt exciting, dangerous—the moment before the dictator is dragged from the palace and the rope is thrown over the lamppost. Bender and Al Wasserman soon enough reestablished order, but in those hours camp came closest to its natural condition, when order is stripped away and no one knows what will happen next.

On their way out, Bruce and the Scotsman stole a tent and sleeping bags and camped out across the lake. For the rest of the summer, if you were good with a canoe and brave, you could visit them, swim, and take sips of warm beer, living, for an afternoon, in a world without law.

Countless books and movies aim to tease out the meaning of life within various American institutions: the academy, the public school, the Army, the commercial fishing business, whatever; yet, as far as I know, there are no books or movies that get at the real truth of camp. A few years ago, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, longtime book reviewer for the *New York Times*, who wrote his own novel about camp, examined this scarcity in *Publishers Weekly*. "What a perfect setting for a work of fiction," he wrote, "this stripped-down world, where all that matters is the weather, your bunkmates and counselors and the world of nature surrounding you. Here is civilization in a nutshell, like a ship at sea, an infantry unit in the field or a boarding school. The shelves of American libraries must be weighted down with novels about summer camp." But he could find just two legitimate camp novels: *City Boy: The Adventures of Herbie Bookbinder* and *The War of Camp Omongo*.

Why?

Maybe because whenever a former camper sits down to write about camp, no matter how hardheaded his intentions, he gets caught up in nostalgia—for camp, but also for the person he was when he was small and open to suggestion. Maybe it's the brainwashing—the war cries, chants, and songs you were forced to learn, the patriotic jingles that, when you try to remember what camp was really like, rise up in your memory and shout down whatever it was you wanted to say. *Menominee, Menominee, Hats off to thee, To our colors true we shall ever be!* Maybe that's the purpose of all war cries and jingles. They get in your head and stay in your head then come out your mouth until your ears hear your mouth and hate your head and you have the lie instead of the truth. *Little Darlings*, *Meatballs II*, *Meatballs III* and

IV—lies, happy little lies. But every now and then you get a scene that hints at the truth, a dispatch missed by the censors. Like in the first *Meatballs*, when Bill Murray rallies the campers before the end-of-the-season games with the rich-kid camp, saying, "Even if we win . . . even if we play so far above our heads that our noses bleed for a week to ten days, even if God in Heaven above points his hand at our side of the field, even if every man, woman, and child joined hands together and prayed for us to win, it just wouldn't matter—because all the really good-looking girls would still go out with the guys from Mohawk, because they've got all the money."

The movies that get closest to the truth are the slasher flicks that use some abandoned camp as a backdrop. Think of the poster for *Friday the 13th*, the knife-wielding hand against a placid lake—true not because there were killers at camp, but because it *felt* like there were killers at camp.

A few years ago, I decided it was time to go back to Menominee. I could not believe it was still out there, sitting in the woods, consuming and disgorging campers. But when I went to the website, I saw pictures of the same lake and cabins, the same sort of kids, too, only they were kids now and we were kids then. Here and there, leading a cheer, I saw an adult who looked familiar. He had short dark hair and a square jaw. When I checked the directory, I realized it was my bunkmate Steve Kanefsky. He had purchased Menominee a few years before. He had become Al Wasserman. I knew Kanefsky in high school. We never talked about camp, and I assumed that, like most of us, he had stopped going as soon as he became interested in girls. But it turns out that some kids not only do not stop going to camp, they keep on going forever. When I did a Google search, I turned up an article from *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix* with the headline "Man Turns Childhood Dream Into Reality." It said Kanefsky bought the camp in 1997, when he was twenty-eight. It said he lives all summer at camp but spends winters in Scottsdale, Arizona, where "he followed his parents, Shari and Irwin Kanefsky, who moved here in 1986."

When I called Menominee to arrange a visit, the voice on the machine was clearly Kanefsky's. I left a long message, carefully reminding him just who I was. This was in September and camp was over, so, according to the machine, the messages would be checked infrequently. I did not expect a callback for days. But almost as soon as I hung up, my phone rang. It was Kanefsky. He said, "Is this Rocket?"

Ah, Rocket, the nickname I had earned—because of my speed on the ice and as an homage to the hockey player Maurice "the Rocket" Richard—at age five and kept until eleven or so, when my decline was first noticed.

"Yes," I said, "this is Rocket."

We talked. Kanefsky told me he was getting married in just a few days. His fiancée was named Bari. She was the sister of a camper. They met on Visitors' Day. He proposed at home plate of the Senior Diamond, now called Bob Bender Senior Diamond. The ceremony would be performed behind the house Kanefsky had built at the camp. After that, Bari Kanefsky, daughter-in-law of Shari Kanefsky, would take her place as the first lady of Menominee—live in the big house, eat in the mess hall, one of the few women in a camp full of boys, and so, presumably, the object of sexual fantasy. Steve told me that the camp now offered a four-week session, but, in the big ways, it was still the same. I told him that I wanted to visit, walk the grounds, look for names. He said, "I get it. Come whenever you want. I won't be there, but I'll call the off-season caretaker, Tom Fedderly. He has keys to everything."

I asked my brother-in-law, Jeremy, to come along, because Jeremy is an excellent photographer and I wanted him to take pictures, but also because I was scared. Off-season caretaker? I did not like the sound of that. In October, we drove to LaGuardia, caught a flight to Milwaukee, rented a car, and got on the interstate. The highway skirted Madison, then turned north, narrowed as it went. Out the window were barns and silos, cows, fields, dusty stands, fireworks shops, lakes, lots and vacancy signs. It was darkish when we reached Eagle River. Lights were on in the taverns, and smoke rose from the chimneys. This part of America has not been touched by sprawl. Instead of fast-food franchises there are supper clubs with names like the White Stag, with huge animals carved in wood out front. The convenience stores were filled with hunters. Some carried guns, had boots, and tracked mud. There, before, in these woods, some hunters tried to chase off a trespasser, the six-year-old Chai Soua Vang, a migrant from Laos, who turned out to be a member of the Hmong ethnic group, many of whom had trained by the CIA during the Vietnam War. A hundred thousand Hmong, brought back as refugees, live in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Vang, a truck driver and a shaman, said the hunters taunted and then chased him; he killed six of them.

We checked into the Black Bear Lodge and watched the Yankees on TV. There was a lake out the window. According to the menu at the restaurant, it was filled with walleye, a meaty, ancient fish. In the morning, we followed the road past motels and lodges. The trees made a canopy, the leaves were changing. We turned down the gravel drive into camp. We parked behind the mess hall. As soon as we got out, a golden retriever started slobbering all over us. It was Tom the caretaker's dog, and it was a lot like Tom, friendly, nervous, and a little too eager. Tom was working on a roof. He climbed down when he saw us, came over, and shook our hands. Kanefsky had told him we were coming.

He said he spent his free time in the woods, hunting deer and moose. He described the thrill of a bear hunt. He showed us what he was doing to upgrade the cabins and bathhouse. He said things like, "I want to make it good for Steve," and, "The last guy was not organized, but I want it right for Steve," and, "And one thing good you can say about me is

e would be appreciated." He as if he were a little afraid of unkmate. He then led us to a hat had been wooded when I a camper but was bald now, ed for Steve Kanefsky's dream e, a log McMansion with huge ows and a three-car log garage.

m went back to work and left wander. We walked through old owner's house, the cottage e Charlie Comiskey spent sum- It has been turned into guest ers. When I was a camper it off-limits. I felt like I was pok- hrough Berchtesgaden, search- or evidence: I looked in drawers ead files but could find no men- of the bird man or THE BULLY. It he same story when I looked at res in the mess hall. The group were faded, the faces too small cognize, and elsewhere I saw ly pictures of Steve Kanefsky. e I began to see everywhere: fsky at ten, Kanefsky at thir- , Kanefsky at thirty; Kanefsky friends, Kanefsky water-skiing, fsky alone. It seemed he had ced pictures of the public past pictures of his private history. I enly understood the motive of itarians. They do not rewrite ast to remove evidence of their arrassments and crimes, as I always thought, but to turn personal history into public ory—to shape the past into ory that culminates in them: e Kanefsky.

ooked at the sidewalks where we written our names in cement. what had been done to the pic- s by Kanefsky had here been e by time, all those ice storms blizzards that flattened the sur- until the letters looked like y-man scrawl. As if our names our lives, written clearly when were young then gradually erased ne pounding of nature.

went into the cabin where I lived the bird man and THE BULLY. The ks had been stripped, the bed es looked skeletal. I stood beneath spot where the bird man had gone the rafters. I could see him up e, still, beams rising above. I could THE BULLY, too, on this very spot, ing up.

I went outside. When I saw the basketball court, I remembered the incident that led to my decision to quit Menominee. I was in my cabin when a younger kid came in crying. He told me Scott Simons had taken his ball.

"The one your mom gave you?"

"Yeah."

I went outside and said, "Simons, give the kid back his property."

"Who's gonna make me?"

"I am."

I took a swing at Simons. He put me in a headlock. I proceeded with the backup plan: flail wildly. My fist caught his giant lip, which mashed against his braces, which were in the process of correcting his giant teeth. He started to bleed, then started to cry. He ran away crying. That night, I could hear the talk:

Who beat up Simons?

That little guy, Rocket!

By the next summer, I was like the gunslinger in a western. Every punk who wanted to prove himself came looking for me. I had to fight every day, culminating in an epic, no-decision battle in the rain. After that, I did not want to go to camp anymore.

Every year, near the end of the summer, Menominee faced Camp Kawaga in a mini-Olympics. Preparation for these games mimicked the preparation for war. Of course we heard about Kawaga throughout the summer: the enemy over the horizon, a challenge to our way of life and our sense of self. But a week before the games—that's when the attacks began. We would be changing in the bathhouse when a young man in a hooded sweatshirt raced through, calling us names and dousing us with cold water. Or he dashed through the mess hall, throwing eggs. Some seniors went after him, but the villain always got away.

Word came back. *It was Joe Kawaga!*

The attacks grew in frequency. We were told to be careful, as Joe Kawaga was remorseless, brutal, determined. He was behind every tree, waiting to strike. The young kids would walk the trails in quaking fear. The night before the games, the seniors finally caught Joe Kawaga. A joyful shout went through camp. The saboteur was locked in a cell in the barn. We put on our best clothes for the trial. Evidence was presented and a verdict rendered. As the judge read the sentence—*Joe Kawaga, you are to be burned at the stake until you are dead*—the campers stood as one man, jeering. A dummy was exchanged for the senior playing Joe Kawaga, but if you were very young—not a baby, maybe, but still only six years old—you might miss this exchange and believe it was a real person being hoisted onto the shoulders of the mob, marched into the night, and tossed into the flames.

Later, as you lay in bed, the cries of the mob echoed in your ears, and you saw the body in flames. A counselor woke you in the middle of the night, saying, "The kids from Kawaga have come for revenge. Run to the mess hall." As you ran, someone knocked you down and said, "I'm gonna burn you!" When you got to the mess hall, the lights were on and the older kids were there cheering. Someone called your name. You ran through a tunnel of arms. A senior gave you a jersey with your nickname on the back: ROCKET. The next morning, the kids from Kawaga arrived in a dirty yellow school bus.

I came back from camp with no answers. What happened to the bird man? Who was THE BULLY? I decided it was better not to know. If I found THE BULLY, I told myself, he would be just another middle-aged guy with just another middle-aged job. This way he could live on, undiminished, in my mind. Then one day I was looking at pictures on the camp website. These started in the present, then went back to the Nineties, the Eighties. I slowed as I reached the Seventies. I studied foreground and background. I stopped dead at a shot of the entire camp posed in front of the equipment shed. There was the bird man. I recognized him immediately. By the cowlick and the look in his eyes. Next to him was THE BULLY. I knew him from his body language, from the way he pushed the bird man out of the way, but mostly from his face, because it was mine. ■

ACROSS THE BOSPHORUS

Photographs from Turkey

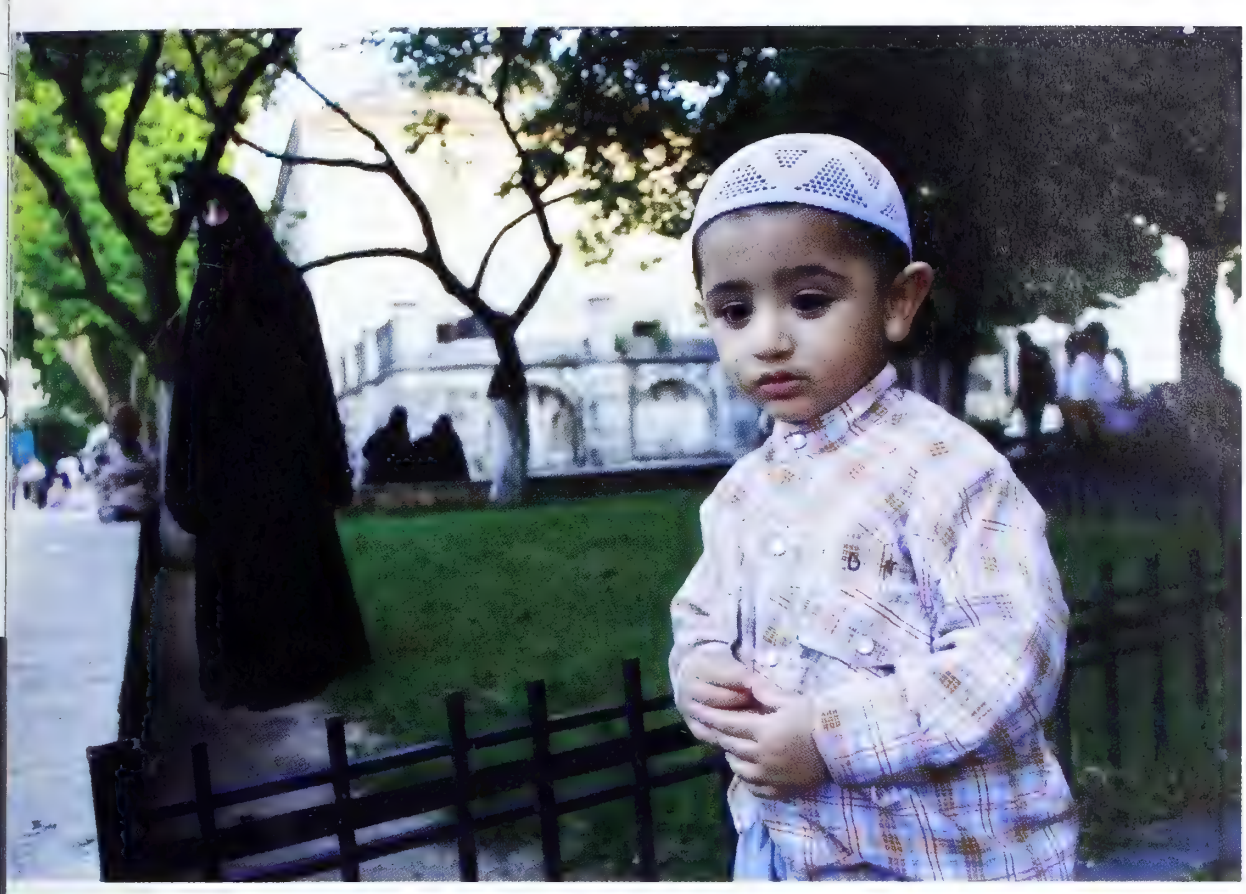
By Peter Turnley

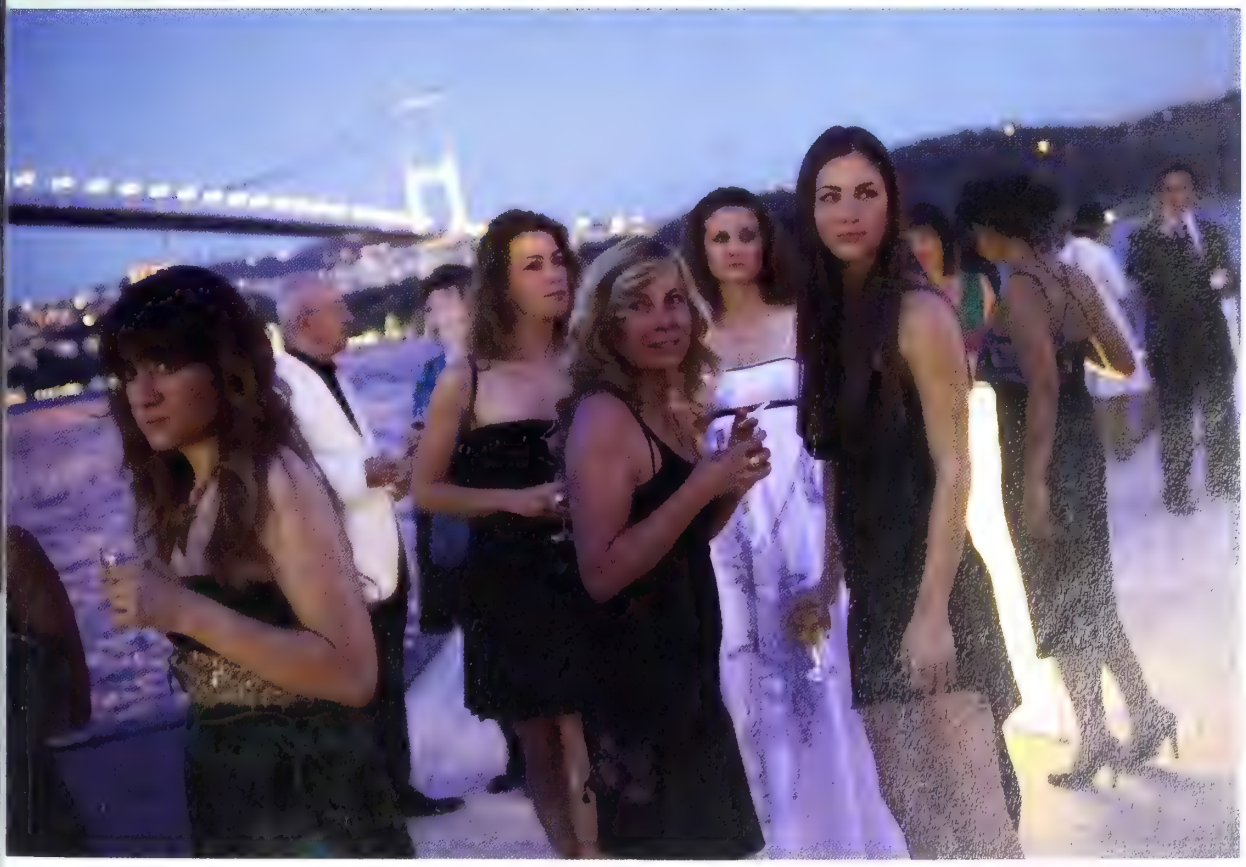


A market in the Eminonu district of Istanbul

Harper's Magazine contributing editor Peter Turnley is a photographer based in Paris and New York City. He has published four books of photographs, including Moments of Revolution, Parisians, *and* In Times of War and Peace. *His new book* McClellan Street *is being published this month.*

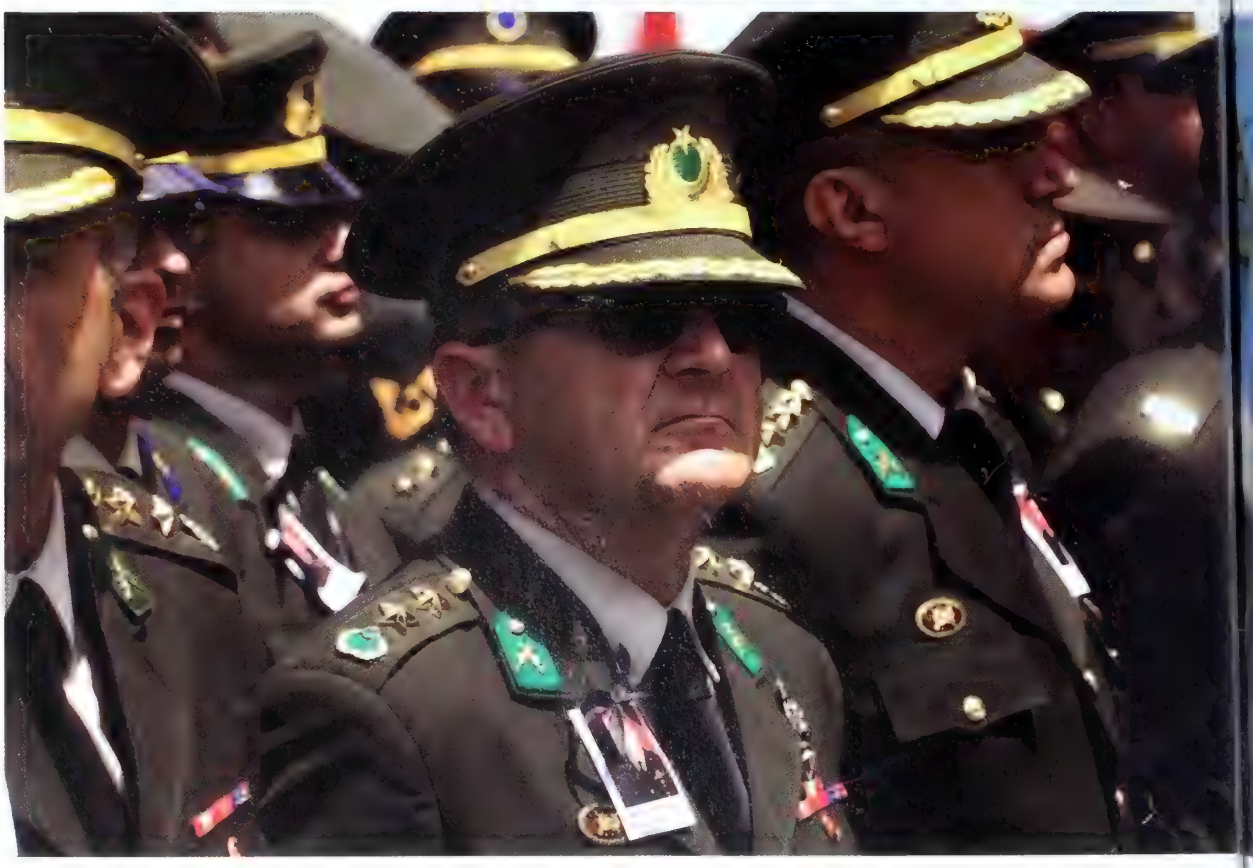
Photographs © Peter Turnley/CORBIS





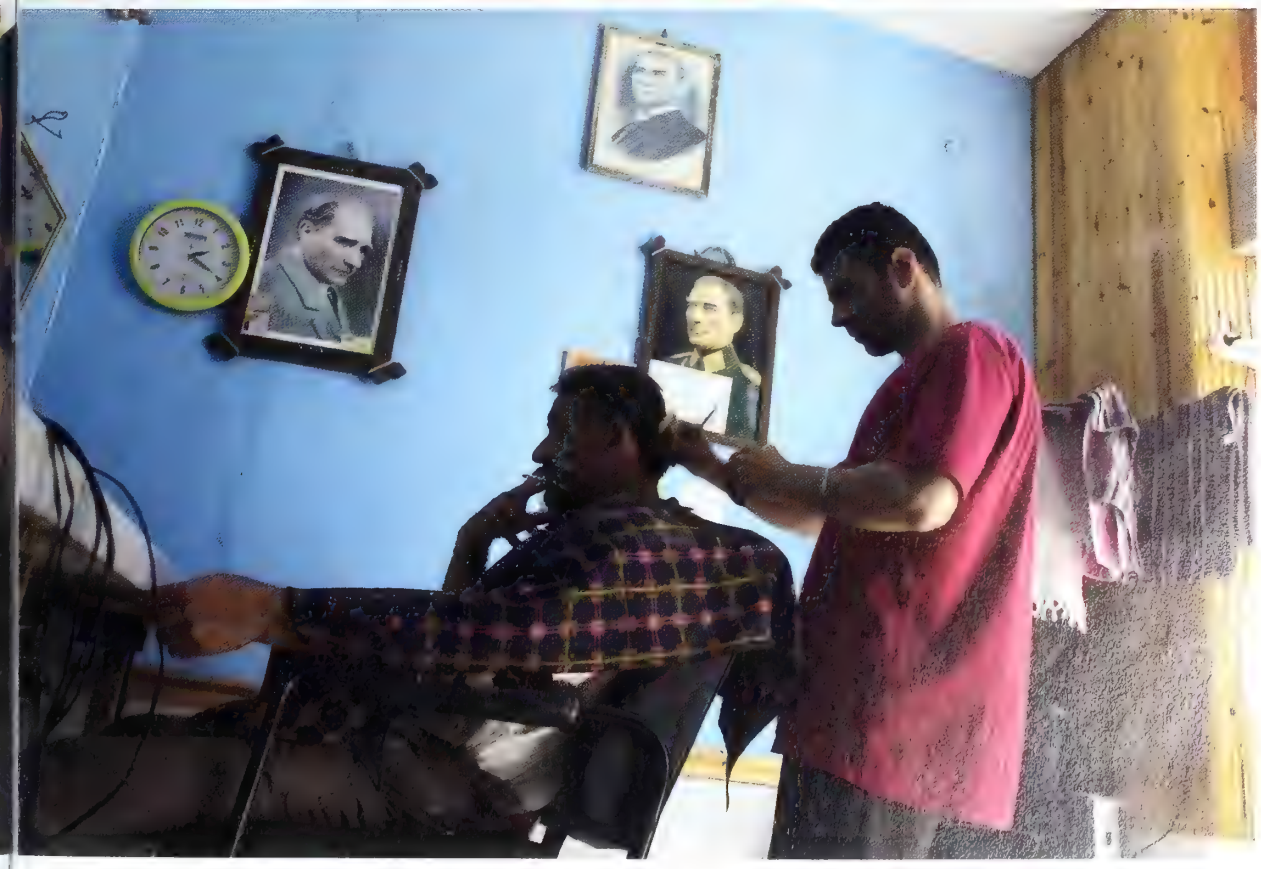
nother and son outside the Fatih Mosque in Istanbul
arty near the Bosphorus Bridge





A boy poses with his family near the Galata Bridge. Young boys wear a traditional costume as part of a circumcision ceremo
A funeral for two Turkish soldiers killed in the southern part of the country by Kurdish guerri



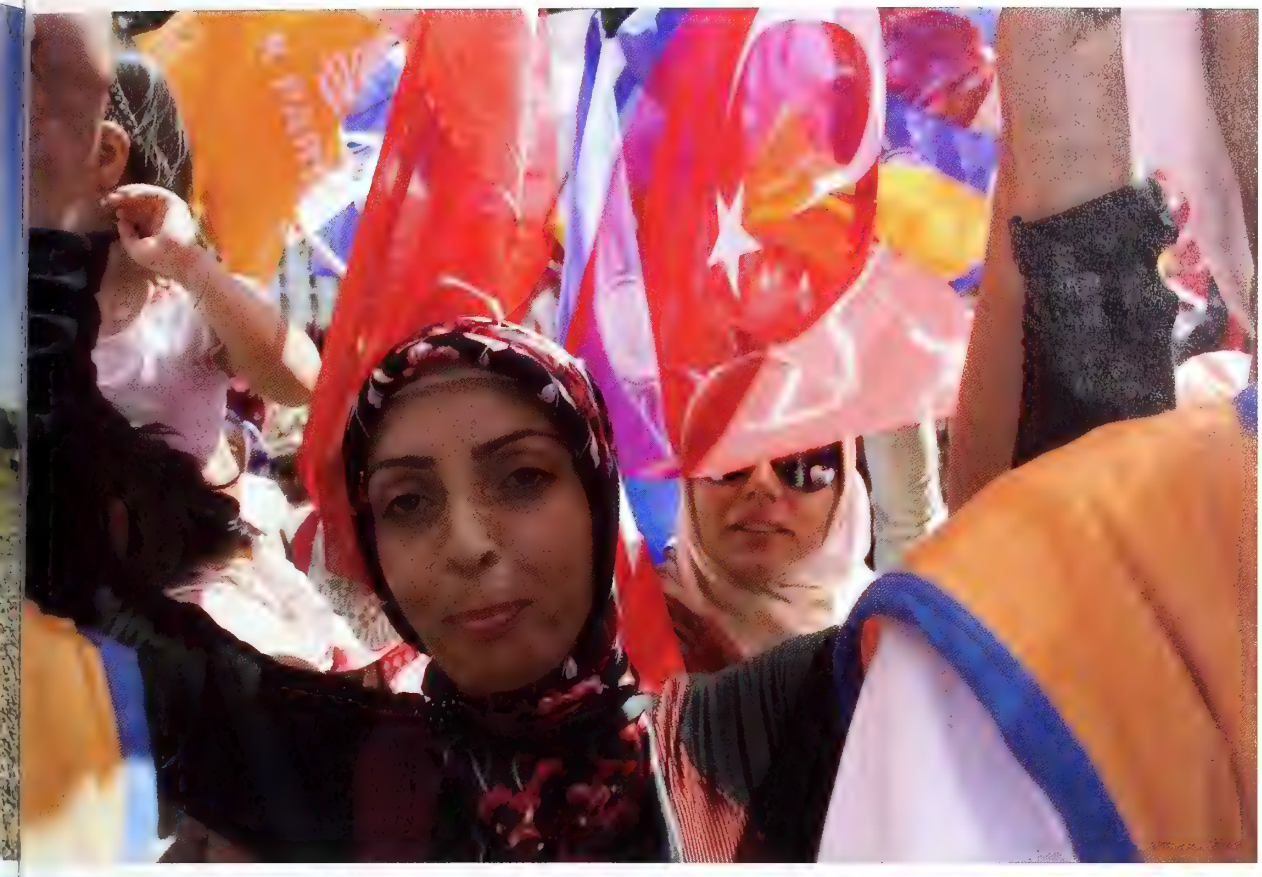


yer at the Fatih Mosque
arbershop in the village of Gölyazi. On the wall are the ubiquitous portraits of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey





Kurdish farmers milk sheep in southern Turkey between Diyarbakir and Batma
Fishing at a port along the Sea of Marmara in Istanb





porters of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the Kurdish region of southern Turkey
a ferry between Eminönü and Karaköy, Istanbul





A port on the Sea of Mar
On a tram near Sultanahmet, Ist

THERE IS NO EAST

Reading Orhan Pamuk

By Christopher de Bellaigue

A westernized Turkish writer—'s call him Orhan Pamuk—rises to ominence in the 1980s and 1990s. e writes two highly autoographical novels that are ell received in Turkey be- re his third, *The White astle*, about a Turk and a enetian who exchange entities, brings him to the tention of an admiring orld. Two subsequent ovels, *The Black Book*, out a peripatetic Istanbul urk who adopts the iden- y of his cousin, a famous ewspaper columnist, and ventually conspires to ave him killed, and My *ame Is Red*, a story of six- enth-century Turks who ll and die over religion nd art, attract global ac- aim. Beginning in the late 990s, the writer makes sev- al visits to Kars, a remote nd politically fractious own in eastern Turkey, here, posing as a journal- t, he collects material for novel and arouses con- derable local suspicion. The novel, *now*, is about Ka, a poet who goes east n a journalistic assignment he never ompletes, gets entangled in a coup unched by secular army officers, be- ays an Islamist leader, and flees abroad—only to be assassinated, presumably by the Islamists.

After the publication of *Snow*, the author's relations with the Turkish media and many normal citizens, long under strain, suffer irreparable damage. Secularists accuse him of portraying Islamism benignly and the Turkish Republic as paranoid and militaristic. These accusations intensify after many in the West, notably in the European Union—a club that Turkey, nominally at least, wants to join—leap to the author's defense when he is tried for the crime of "insulting Turkishness" in an interview with a Swiss newspaper in which he says that "thirty thousand Kurds and one million Armenians died in these lands, and almost nobody talks about it but me." The case against the author is dismissed, but not before he has been threatened by right-wing Turks and their allies in the media. The same Turks detect a dark conspiracy behind the author's election as a Nobel Laureate in Literature in October 2006. In fear for his life, the author goes into exile in New York, and walls in Beyoğlu and Cihangir, two Istanbul neighborhoods that he has written about, are daubed with the words, "Whatever you do, don't come back!"

But—and here is the author's fatal mistake—he does come back, on a short, low-key personal visit. In the spring of 2007, when the newspapers are full of rumors of a military coup against the Islamist government and a strange low-lying cloud obscures the Bosphorus view from his studio in Cihangir, veiling the city and the water but not the vast Turkish flag that billows above the distant Asian shore, the author grants an interview to a foreigner, a European journalist who is writing a book about a remote and po-



hristopher de Bellaigue is the author of two ooks, In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs *nd, most recently,* The Struggle for Iran.

ustration by Riccardo Vecchio

litically fractious town in eastern Turkey. As the famous author takes a photograph through the open balcony doors of the strange low-lying cloud—"I have never seen anything like it," he says—the European, overcome by envy and a lust for artistic celebrity, picks up a weighty foreign literary award, the bust of a German poet, and smashes it down on the author's head.

It scarcely seems possible to write about Orhan Pamuk, who has spent much of his life describing what it means to write and record, without experiencing a sense of comradeship and rivalry, without longing to encroach on the universe that he has created, to barge into his imagination. This is what Galip does in *The Black Book*, when he insinuates his way into the flat and the persona of his missing cousin, Celâl, a famous columnist for a mass-circulation newspaper, whose voice he imitates, whose romantic past he adopts, and whose daily column he eventually starts to write. In *Snow*, the line between the narrator and the narrated blurs when Orhan, who is telling the story of his old friend Ka, finds himself personally involved with the subject of his research, even falling in love with the same woman.

Alternatively, one might consider Pamuk from a narrower, more local perspective, that of a Turk. It is sometimes hard for Turks to discuss Pamuk without getting into an avid and even upsetting debate over his exploration of what it means to be Turkish. The subjects that he has raised again and again, of authenticity and identity, are those that the Turkish Republic has tried to hide behind such fuzzy imperatives as modernity, secularism, and national unity. They are sensitive subjects, and their discussion alone often suffices to expose neuroses and provoke accusations of treason and betrayal.

Finally, more parochial still, imagine looking at Orhan Pamuk as a member of his long-suffering family, fearful of each new book with its inevitable allusions to absent fathers, snide mothers, and bullying elder brothers. *Istanbul*, Pamuk's recent childhood memoir, contained many such allusions and led to two family ruptures. Then there is the resentment that Pamuk gets simply for being Orhan Pamuk, the sniping from lesser Turkish writers who think they should be where he is, the charges of haughtiness and arrogance. Pamuk arouses strong emotions, as strong as any writer today.

Should one leave these emotions at the threshold of a meeting with Pamuk? Must they be expunged from email exchanges and telephone conversations? I wonder whether those passions that have made Pamuk a controversial man, the hottest of literary topics, have also had the effect of belittling him as a writer, undermining his aspirations, tenacious and deeply felt, to artistic greatness. Take, for instance, the prestigious prize. Pamuk would surely have won it eventually. But last year, of all years, three years after he completed his most recent book, the Nobel jury rewarded a man newly famous for resisting the intolerance that we ascribe to societies less civilized than our own. Does the prize weigh heavier or lighter as a result? Fifty or one hundred years from now, will Orhan Pamuk be called genius or champion?

He was born in 1952 into a family that had made its money laying railway tracks, a clan of westernized Turks occupying all five stories of a block of flats, Pamuk Apartments, in Istanbul's upmarket Nişantaşi district. Pamuk lived in comfort and was sent to the best schools, but his parents' feuding unsettled him, their marriage refusing to thrive or die, and as a boy he sought imaginative refuges—doppelgängers, the multiple perspectives and infinite refractions provided by mirrors—that would later serve him as a novelist.

At an early age, Pamuk was already alive, we learn in *Istanbul*, to the historical ironies of his place in Turkey and the world. His family was noisy and argumentative, but its heart was spiritually and culturally dead. In *Istanbul*, the Pamuks' secular trophies—the unused piano, the teacups imprisoned in cabinets, the Art Nouveau screen arranged without purpose—reflect the elisions and falsehoods of Turkey's journey to modernity. That crusty old Islamic monarchy, the Ottoman Empire, was long dead, killed off in 1923 by the impious nation-builder K[illegible] Atatürk, but Atatürk's wester[n] revolution had brought hazards [of] own. They were there for all to [see]. Pamuk Apartments, in the fa[ce] European aspirations, in their [mo] disdain for religion (a pursuit fo[r] vants), in the philistinism of Pa[mu] sad and beautiful mother. It mi[ght] said that where Atatürk's cham[pi]on saw a transition to a vigorous [and] positivist way of life, Pamuk [saw] wound, and it is on that wound [that] he positioned himself, a stand [point] from which he has derived mu[ch] his power and creativity.

Pamuk came to relish melan[choly] and decay. The Istanbul of the 1[9]50s and 1960s was no longer the capi[tal] a world empire, or even of an im[pe]rished nation-state. Atatürk ha[d] seen fit to establish his capital t[here] choosing instead the rural fastne[ss] Ankara, far from foreign threats, a [new] hill for a new cult. In Istanbul m[any] acres of old trees were felled; imp[erial] mansions, marble fountains, and [wa]terside villas surrendered to fire, [ne]glect, and developers. This was no[t a] generation—the new buildings co[nsi]up would be denounced as shoddy [and] hideous—but a further indignity to [add] to the existing insults. Amid the fu[ror] of change, reminders stood everywh[ere] of the old Ottoman heritage, "trac[es]" as Pamuk writes in *Istanbul*, "of a g[reat] culture and a great civilization tha[t] were unfit or unprepared to inherit [in] our frenzy to turn Istanbul into a p[oor] poor, second-class imitat[ion] of a western city."

Pamuk rarely writes heatedly; [the] anger he shows here amplifies [his] youthful interest in four Turk[ish] writers whose vision of Istanbul a[nd] its past greatly influenced his ow[n]. Like Pamuk, these men—the "gr[eat] fat poet" Yahya Kemal, the popu[lar] historian Reşat Ekrem Koçu, t[he] memoirist Abdülhak Şinasi His[ar] and the novelist and poet Ahm[et] Hamdi Tanpinar—shared an admi[ra]tion for Western literature (Fren[ch] in their case), but they also strove [for] artistic integrity, and this may ha[ve] been a block to their wholly adopti[ng] the idioms of the West. "To be wes[tern] and yet, at the same time, to [be] authentic" is how Pamuk distills th[e]

enge facing them; they found nswer in writing about "the de- and fall of the great empire into t they were born"—creating, as k puts it, a "poetics of the past." the prose of Tanpinar, whose ranslated 1949 urban love story, , Pamuk admires, Istanbul is to ied for its poverty but celebrat- its vitality. In Koçu—author of ewspaper supplement *Strange Curious Facts from Our History*, oisseur of Ottoman torture tech- s, lunatics, and lissome boy ac- s—we find a precursor for what k calls "the archivist in me," ncyclopedist and classifier of lers, freaks, and abominations the imperial past, a past so brighter in the mind's eye than overcast republican present. Ottoman miscellanea finds its nto Pamuk's novels.

om Kemal and Tanpinar, them- s following the example of earli- estern visitors, Pamuk drew in- tion as a *flâneur*, an explorer of bul's most wretched and sunken borhoods, a pastime that links to the contemporary Turkish ographer Ara Güler, whose dig- d, unsentimental photographs of rban poor illustrate the pages of *bul*. Pamuk seems more attuned anpinar's geographical agnosti- than to the cloying nostalgia one finds in some of Kemal's po- "I am not attached to the East," inar wrote, "or to what is old, o the life of this country. Is this g a Muslim, or being an Eastern- r being a Turk? I don't know . . . e there is no East, and none of or of that—there is the life that ee around us."

muk denies that he wrote *Istan-* s a companion to his fiction, but e who know and love his novels itably will devour it as such. The ative ends in the mid-1970s n Pamuk, who has already ped out of architecture school in r to paint, vows instead to be e a novelist. Hindsight, Pamuk's ours, encourages us to read *Istan-* not only as a memoir but also as refully weighted homage to the iors and artists who influenced way of looking at the city. Be- s Pamuk's four "lonely melancholic" Turks, there are such Westerners as the German Antoine-Ignace Melling and the Frenchmen de Nerval and Gautier. As he discusses these and other visitors, amiably transmitting the most jaundiced and patronizing opinions about the city he loves, we get a glimpse into Pamuk's accepting, creative spirit, and his sense that Istanbul, like art, is the property of everyone.

But there is also a more specific revelation here, an inkling that were it not for the West and its culture Pamuk would be quite a different writer, or perhaps not a writer at all. He appreciates the painter Melling because Melling was tactful and assiduous in recording Istanbul's contours and inhabitants, and because back then, at the turn of the eighteenth century, Turkish artists were too busy eulogizing the sultan to interest themselves in recording these contours and inhabitants. He is grateful as well to a Croatian cartographer whose insurance maps of the city facilitate Pamuk's favored postmodernist pastime: speculating on the daily movements of the writers he admires. Pamuk refers to "our desire for verisimilitude" as if this desire were axiomatic, but it was not so in Ottoman times—when many Turks regarded realism in art as unworthy or blasphemous—and it isn't today. If, as he writes, "there is no Ottoman painting that can easily accommodate our visual tastes," this is because "we" have grown up to see things in a different, Western way.

So Pamuk values the contributions of Westerners, literalistic though they may sometimes be, on the premise, learned in front of his mother's triple-paneled mirror, that you can never have too many perspectives.

Indeed, *Cevdet Bey and His Sons*, Pamuk's first and most conventional book, a family saga that spans six and a half decades of imperial and republican history, is his only novel to have a single, anonymous, third-person narrator. (It is also the only one not to have been translated into English.) In his second, *The Silent House*, Pamuk approaches some of the same issues, in particular the polarizing question of what sort of country Turkey should try to be, this time using multiple first-person narrators and elusive, slipping chronologies. But it is Pamuk's third novel, *The White Castle*, the earliest that readers of this essay are likely to have encountered, that announced his daring as a writer and, just as important, his single-mindedness as a contrarian and autodidact. These two characteristics are important to our understanding of Pamuk. For amplification of them and other aspects of his personality, we must return to the polished words of Pamuk on Pamuk, in interviews, *Istanbul*, and *Other Colors*, a collection of essays and vignettes. The contempt with which the schoolboy Pamuk viewed many of his teachers and schoolfellows; his truancy, which started in earnest at the age of eight; his aimlessness in many things, but not in his desire, which never flagged, to thwart his mother's safe, bourgeois ambitions for him—from all this, the picture we get is of an observer, a possessor of sporadic charm and brilliance, superior, hyper-aware, and cussed. It accords fully with the later self-image that emerges from his writings, of a rebel rejecting the meager and repetitive culture around him.

There had been a military coup in 1960, when Pamuk was seven. Between a second coup in 1971 and a third in 1980, Turkey was convulsed by political violence. Mostly the right fought the left, but sometimes the Maoists and Leninists fought each other. In literature, the preserve of the left, radical politics joined hands with an innate formal conservatism to discourage authors from reading, let alone writing, innovative books. Social realists such as Gorky and Steinbeck were the models to emulate; Borges and Nabokov were nowhere to be seen. "You are writing a novel," an acquaintance asked Pamuk when he was working on *Cevdet Bey and His Sons*, "but do you know the villages?"

Pamuk had had enough of reading about the villages and their stoical, suffering inhabitants. He attended a few political meetings, got bored, and became a political voyeur. (He has likened himself to Saim, the private archivist in *The Black Book*: collector of all political views and opinions, subscriber to none.) His elder

brother, Şevket, his rival but also his companion, was away studying at Yale. For a while he had a beautiful girlfriend, whom he painted repeatedly, but she left too, for a smart school in Switzerland. Pamuk was not a member of any literary community or clique. He had no literary soul mate. His friends were Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, Proust. But his best friend, his main character and inspiration, was Orhan Pamuk.

Imagine the effect that *The White Castle*—that piercing, startling little book, so broad in conception and economical in execution—had on the bruised citizens of Turkey when it appeared in 1985. Civilian government had been reinstated after the coup five years before, but the president was still a general and the jails were full. A new constitution was in place, designed to unite people around the ideas of Turkishness, modernity, and moderate Islam. Into the picture strides Orhan Pamuk with a very modern novel about Ottoman Istanbul, probing the fundamental questions of existence with barely a reference to God or nationality—asking, Why am I what I am? The answer, of course, is that I may not be.

"From a very young age," runs the first sentence of *Istanbul*, "I suspected there was more to my world than I could see: Somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double." In *The White Castle*, Pamuk casts these twins as two scholars, an ambitious Turk (the "Hoja," or master) and his erudite Venetian slave, identical in appearance and complementary in aptitude and temperament. Emboldened by Galileo's and Bacon's spirit of rational enquiry, fueled by a shared desire to please the sultan, the two men discuss the planets, experiment with gunpowder, study ants, observe a plague epidemic, and eventually start work on a terrifying machine of war.

In Pamuk's child's eye, the second Orhan is not only a companion; he is also an impostor and a tormentor. So it proves in *The White Castle*. Between the scholars, behind the cooperation and cohabitation, there is an embrace, both fruitful and destructive. They sit like married adversaries at opposite ends of a medieval dining table, daring each other to confess, to succeed or fail. It's as if these men have found what Pamuk has called "the 'other' who will complete us." They are on "a journey that takes us beyond the surface, into the depths, closer to the center."

Quite what this is Pamuk does not make explicit, though it has much to do with knowledge, of evil as well as of good. Over the years, the Turk and the Venetian grow still more alike, each delving deeper into the other's past until the sultan unexpectedly orders them to deploy their war machine against the Poles. The campaign into the Carpathians, conducted under downpours of yellow rain, degenerates as Hoja organizes parties of men to torture local villagers into revealing their worst sins and transgressions. But he is disappointed by the banalities to which they confess, as the Venetian narrator relates:

> It was not that we never came across interesting victims who told of their sins at great length, as if deep down in their hearts they'd been waiting for years for this day of interrogation, terrified and bewildered either by tales of our violence, which we'd heard had travelled from village to village and become legend, or by the specter of some absolute justice whose mystery they could not penetrate; but by now Hoja was no longer interested in the infidelities of husbands or wives, the stories of poor villagers who envied their rich neighbors. He continually repeated that there was a deeper truth, but I think he doubted now and then, as we did, whether we would be able to discover it.

By the end of the book, the two men have finally exchanged identities. The war machine, a lumbering "ass in the mud," has a disastrous baptism of fire, and the White Castle, the ultimate prize, remains unconquered. "It was at the top of a high hill," writes the Venetian, "its towers streaming with flags were caught by the faintest red glow of the setting sun, and it was white; purest white and beautiful. I didn't know why I thought one could see such a beautiful and unattainable thing only in a dream."

The White Castle still reads as if it were new. For most Turkish wr accustomed to looking at hist events as tools in contemporary tics, the Ottoman Empire is s thing either to be decried, as tionary and backward, or vau (in the case of the nationalist evidence for Turkish superiority *White Castle* does neither. Par backdrop is sumptuous, but his is not concerned primarily witl Ottoman Empire. It is conce with timeless and universal de to learn, to advance, to know self. Pamuk's tone does not when he describes the ideas an entific methodologies, most of Western in origin, that inspire two men. Unlike many of his patriots, Pamuk feels no embar ment at the late Ottomans' inal to compete with Europe in the eration of ideas, and seeks no sc goats for it. He takes history ser ly, but not personally.

When I'm reading *The White C* or *My Name Is Red*, or even *The I Book*, with its debts to Ottoman ary culture, I feel like the Edwar aesthete Robert Byron standing i bazaar of Herat, in Afghanistan, proclaiming, "Here at last is Asia v out an inferiority complex." Par then, is Turkey without an inferi complex. He has not succumbe that common Turkish urge to a "We are Westerners," or "We ar Eastern people," or "We are sec ists," or "We are devout Muslims if a few words, forcefully uttered, lay Turkey's identity question to This urge has been met by the re ive instinct of many Europeans to sify the Turks, often pejoratively. gether, they have turned Turkey's c to join the European Union, wl promises to drag on painfully for m years, into an historical trauma.

Pamuk's distaste for these la can be attributed, in part, to his preciation for Ottoman history culture, to his sense of where rep lican Turkey comes from and w it is kicking against. He didn't l this appreciation from teacher textbooks. History courses in T ish schools lionize the early toman sultans, vilify the later o and present Turkish history as fl ing to an inescapable conclusi

riumph of Atatürk's revolution. ıermore, being concerned with ying the role of ethnic Turks, urriculum plays down the Iran- ınd Arab components of Ot- n civilization.

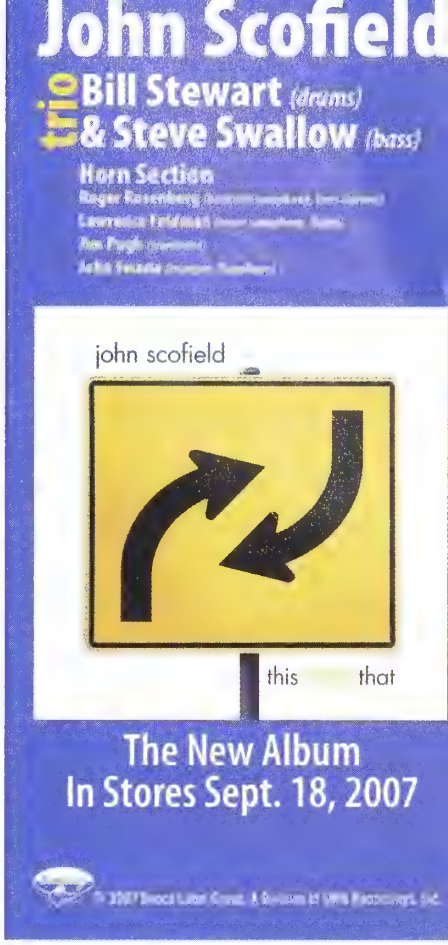
atürk, in his attempt to sever the between modern Turks and their man forebears, and to ready his try for a progressive, Western fu- made Ottoman and republican ish mutually unintelligible. In his parliament legislated that ish no longer could be written in Arabic script but instead had to ndered in a modified version of Roman alphabet. He and his col- es labored to rid Turkish of thou- of Arabic and Persian words and ssions, and to replace them with ." Turkish equivalents. If there no equivalent, they would invent or adopt a French substitute. adays, the vast majority of Turks ot read Turkish books published to the law of 1928. Although y important books have been slated" into modern Turkish, the ves and libraries are full of unex- ed Ottoman remains, decipher- to only a few.

han Pamuk is not a fluent reader toman Turkish, but it is clear from istorical novels that he has read a many of these "translations," as as a lot of history and commentary t the Ottomans in modern Turk- nd English. He has also read much e Persian poetry that made up the eval Ottoman canon—again, in lation. He spent months studying miniature paintings, inspired by an masters, that the sultans com- oned, and *My Name Is Red* is the of these labors. This novel, Pa- 's most optimistic and accessible te, is a polyphonic murder mystery; lso an intelligent consideration of lash, expressed in the tension be- n stylized Islamic representation Renaissance verisimilitude, of di- ng civilizations.

The Black Book, a tricky, pi- sque, and occasionally richly ic story of disappearance and im- onation, Pamuk draws on Ot- n and Iranian poetic quests to lify the quest he narrates. Osten- , *The Black Book* is about Galip's ch for his wife, Rüya, who has disappeared. But Rüya, whose name means "dream" in Turkish, is an ethereal presence; more substantial is the man, also missing, whom Galip suspects of harboring Rüya: her half-brother Celâl. *The Black Book* contains references to the eighteenth-century Ottoman poem *Hüsn ü Aşk*, which relates the efforts of a young man, Aşk (meaning "love"), to find his beloved, Hüsn ("beauty"), only to discover that Hüsn never left his side and was with him all along. There are also allusions to the Iranian mystic Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, in which a flock of birds embark on an arduous journey in search of the mythical Simurgh. Purified by their ordeals, thirty of them attain their goal, being confronted by their own reflections and thus completing a circuitous journey back to themselves. *Simurgh* means "thirty birds" in Persian.

Pamuk is asking us to consider that Galip's quest has an internal character, but he misses something amid the clever allusions and word games, and this sheds light on an important aspect of his work. According to the conventions of Persian (and thus Ottoman) mystical poetry, whenever a journey is undertaken or a lover yearned for, the reader assumes that the objective is neither a place nor a person, but rather a blissful union with God. In Persian poetry, with its established metaphors—the embrace of a lover, for instance, stands for spiritual annihilation in God—the border between the earthly and the transcendent is as nebulous as the border, in Pamuk's work, between the real and the imagined. But this is a border that Pamuk, proud of his secular humanism, refuses to approach. For him, mysticism is a "treasury of patterns. . . . I don't seek anything beyond that." And so, in his rereading of the mystic verses, Pamuk elides the ecstatic spirituality at their core; these poems are useful merely as literary precedents for the secular, psychological quest that Galip is engaged in.

There is a striking example of this elision when Pamuk has Celâl write an article about the relationship between Celâleddin Rumi, perhaps the





greatest of all the mystic poets, and his muse, the itinerant dervish Shams of Tabriz. It was Shams who prompted Rumi to abandon his career as a doctor of religious law and to pursue the highest of mystic ambitions: immersion in God. Shams's disappearance in 1247 plunged Rumi into grief; he went on to extemporize, over a decade or more, the 25,000 Persian couplets of the *Masnavi-e Ma'navi*, or Mystical Rhyming Couplets, and much other mystic poetry besides. In Celâl's hands, however, Rumi and Shams are reduced to mere precursors for the twins, doppelgängers and impostors who fill the pages of *The Black Book*. "If I am He," Celâl quotes Rumi after Shams's disappearance, "then why am I still searching?" Celâl has missed the point of this line. It is a reference to Shams only at the most literal level. Rumi is identifying himself with God.

When it was published in 1990, *The Black Book* attracted more attention than any of Pamuk's earlier works. His treatment of Istanbul was likened to Joyce's treatment of Dublin, and Pamuk's writing in this novel, with its winding, ambulative sentences and relentless literary cross-fertilization, lends itself to such a comparison. There was also criticism, especially in Turkey, by readers who may have been perplexed and unnerved by such a difficult book. In a review for the magazine *Gösteri*, the critic Tahsin Yücel bitterly regretted the propensity of Pamuk's hero Galip, while searching for his wife, to "interest himself in things that are, for the most part, absolutely unconnected to the poor woman . . . to characterise such a book as a love story would be utterly risible."

No, *The Black Book* is not a love story. Perhaps Pamuk's greatest achievement is to cast Istanbul anew, as a city composed of layers of history whose sinister fascination often lies below the surface. Here, in a superb early chapter called "When the Bosphorus Dries Up," he looks forward to a time when Istanbul's celebrated waterway becomes a mucky valley:

> Amid the doomsday chaos, among toppled wrecks of old City Line ferries, will stretch vast fields of bottle caps and seaweed. Adorning the mossy masts of American transatlantic liners that ran aground when the last of the water receded overnight, we shall find skeletons of Celts and Ligurians, their mouths gaping open in deference to the unknown gods of prehistory. As this new civilization grows up amid mussel-encrusted Byzantine treasures, tin and silver knives and forks, thousand-year-old wine corks and soda bottles, and the sharp-nosed wrecks of galleons, I can also imagine its denizens drawing fuel for their lamps and stoves from a dilapidated Romanian oil tanker whose propeller has become lodged in the mud. . . . No longer will we soothe our souls with songs about the birds of spring, the fast-flowing waters of the Bosphorus, or the fishermen lining its shores; the a.r will ring instead with the anguished cries of men whose fear of death has driven them to smite their foes with the knives, daggers, bullets, and rusting scimitars that their forefathers, hoping to fend off the usual thousand-year inquiries, tossed into the sea. As for the *Istanbullus* who once lived on the edge of the water, when they return to their homes exhausted of an evening they will no longer open bus windows to drink in the sea air; instead, they'll stuff newspaper and cloth in the cracks to keep the stink of rotting flesh and mud from seeping in; they'll sit there staring through the glass at the flames that rise from the fearsome black chasm gaping below.

Orhan Pamuk stepped back from the open balcony door and put down his camera. We took seats opposite each other in front of his big desk. Looking around the studio, which was lined with bookshelves, I found myself thinking of a delightful image in the Turkish edition of *Other Colors*—the image of Orhan Pamuk, writing his novel in indecipherable longhand, hoarding empty ink cartridges in his studio like a game hunter. Pamuk jumped up to get me a glass of water. Then he loped around the room, a tallish man with a slight stoop, searching for the press card that he had kept in his pocket while researching *Snow*; he knew I was writing about the East and wanted to show it to me.

"The first one hundred and fifty pages of *Snow* is made up of things that happened to me . . . going to Kars by bus through the snow, everyone looking out of the windows, the icy cold, the lo-

cal journalist who knows where K
because he eavesdropped on th
conversations of the policeme
were following him; the newspap
a circulation of two hundred and
ty-five; the manager of a telepho
change. I knew these people. I b
some of them off. I enjoyed mys

Around five years ago, Pamu
started to get less enjoyable. No
could he live quietly, visiting
haunts; everyone knew his face.
appealingly open, rather fleshy
given to sudden bursts of laug
Then came the interview in the
newspaper, and the nationalists
tion. Rather than defend him,
Turkish liberals criticized Pam
giving the impression that he
had the courage to discuss th
menian massacres of 1915 an
Kurdish insurgency that continu
day. It was the beginning of wh
muk calls a new "intensity" in hi
lic life, a disagreeable sense of
hated as well as admired.

Despite his reluctance to pa
pate in politics, Pamuk has long
a public advocate for freedom
pression, whether in the ca
Salman Rushdie or the Kurds.
failure of many Turkish writers
journalist colleagues to speak u
him, and the ungenerous reacti
many Turks to his Nobel triu
must have hurt him immensely
spoke of the "jealousy" of form
quaintances and colleagues.

"You might say that I lost
friends."

Not only friends; it is well kn
that there have been rifts in the
muk family. Pamuk told me that h
der brother, Şevket, a respected
nomic historian, attended the N
awards ceremony in Stockholm de
being offended by the way he wa
picted in *Istanbul*—as a bully. Pa
does not regret writing these pass
Descriptions of fights with Şevket, a
being "beaten and reviled," establi
a bond between him and readers
had received similar treatment.
hadn't written that section out of
that my brother would be offend
wouldn't have been true to myself.
book would have been deficient."

In Stockholm, Pamuk dedicate
prize to Gündüz Pamuk, the s
spendthrift, philandering, perenn

ent father we know from the of *Istanbul*. When it comes to k's writing career, it seems that üz, who died in 2002, played a positive role, as the bookish ɔer of an unbookish family and k's first reader. At the end of his tance speech, Pamuk described ıoment when he tremblingly d his father the manuscript of his ovel, *Cevdet Bey and His Sons*. "I ıis not only because I had confi- in his taste and his intellect; ɔinion was very important to me ıse, unlike my mother, he had pposed my wish to become a ." That "unlike my mother"—an ic aside, by any standards—was f two negative references to his er in the speech. They have not spoken since *Istanbul* was published.

Nowadays, Pamuk's empty ink dges pile up in New York City. ıg moved there last autumn, as ıest of Columbia University, he ayed to complete the "very am- ıs" novel he has been writing, ıd off, for the past five years. It ɔut a rich Nisantasi boy, a hand- shining lad whose life goes sour he falls obsessively in love with aughter of a distant relation. At ıme time, said Pamuk, "I draw a re of all Istanbul, of all Turkey, 1975 until the end of the last ıry." It will not be the first book Pamuk has written at Columbia. rote parts of *The Black Book* in Columbia library in 1985, while -wife was a student there.

I speak to Pamuk, as I read *Is- l* with its careful dues, and *Other* 's with Pamuk's lovely descrip- of the way he writes—slowly, ng his imagination as you might e a pear tree, then picking the off the ground—I feel as though ɔeing guided in the preparation of ssay. Not only I; future literary bi- ɔhers are being guided as well. Pa- is putting himself between us and ork. But it is impossible to say ɔolitely.

hen I tried, Pamuk exclaimed, 're asking whether I'm content ly to write my novels, or whether lso arranging where I should be d in posterity!" Pamuk cited the examples of Goethe and Mann; they did the same. He recalled "the archivist in me, the collector in me . . . I'm forever taking photographs. And of course there's an unattractive narcissistic side, too. Yes, as other writers have done, I am trying to determine—albeit without much hope of success—how my books should be understood and read."

Leaving his studio that afternoon, walking under the sun in Cihangir—a carefree anonymous walk of the kind Pamuk once enjoyed and conceivably may never enjoy again—I found myself returning to the question of where we will place him in half a century. And it struck me that now, after the Nobel Prize, after exile, the life and career of Orhan Pamuk have entered a new phase. Henceforth there can be no separating the two Pamuks, the artist and the activist. Fortunately, there are riches in both, enough for Pamuk and enough even to sustain another—the Orhan of *Snow*, perhaps—in curiosity and creation.

As I strolled, I relived a conversation that I had had several months before, with a Turkish army captain in eastern Turkey. The captain was a hearty, lupine nationalist. To him, the presence of a European here, in the disputed lands of Kurds and Armenians, was proof—as if that were needed!—of the West's malign intentions toward the Turkish Republic. So our conversation, outwardly good-humored, laced with Turkish coffee, acquired a resentful, contemptuous undercurrent.

I have forgotten the words that the captain used to convey his stark ideas: his nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire and his loathing for the pygmies of the European Union; his conviction that Turkey is being prevented from assuming its rightful position of regional—even world—primacy only by the machinations of foreigners and traitors—Europeans, Americans, Armenians, Kurds. But I vividly remember the captain's expression of triumph and scorn as he abruptly interrupted his own argument and demonstrated—to his satisfaction, at least—the inevitability of our conflict: "You look like the sort of person who reads the books of Orhan Pamuk. Unreadable, don't you think?" ■

RECORDINGS of DISTINCTION



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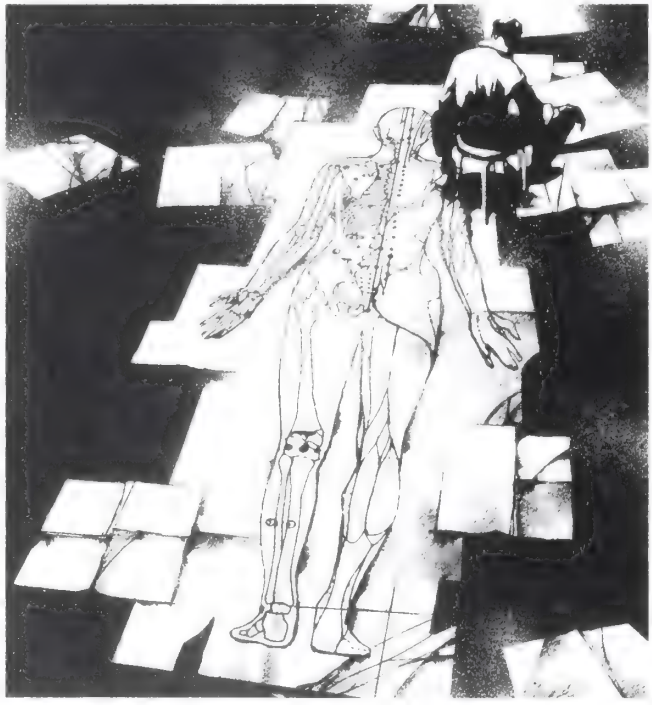
THE PROPOSITION

By David Bezmozgis

Roman Berman looked again at his rectangular desk clock, a complimentary gift that had come with the first *Time* magazine subscription. The subscription ran him sixty dollars a year, but he justified it as a necessary expense. Even though he planned his schedule meticulously and rarely kept a patient waiting, the magazines lent his office a sense of professionalism. Though he preferred the newspaper, he sometimes perused the magazines himself—particularly if there was a profile of an athlete or a businessman. Other times, if he came across something that he thought would be of interest to his son, he brought the magazine home. Recently, for instance, there had been an article about a famous Hollywood movie director, the son of Hungarian Jews. The director had immigrated with his parents to America when he was a boy of six, like his own son. He had then gone on to attain tremendous success. The article described him as a millionaire many times over. Roman wondered if his son had read it. He'd brought it home the previous week. He made a mental note to ask his son when he got home. Not to pressure him, of course, only to inquire.

David Bezmozgis is the author of Natasha and Other Stories.

It was ten minutes past five, and Svirsky was now more than half an hour late. Roman had specifically told Svirsky to come to the office at four-thirty, after his last patient of the day.



But at four-thirty there had been no sign of Svirsky. Roman was surprised. If he had been in Svirsky's position, not only would he have been on time, he would have been early. But apparently Svirsky didn't think this way. Roman waited and tried to sort his files, but he found it nearly impossible to focus and frequently consulted the clock. He himself always tried to be punctual. On the rare occasion when he was detained, he made sure to call and [illegible] his appointment. Svirsky hadn't [illegible] It infuriated Roman, especially si[nce] was the one doing Svirsky a fav[or].

Earlier in the week, Roman ha[d] ten a call from Lyona [illegible] Svirsky's brother-in-l[aw]. first Roman thought [illegible] was calling about the [status] of his insurance clai[m]. Lyona didn't mentio[n] claim. He asked abou[t] man's Volvo.

—I was going to p[ut] ad in the paper, R[oman] said.

—How does it run[?] ona asked.

—Very well. It le[aks] little oil, but I top [it] once a week.

—Renata's brothe[r] came here from Leni[n]

—She must be hap[py]

—She can be happ[y] problems come dow[n] my head.

—He needs a car?

—He has a car. Ag[ainst] my advice he bought a[n] Tempo. Used. A pie[ce] garbage. Some mornin[gs] starts, some mornings it doesn't [start]. You could flip a coin. He has two [kids], one and seven. The wife is at h[ome] with the baby. I found him a job [in] scrapyard, but without a car he c[an't] get to work.

Roman had been sympathetic. [After] ter all, it wasn't that long since he [had] been in Svirsky's shoes. Nobody n[eed]ed to remind him how little separ[ated] him from Svirsky. An outsider m[ight]

Illustration by Daniel

; office and presume that every- had fallen into place, but Ro- new better. He lived from phone phone call. Come the holidays, de the rounds of doctors' offices, ng a bottle of cognac or a box of lates, doing what he could to : that they didn't forget about nd kept referring their patients. :ceptionists weren't always hap- see him; some ignored him and him wait. "Hi, Shirley." "Hi, ia." "Happy Channukah, Rac- It was no great joy to go sim- ; around like that, but he was ed to do it if it paid the over- the mortgage, and what they d for Hebrew school. Every now hen, when a big jackpot was an- ed, he bought a lottery ticket, e didn't hold out any hopes of ning rich. He was a man who had to a new country in his forties, few marketable skills, equipped o English apart from two novelty s: "Life is very complicated" and in touch." In his more sanguine nts, Roman thought: Anything tained, I should feel fortunate. ight of this, he'd consented to yona. He assured him that his r-in-law would get a decent car ir price. True, Roman thought, vited trouble whenever you did ess with friends. The Volvo break down tomorrow and then would be bad feelings. With a ger, you could wash your hands thing, but with a friend you as- l responsibilities. Nevertheless, agreed to do it. He'd even re- d from putting the ad in the paper. But now, for all his good intentions, he was sitting around like a fool.

Roman considered waiting an- ten minutes, until five-thirty, be- ing home. It wasn't often that he le to get home so early. Usually, d appointments until after six. dn't get in until seven or later. By his wife and son would have al- eaten dinner. The boy might be homework, reading, or watch- levision. Roman would eat alone, naybe spend a few minutes with n between television shows, be- ne boy went to sleep. He wanted y involved in his son's life, to be a good father to him. But it was a difficult age, the boy was often moody and irritable and made Roman feel as if he disapproved of him, as if Roman was always putting an emphasis on the wrong things.

Roman resolved to go. But at that moment he heard the jangling of the bell on his front door. Now, finally, here was this Svirsky, Roman thought. He'd accumulated so much resentment waiting for him that he felt tempted to turn him away and teach him a lesson. Well, that he wouldn't do, but he would certainly vent his displeasure. The mere thought of venting his displeasure made Roman feel better. He was eager for Svirsky to come through the door and into the inner room where Roman had his file cabinets and his desk.

—In here, Roman called.

But it wasn't Svirsky who came through the door. When he saw who it was, Roman cursed both himself and Svirsky. He should have left earlier, he knew it. He had tried to do someone a good turn and now, inevitably, he was being punished.

—We were passing by and thought we'd stop in to see if you were busy, Kopman said.

With him was his partner, Gruber, the Israeli. Gruber followed after Kopman and then stepped aside to make room for an attractive young woman. She had straight brown hair down to her shoulders, and wore pink lipstick and pale, whitish eye makeup. She was tall for a woman; in heels she was level with Kopman. She was also slim, but in a tight blouse and short skirt everything she had was exhibited to maximum effect.

Since he rarely had occasion to meet with more than one person at a time, Roman had only two chairs on the opposite side of his desk.

—It looks like we caught you at a good time, Kopman said before sitting in one of the chairs.

—I was waiting for someone. He's late. I was about to leave.

—Good then, Kopman said. We'll only be a minute.

Kopman motioned for the woman to sit in the second vacant chair. He spoke to her in English.

—Sit, Felicia dear.

The woman did as she was told and sat almost directly across from Roman. She gazed at the wall, at a spot vaguely above Roman's right shoulder. There he had his framed diploma from the Board of Directors of Masseurs, a recent school picture of his son, and an arts-and-crafts project the boy had done years ago in summer camp—a pattern of nails strung with green yarn that spelled out the Hebrew word *Shalom*.

—Well, Kopman said, we just wanted to know if you'd given more thought to our proposition.

Roman looked from Kopman to Gruber, who stood behind him, and made no effort to mask his feelings about their proposition. He didn't like either of them. Gruber was antsy and unhealthy. He was obese and careless about his personal appearance. He had a thick growth of stubble, and his kinky hair bulged like stuffing from the baseball cap that he'd neglected to remove indoors. Kopman, Roman's wife had known as a girl in Rezekne. They had been in the same class. After he graduated from high school, his family left for Israel. All kinds of stories circulated about what he'd gotten himself involved in over there. Roman's wife hadn't even heard that he'd come to Toronto until he'd shown up unexpectedly at Roman's office.

The first time, just the two of them had come, Kopman and Gruber. They'd arrived in the evening while Roman was with a patient. When the doorbell rang, Roman had stepped into the waiting room to investigate, since he'd had no more patients scheduled and wasn't expecting anyone. Kopman had introduced himself, mentioned his old acquaintance with Roman's wife, and said that he was there with a business proposition. What proposition? Why arrive unannounced? Kopman didn't explain. Roman hadn't liked the look of the two of them from the beginning, and he'd had a hard time concentrating on finishing the session with his patient. When the patient left, Roman had had no choice but to allow Kopman and Gruber to outline their proposition.

Their proposition amounted to this: they were pimps and they wanted to make him into a pimp too.

There was good money to be made in

massage parlors, Kopman said, all they needed was someone with a valid masseur's license. Other than supplying his license, Roman wouldn't have to do anything. They would take care of everything. They would set up the business and manage it. Once a month Roman would receive a check with a percentage of the profits. He wouldn't have to so much as lift a finger. If the first parlor proved successful they could expand.

And if the police come? Roman asked.

—If the police come we try to arrive at an arrangement, Kopman said.

—And if they don't accept your arrangement?

—Then they will just close the place down, Kopman said.

—And report me and revoke my license, Roman said.

—You might get a warning, that's all, Kopman said. You know how many places like this there are in the city?

Enough, Roman said.

—So why shouldn't you benefit also? Do you deserve any less? I'm sure it wasn't easy to write the exams and get the license, Kopman said. If it was easy, I wouldn't be here. I'd do it myself.

Roman had told them that he wasn't interested. They had suggested that he reconsider.

—Why rush to refuse? Kopman asked. There's real money to be made. Take some time. Think about it. It's a good opportunity.

In the days that followed, Roman had repeated the conversation to his brother-in-law and to a few select friends. All had been of the opinion that he should explore further. They'd heard of such enterprises. It was no lie, people made money. Besides, what was so horrible about a massage parlor? If Roman decided to go ahead with it, nobody would condemn him.

Despite what they said, Roman had misgivings. Kopman was right, passing the exam hadn't been easy. He had devoted himself to it for more than a year. After a day of warehouse work, he had come home to study. In all his life, he had never worked so hard. All the while he had been sustained by dreams of opening his own practice, being his own boss, providing for his family in a dignified way. He lived that year in a state of perpetual anxiety. He was tyrannized by the fear that he would fail the exam and be consigned forever to a life of warehouse labor. No matter how long and grueling the hours of study, they paled against the wretched prospect of failure. When he received the letter informing him that he had passed, he was jubilant. He felt that he had accomplished something monumental. He would work in a clean office, almost like a doctor, and his son wouldn't have to be ashamed of him.

He'd spent seven years building a good reputation. He had loyal clients who ascribed to him their miraculous recoveries. An old man who couldn't get out of bed now walked to buy his groceries. An accountant who couldn't tie his shoes now played tennis. An arthritic grandmother who couldn't turn a doorknob now planted roses and baked cookies. He'd dealt honestly with people. He'd never cheated anyone. Whatever he did was within the law, or, if it exceeded, it wasn't in any odious way. He did what everybody did to stay in business. If somebody had a benefits plan that covered massage, he'd provide a document attesting to treatment and then split the proceeds. If somebody got into a car accident, he would diagnose an injury to assist with the insurance claim. It was because of this that Lyona Ribak, for instance, stood to collect $2,400. There was nothing contemptible about it. Benefits money, if left unused, disappeared; and each year the insurance companies, renowned crooks, made billions in profits.

But to become involved with people like Kopman and Gruber, and to risk his reputation for a brothel, was something entirely different. The worst kind of trouble could happen in such a place. There could be drugs, fights, even murder. If anything happened, he could be implicated, sent to prison. He imagined the scandal and the humiliation. How could he face his wife and son? And even if nothing happened, what if his son discovered that he'd become a partner in a brothel? How would he explain such a sordid thing? More money? This was no explanation. They weren't st
Without a massage parlor, he
wife had jobs and were doing o

He would rather struggle a
modestly than gamble and lea
kind of life. He'd already exper
that kind of life. His father ha
this way. When they settled i
after the evacuation, his fath
traded on the black market. H
speculated in gold, gemstones, t
and heirlooms. Officially, his job
fire marshal at a theater, but h
there only during performances
evenings a week. The rest of th
he had free to pursue deals. The
a family of five: Roman, his pa
and his two sisters. His mother
home and looked after the hous
situation after the war was grim
tions of the city were rubble, and
were shortages of everything. H
ther bore a heavy burden. He
small austere man, frugal in his
tions, but Roman revered him. R
was twelve, thirteen, fourteen,
time, the same age as his own so
He hadn't known every detail, bu
known enough about how his
made his living. Once, his father
ened him in the middle of the
took him into the cellar, and sh
him where he had hidden a box
taining gold coins and banknot
case something happens, his fath
said. Roman understood that if th
thorities ever caught him, his f
would be severely punished. A
certainly he would be sent far
where anything could befall hin
worried also about the people
whom his father associated, an
harm they might do him. Nights
his father was late coming home
man didn't sleep. He snuck outsid
stood in the shadowy passageway
led from their building's courtya
Red Army Street. There he stood
peered into the night until he sa
father's familiar form walking reso
home. The sight always made
dumb with relief, gratitude, and
Though when his father saw hin
became furious and berated hin
lurking about and drawing atten
But no matter how many times h
ther berated him, Roman couldn't
it. He couldn't sleep or keep still
had to go out to the street, bec
every second of not-knowing wa

le. And once he saw his father, the abuse didn't matter, because his father was home.

oman did not want to subject his this kind of life. To Kopman he thought about it. I talked to . But I haven't changed my opin- 's not for me. I'm not interested. really is a shame you feel that opman said. Personally, I think ave the wrong idea about what suggesting.

What wrong idea? I understand hing perfectly well.

Have you ever visited such a place? What the hell for? Roman said.

Some of the places are dirty. e you think we would be run- dirty place?

Kopman, Roman said, I don't care kind of place you plan to run.

The place will be nice, Gruber n English. We would only make place.

This is why we brought Felicia, an said. So that you could see for lf the kind of girl we would hire. the mention of her name, Feli- anced opaquely from Kopman nan.

Stand up, Felicia dear, Kopman Let Roman take a look at you.

ediently, Felicia pushed her chair and rose. She didn't make any oses or change the expression on ce. She stood with her hands at les, and rested her weight slight- one hip.

You see what a beautiful girl, Kop- aid. Guess how old.

What are you doing, Kopman? n said.

Twenty-three, Kopman said. She ist some whore off the street. She's ntelligent. You can talk to her. er where she's from, Kopman said. t makes no difference to me she's from, Roman said.

She's Czech. From Prague, Kop- aid. Where are you from, Felicia? aking in a bored, faraway voice, rl said, I'm from Prague.

pman raised his eyebrows and d triumphantly, as if he had d a disputed point.

She's also educated, Kopman said. as a medical background. In oslovakia she studied to be a She knows massage. She's not a professional like you, of course, but she's very good.

—Fine. Is that all? Are you finished? Roman said.

—You don't believe me? Kopman asked. Take her into the other room. Tell her what you like. She'll do anything you say.

—Kopman, Roman said, what's wrong with you? You grew up with my wife. You went to school together.

—Yes? So? She was a good student. She helped me with my homework. What does one thing have to do with the other?

—Get out of my office. Get out, Roman said.

—Don't be rash, Kopman said.

Roman turned his attention to the girl. She looked like a normal girl. She was no different from anyone you saw on the street. He wondered how she had become like this. How had she gotten mixed up with scum like Kopman and Gruber.

—Young lady, Roman said.

She lowered her eyes and looked at him, slightly confused, as if uncertain that he had addressed her.

—Young lady, Roman said. I read in the newspaper that there are not enough nurses. You studied to be a nurse. Go away from these guys. Hospitals are looking for nurses. Go be a nurse.

A hard, unpleasant look crossed the girl's face.

—Fuck you, she said.

With that, they left.

What a miserable day, Roman thought as he drove home. It was already six o'clock. After Kopman, Gruber, and the girl had left, he'd taken several minutes to compose himself. He was plagued by a bad feeling, like he had been soiled. He also found it hard to banish the image of the girl's cruel face. He'd meant only to be kind, and her viciousness had taken him completely by surprise. He felt her insult keenly, like a slap.

He steered the Volvo up Bathurst, to Finch, turned on Torresdale, and into his subdivision. Six o'clock and not a word from that bastard Svirsky, Roman thought. A miserable day.

Roman parked the car in the driveway and climbed the cement steps of his porch. When he unlocked the front door, he sensed something odd. It took him a moment to register what it was. He saw a pair of strange boots in the entryway, worn and scuffed. Then he heard his wife's voice coming from the kitchen, speaking politely, even formally. After this he heard a man's voice, thanking her, declining something in a muted, timid way.

Roman didn't call out to announce his arrival but went up to the kitchen, where he saw a man seated at the table, his back to him. The man was still wearing his jacket. Seated across from him was Roman's wife. A teapot, cups, fruits, and biscuits were on the table. Beyond the kitchen, in the living room, the television was on, and his son was lying on the sofa.

There you are, Roma, his wife said, when he entered. This caused the man to turn in his chair to face him. Introductions were unnecessary, but his wife identified him as Edik Svirsky.

Svirsky looked to be in his middle thirties, with a haggard though handsome face. His eyes were gentle, brown, and filled—as the saying went—with all the sorrow of the Jewish people. His hair, like a boy's, peaked in the middle. He was thin, but his hands, which fidgeted nervously, were large and strong, the nails dirty from the scrapyard.

—We just called you at the office, but you had already gone, his wife said.

She shifted a cup and a saucer and bid Roman to sit down.

Roman didn't sit but said, Of course I'd gone. I'd been waiting since four-thirty.

He stared at Svirsky, expecting an explanation. The scrutiny made Svirsky fidget even more.

—His car broke down, his wife said.

—I'm very sorry, Svirsky said. I wanted to call but I couldn't find your number. I was at work; they'd agreed to let me leave early. But the car wouldn't start. Guys from work tried to fix it; then they called a tow truck. My English isn't very good and I didn't understand everything that was happening. The tow truck driver took the car to the garage, but I didn't want him to. I imagined it would cost a lot to repair. I asked the driver to take it to the parking spot at my building. It was already late then.

I called Lyona and he told me to just walk to your house. I hurried, but it took twenty minutes.

In the living room the television erupted in loud, idiotic laughter. It put Roman's nerves on edge, and he shouted for his son to turn it down.

—Sit, his wife said.

Roman squeezed in and sat.

His wife then called for their son to get up from the sofa and join them in the kitchen.

—Your father came home, his wife said. Come over and say hello.

His son turned off the television. He rose from the sofa as if it were a great chore.

Roman watched him come. When his son had been younger, he'd been athletic. They had enrolled him in soccer in the summer and hockey in the winter. He hadn't been an exceptional player, but he had enjoyed it. And Roman had enjoyed attending the games. In his own youth, he'd been something of an athlete, and he had liked having this in common with his son. But over the last year or so, his son had ceased to show much interest in sports. He'd grown his hair long in a way Roman felt didn't suit him. His complexion had suffered. He spent more time watching television, or in his room reading and listening to music. Though his grades were still good, he seemed lazy and discontent. But when Roman offered a helpful suggestion, his son became sullen and withdrew.

Upon entering the kitchen, his son took the available seat beside Svirsky.

—Hi, Pa, he said automatically.

His presence at the table seemed to further unnerve Svirsky.

—I really apologize, Svirsky said. Lyona told me not to buy that car. He recommended another. But it was more expensive, and I felt uneasy borrowing more money from him. We'd already borrowed enough. I thought if I bought the cheaper car it would be easier on Lyona and my sister. They've been very generous. But now I know it was a big mistake. I only managed to complicate things.

Roman shrugged, and said, We all make mistakes.

His mood was brittle, and for some reason Svirsky's haplessness aggravated him.

—I'm very grateful to you for selling me the car, Svirsky said, and reached into his jacket pocket for an envelope.

Roman watched him fumble with it and lay it on the table. It was stout with bills.

—I took out three thousand, like we agreed, Svirsky said.

Okay, Roman said.

With the envelope on the table, Svirsky appeared at a loss. Roman sat diagonally from him, but it seemed inappropriate to reach across the table. He expected Svirsky to pass it to him. Svirsky, for some inexplicable reason, continued to hesitate.

—You haven't seen the car yet, Roman said. We should go outside and I'll show you the car.

—Yes, all right, Svirsky said. But he remained tentative.

Roman pushed his chair back and got up. Svirsky, as if still hampered by something, slid his chair back slowly.

—I don't doubt that the car is very good and worth the price, Svirsky said.

—I understand, Roman said, not quite understanding. But I'm not offended, it's every buyer's right to inspect his car.

—The thing is, Svirsky said, I took out three thousand dollars. And I planned to give it to you, but I didn't anticipate the charge for the tow truck.

So, finally, there it was, Roman thought.

—How much was the tow truck? Roman asked.

—A hundred and fifty dollars, Svirsky said, penitently.

Svirsky's implication was clear, and Roman looked around the table to see the reactions of his wife and son. His wife was circumspect, unwilling to provoke. But he could see that his son expected him to do the mean thing, the uncharitable thing.

—Why don't you go outside, Edik? Roman said. Here are the keys. Take a look at the car. Give me a few minutes to think about it.

—Yes, of course, Svirsky said and went to tie his boots.

When Svirsky had gone, Roman looked again at his wife and son.

—Well, what do you say? he said.

—What can I say? his wife r

—At three thousand dolla car is a good price. Maybe we get more, but for him I didn't ev it in the newspaper.

—It's hard not to pity hi wife said.

Roman didn't reply. He a for a quiet moment to prev which it was possible to consid pity Svirsky. He wanted to sh he wasn't blind to the feeling. the moment wore on, Rom lieved that it also allowed for of the complete picture. In the plete picture, Svirsky could considered alone. The comple ture also included themselves own circumstances, the pres the unpredictable future, an persistent, unwieldy claims past. These things had to b counted for.

—It's only a hundred and fift lars, his son said.

It was precisely this naive selfl that Roman couldn't abide. H sponded with anger, though wh intended was correction.

—A hundred and fifty dol money, Roman said. Nobody on the street and gives away a dred and fifty dollars.

—I feel sorry for him, hi countered.

—You feel sorry for him? Wh sorry for you? Who feels sorry f Roman said. Okay, he had som luck. But why should I pay for h truck? I didn't break his car. I'm him a favor. So what should I do more off? Are we so rich? Tell me should I pay for everyone? Things work like this.

Roman looked at his son to see he might say. The boy looked back cold distaste.

No matter, Roman though would not relent. It was for his own good. One day he would a ciate what his father had done would understand that everythi had done, the risks he'd taken risks he hadn't taken, all of it wa of love for him. Life was painfu hard, and it did you no good to pr otherwise. This was what he ne to understand.

EW BOOKS

ohn Leonard



n the eve of yet another 9/11 anniversary, NEW YORK CALLING: FROM BLACKOUT OOMBERG (Reaktion, $25) is cting look at the state of the city irty-five excruciating years of ar. Marshall Berman, an urban- and literary critic, and Brian a poet and photographer, have led novelists, journalists, col- ofessors, art historians, film ed- od critics, computer program- nd jazz musicians to remember ile all five boroughs from, rough- Pleistocene epoch of Ed Koch, y Allen, and "Son of Sam" to lantic Yards real estate boon- . The result is both anthropo- and nostalgic—part harangue t dirge. Although editor Berman pt from this regretfulness, a sur- number of contributors to *New*



Calling miss the good old days ury and filth; of bankruptcy, ng, deindustrialization, crack co- and AIDS; of landlords burning he South Bronx and 1,800 mur- year. In other words, they miss outh, and the edge they felt—the thrill—on the dangerous streets. new the sky would fall?

nwhile, in a mean time, we en- he "planned shrinkage" of poor- hborhoods to eliminate "unpro- e" minorities; the metastatic spread of luxury housing, Starbucks outlets, and double-wide baby strollers; white flight, trigger-happy cops, and homelessness (an average of 32,609 New Yorkers still spend every night in shelters, while many others have decided for their own safety to sleep instead under a bridge or in a cardboard box); wise guys, woo-girls, "fashionistas, dotcommers, trustafarians," and methane pollution, not to mention a mayor, Rudy Giuliani, in the Mussolini mode, who liked nothing better than a balcony from which to bark our marching orders. In return, in self-defense, we perfected punk rock, hip-hop, graffiti, and gay pride.

Steve Maluk harvests oysters and watches herons among the mafiosi on Staten Island. Kevin Walsh reminds us that Simon and Garfunkel, Donald Trump, and the New York Dolls all grew up in Queens. Brian Berger goes to Brooklyn to eat ethnic and explore real estate development swindles. Berman and C. J. Sullivan recall the Bronx before arson, crack, and Robert Moses turned it into Beirut, and celebrate as well its resurrection, with Gambians, Senegalese, Cambodians, and Mexicans in Morrisania, on Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse. Jim Knipfel catalogues subway etiquette, Anthony Haden-Guest diagnoses art careerism, Margaret Morton checks into an SRO hotel, Luc Sante buys drugs, Armond White refuses to forgive Spike Lee for *Clockers*, and Catherine B. Schmitz tells us that "just about every woman I knew" became a stripper or a dominatrix. Charlie Parker and Patti Smith are valorized. Eleanor Bumpurs and Amadou Diallo are mourned. Williamsburg, in Brooklyn, is obsessed about.

New York Calling isn't perfect. The perspective throughout is marginal, on an outsider fringe where the creative juices are most acidic; it would have been nice to hear from a social worker, a schoolteacher, or a nurse. The list of authors in "Writing New York" is so sketchy it's starved. And with twenty-eight chapters, surely the editors could have found more than three women to contribute. Still, we emerge with a terrific sense of immigrant muscle, ethnic flavor, and multicultural diversity as a big city's jumping beans. Berman has dreamed such urban dreams before. In his magnificent *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (1982), Baudelaire, Marx, Dickens, and Mandelstam homesteaded Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. More recently in *On the Town: One Hundred Years of Spectacle in Times Square* (2006), what he saw on Forty-second Street—rainbow colors, un-

84, by Jean-Michel Basquiat © James Goodman Gallery, New York City/Bridgeman Art Library/Artists ociety, New York City/ADAGP, Paris; Photograph © Ferdinando Scianna/Magnum Photos

veiled women, dancing feet, social mobility, "the magic realism at the heart of modern mass culture"—confirmed him in his democratic faith. I'll just keep my fingers crossed.

Bliss Broyard's ONE DROP: A TRUE STORY OF FAMILY, RACE, AND SECRETS (Little, Brown, $24.99) is another New York table, more magic realism. Her father, Anatole, the longtime literary critic for the *New York Times*, only got around to telling Bliss that he was partly, secretly, black two months before he died of prostate cancer at age seventy. Even then he seems to have confessed his "passing" reluctantly, at the insistence of his wife, Bliss's mother, Alexandra. All of a sudden, in 1990, there were some dark-skinned relatives Bliss had never met. We are off with the hounds to the bayou, or at least to New Orleans and its complicated Creole culture, from which Anatole had extricated himself after his World War II Army service, and then on to bohemian Greenwich Village, where everybody was existential anyway, and you made yourself up to be whoever you wanted or needed to be. His early essays for such magazines as *Commentary* had hinted at his origins in order to authenticate his credentials for writing about hipster life. But then this charming, gifted, curly-headed, showboating short-story writer with a yen for blonde women laundered and rinsed his personas, so determined to rebrand himself that he threatened to sue the publishers of a *roman à clef* by Chandler Brossard if they didn't edit the description of a character based on him. Decades later he would savage another Brossard novel in the *Times* without disclosing his personal interest. Nor, as a daily book critic, was he ever kind to African-American writers. He even disapproved of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Bliss, who has published a book of her own stories, will go anywhere, from Louisiana to Los Angeles, to meet another surprising Broyard. (Although she notes that several had mixed feelings about someone they saw as a middle-class suburban white chick in a big hurry to discover her black self, most were delighted to include her in their "gumbo.") She inquires into Creole culture going back to the French Revolution; revisits the history of passing in America; consults birth certificates, census forms, tax records, real estate deeds, cemetery plots, and DNA lab tests; and walks around her father to poke him with a stick. She is loving and forgiving, but maybe slightly less so than she thinks. Her Anatole is a narcissist with nervous tics. She doesn't quite permit herself to say this, but maybe he never finished his own novel because he couldn't tell the truth.

Since *One Drop* is all about disclosure, I should say that I was a colleague of Anatole's at the *Times*, and that his daughter called me a couple of years ago in the course of her research for this book. Although I am not quoted, I do remember telling her that most of us back then, in the 1970s, somehow knew her father's secret and didn't care. My beef with Anatole was that he reviewed only short books, leaving the long ones to the rest of us. Then he crossed the picket line during the New York newspaper strike of 1978. He would later tell me that he enjoyed the strike. It gave him a chance to write about art and movies as well as books. Why, yes, I agreed: he was a regular Renaissance scab.

It's the long goodbye for Aurelio Zen. END GAMES (Pantheon, $23.95) will be the last case for Michael Dibdin's Italian police detective, not because anything happens to Zen in Calabria that hasn't already happened to him in Bologna or Perugia—politics, conspiracy, women, weather, bad luck and worse food—but because, alas, Dibdin died last March, not long after his sixtieth birthday. The temptation, especially in British papers like the *Times Literary Supplement* (June 29) and the *Guardian* (June 30), has been to read real-life forebodings and portents into the fictional *End Games*—several untimely deaths; an excess of Roman Catholicism; a preoccupation with the Book of Revelation in the Bible; and a comparison of Zen's face to the image in a fresco of a minor [illegible] ing martyred.

Zen himself would hoot [illegible] bootless fidgets; always a stra[illegible] knows the worst about himsel[illegible] those people who insist on l[illegible] him, but his job is his vocatio[illegible] a soldier, a priest, or a sanitatio[illegible] er—and he does it no matter h[illegible] he feels. In *End Games* he m[illegible] with American dotcom mo[illegible] who have hired the usual egom[illegible] Italian movie director to sco[illegible] tions for a Biblical epic that w[illegible] er be made because what the [illegible] men are really looking for [illegible] treasure-filled tomb of Alaric th[illegible] who sacked Rome in 410 A.D. [illegible] kidnapping, murder, yachts, a[illegible] copters, there is a lot of agreeal[illegible] guage-play, and way too much [illegible] to sauce. Still, knowing th[illegible] eleventh Zen is also the last, w[illegible] it as if through veils of crepe.

Back from the dead, howe[illegible] Félix Fénéon, the Paris[illegible] critic and anarchist wh[illegible] in 1944 and whose weird NOV[illegible] THREE LINES (New York R[illegible] Books, $14), newly translated int[illegible] lish by Luc Sante, was originall[illegible] lished serially, as 1,220 short it[illegible] the French daily paper *Le Mati*[illegible] Robert Walser, the Swiss-born, [illegible] based former bank clerk and [illegible] butler who wrote a thousand [illegible] and nine novels, including TH[illegible] SISTANT (New Directions, $1[illegible] until he was misdiagnosed as a s[illegible] phrenic and institutionalized f[illegible] last thirty-four years of his life[illegible] Fénéon, like a book of haikus e[illegible] devoted to suicide, murder, fatal[illegible] dents and incestuous sex, is a c[illegible] introduction to the shadowed [illegible] cavity of a Neo-Impressionist wh[illegible] tainly believed in "propaganda [illegible] deed" and may have plotted o[illegible] more anarchist assassinations. [illegible] Walser, with its upwardly mobile [illegible] man in the surreal service of the [illegible] sional inventor of an Advert[illegible] Clock, a Marksman's Vending [illegible] chine, and an Invalid Chair, par[illegible] equally of Stendhal, Flaubert, and [illegible] ka as it satirizes capitalism and ro[illegible] ticism simultaneously. Both books [illegible] a pair of sinister caterpillars, eat [illegible] into the leafy mind.

In the Bazaar, by Joseph Rusling Meeker. © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Art L

JST AND DISGUST

nort history of prudery, inist and otherwise

Laura Kipnis

ed in this essay:

urse, by Andrea Dworkin. Basic Books. 315 pages. $15.95.

Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be d, by Wendy Shalit. Random House. 316 pages. $25.95.

ked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both, by Laura ions Stepp. Riverhead. 288 pages. $24.95.



:x is bad for women, and I mean *bad* in every sense of the word: rom the dismal quality of the ex- ce itself, to the lasting harms— ological, social, existential—it s. At least this is a premise with iin traction in the cultural imag- n, and it seems in no danger of its hold, even in an era that si- neously pays frequent lip service polar-opposite premise—sexual parity between men and women is now a fact, and sex is finally *good* for women, so let's all party. In short, there are many conflicting stories circulating about what women are getting up to in bed, and how much they're really enjoying it, and whether proclaiming enjoyment is even a reliable indicator of anything when it's a woman doing the proclaiming; we are the sex, after all, notorious for faking enjoyment. In fact, for women, even good sex—or sex you mistakenly thought was good—may be bad for you, in ways you can't calculate.

The literature of bad sex is rather extensive (as is bad writing about sex, though these aren't necessarily the same thing), and a mainstay of the genre is the cautionary tale aimed at dissuading women from having sex, or sex of the wrong kind, or with the wrong people. The arguments vary, the politics may vary, but the message keeps coming around again, like a hit single on a top-forty station. Here are three recent variations on the theme spanning two decades, since one—and by far the most interesting, despite its advanced age—is a twentieth-anniversary edition of Andrea Dworkin's radical feminist classic, *Intercourse*. In case you've forgotten, Dworkin was the notorious anti-pornography activist and theorist most famous for having said that all intercourse is rape, though she claimed she never actually said that. The reprint arrives with a new introduction by Ariel Levy, the author of *Female Chauvinist Pigs* (2005). Levy was less a fan of Dworkin's in *Pigs*, labeling her an extremist, which is undoubtedly true (yet also a little backhanded given that Levy was reprising so many of Dworkin's arguments, albeit in less extreme tones). But I too must admit that I never had much use for Dworkin, and have ranted against her in print on a few occasions—though I now must further admit that I found rereading her this time around strangely enjoyable. She's the great female refusenik, and just because sex disgusted her it doesn't mean she isn't often funny and even profound on the subject.

Previously I was under the impression that it was only heterosexual sex that disgusted Dworkin. But as Levy's introduction helpfully informs, Dworkin—who died in 2005 at the age of fifty-eight—may have proclaimed herself a lesbian, yet she was not known to have logged any hours in the actual enterprise, either romantically or sexually. Nevertheless, clearly she thought about sex a lot. Additionally, she was an unorthodox enough lesbian to have loved and secretly married a

Kipnis is the author of Against Love: mic. *Her most recent book,* The Fe- hing, *will be published in paperback* .

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...r, her soulmate, with whom she cohabited for over three decades; he, too, was gay, and happened to have health insurance. Happily, Dworkin found the kind of love she either believed in or could tolerate: one that didn't involve bodies, the messy meeting up of alien genitals, or accommodation to male desire. She had far less confidence in the ability of other women to hew to their own nonconformist paths, perhaps not without reason.

Dworkin was an extremist because she kept harping on the nasty undercurrent of inequality in sexual relations between men and women, and she wouldn't let it drop. In fact, she seemed to revel in it. More mild-mannered and non-feminist writers keep strumming this same banjo, too: namely, the notion that men, on the whole, get more out of sex than women do, and even when the women in question *think* they're operating in some liberated fashion—turning the tables, having recreational sex just like the guys—they're dupes and doing irreparable harm to themselves in the process. But for Dworkin, intercourse isn't a private act or a personal folly; it's a form of political occupation equal to what any colonized people have endured. At least this line of analysis meant she refrained from dispensing advice on how to get more foreplay, or how to land a man by playing hard to get, or other quick fixes to female dilemmas. She didn't believe in individual solutions, and she didn't think a little freedom was enough: she wanted to overturn the whole system. This seems unlikely to happen anytime soon, but Dworkin is still a great philosopher of the bedroom, if a fumingly vitriolic one; even if you disagree with everything she says, she's great exactly because her work resists all practicality. *Intercourse* is a furiously unreasonable book, and a usefully dangerous book for just that reason: it forces you to look at sex without trying to solve it.

The premise is startling and will always be radical: in short, that the act of sexual intercourse itself is what keeps women mired in a state of social inequality, because a "normal fuck" is an act of incursion. Perhaps a few female readers previously thought of sexual intercourse as a natural act; maybe they even thought they liked it—Dworkin will have none of this. Sex, along with the desire for it, is forced on women precisely to subordinate us. During intercourse,

> a man inhabits a woman, physically covering her and overwhelming her and at the same time penetrating her; and this physical relation to her over her and inside her is his possession of her. He has her, or, when he is done, he has had her . . . His thrusting into her is taken to be her capitulation to him as a conqueror; it is a physical surrender of herself to him; he occupies and rules her, expresses his elemental dominance over her, by his possession of her in the fuck.

Note the passive construction—"is taken to be"—which is a hallmark of the Dworkin style. Elsewhere: "The normal fuck by a normal man is taken to be an act of invasion and ownership undertaken in a mode of predation." Taken . . . by whom? The passive voice combined with the punch-you-in-the-face argument, the vacillation between victimization and militancy: this is Dworkin distilled to her essence.

Dworkin was a grandiose writer who liked playing with omniscience: she wanted to speak from within the dark tangled unconsciousness of sex itself, then expose it to the interrogator's rubber hose. Not just expose it; she wanted to hold a war-crimes tribunal—*Intercourse* is her one-woman Nuremberg trial on the injustices of heterosexual sex. (Indeed, she was fond of comparing intercourse—along with its propaganda arm, pornography—to the great crimes of the twentieth century: Treblinka, Auschwitz, the Gulag, all come up as parallels.) Her favored prosecutorial tactic is to pick a revered literary author and ventriloquize him, reading him from inside out: at one moment she's Tolstoy, at another Kobo Abe, then she takes a spin as Isaac Bashevis Singer. Characters merge into authors who merge into the singular truth of the entire culture; writers of every era and nationality are assembled to testify to the timeless truths of male hatred for women. You can read attentively and still not be entirely sure who's speaking from one sentence to the next—Flaubert? Patriarchy? Dworkin? This is rhetorically powerful, if slippery, but don't try to foll... logic; just revel in the dystopia ... *my life*, she wants you to think ... *my world*. Don't get defensive ... might prove her right.

Given the slippery sty... Dworkin is a bit hard ... down theoretically. It's ... entirely clear in her account w... cause and what's an effect: w... women are an inferior class b... intercourse subordinates us or ... course subordinates us because w... ready an inferior class. But if the ... lem is the nature of the act itself ... this always be the case when it ... to heterosexual sex of the penet... sort? Or is it just the nature of t... in a male-dominated society?

On this, as on much else, Dw... is charmingly inconsistent. Wha... ture, what's culture? Why quibbl... details? At certain points we he... women are anatomically constr... for subordination—after all, we'... ones with a hole that's "synony... with entry," put there by the Go... doesn't exist (Dworkin is a virtu... the droll aside); at others, that ... power constructs the *meaning* ... tercourse, because men get off on ... inance. But one way or anothe... essence of fucking is dominatio... thus ensures female inferiority, a... gardless of whether it was natu... culture that instituted the inec... it's doubtful it can ever be other... at least not until everyone giv... fucking. (Dworkin is fairly indiff... to the reproductive aspects of th... but then just how much sexual i... course is really performed for r... duction anyway?) You find her p... occasional lip service to the poss... ty of a non-male-dominated socie... which a more woman-oriented s... ality would hold sway, though ... turns out to be the conventional ... focus stuff: "diffuse and tender se... ality that involves the whole body ... a polymorphous tenderness." T... Dworkin assures, is what women ... *ly* want. As far as bringing about th... cial conditions under which te... sensuality would achieve primac... the bedroom, it's difficult to see ... this would happen, since men e... their dominance too much, and w... en are too complicit in helping th...

ain it, especially by getting hor-
. with them.
'iously, Dworkin was not the
s biggest fan of men: not only
ey titillated by inequality; they
: in order to perform at all. Men
easure from sexual hatred, and
ourse is their way of expressing
npt. Dworkin's own contempt
le sexuality runs just as deep, it
be noted: without rape, pornog-
and prostitution, "the number
s would so significantly decrease
en might nearly be chaste." This
one of her many indictments of
awny sex. One may be tempted
ue that Dworkin underesti-
—or perhaps never encoun-
—the vast range of male vulner-
y possible in sex. Even the
'sex" suggests a reciprocity that
t figure in her argument. Her
re all into "cold fucking," either
ty-bound variety or the promis-
kind "in which eventual aban-
ent turns the vagina into the
! Freud claimed it was." Just as all
n want tender sensuality, all men
o degrade women.
nsidering that Dworkin's writing
evoted to flattening men and
n into reassuringly predictable
it's interesting that one of her
anxieties about sex was that it
people generic. Fucking is the
niversal event, but this univer-
means that we lose our individ-
in the very act. The internal
ape of intercourse disrespects
iality and boundaries, culminat-
t, as one might naively hope, in
ic orgasms or momentary tran-
ence but in

uman tragedy of failed relationships,
geful bitterness in an aftermath of
ual heat, personality corroded by
much endurance of undesired, ha-
ual intercourse, conflict, a wearing
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ss of separation.

n begin to infer that Dworkin got
us about the breakdown of
laries that can happen in sex,
hough this boundary-blurring is
people frequently seem to like
it, or so I hear. But for Dworkin,
abhorrent, a loss of self, because
ercourse "nothing is one's own, nothing, certainly not oneself, because the imagination is atrophied, like some limb, dead and hanging useless, and the dull repetition of programmed sexual fantasy has replaced it."

I'm quoting so much because Dworkin was such a vivid stylist—paraphrase doesn't do her justice. She aspired to be a literary writer as much as a social theorist: she said her models were Dante and Rimbaud, though the contemporary writer she brings to mind is Michel Houellebecq, at least thematically—her acid eloquence on the subject of empty sex matches his; her hatred of men matches his disdain for everyone—with people banging into one another in mutual incomprehension and loathing. For both, the contemporary mantra that sex is good for us is the emptiest notion of all, the new patriotism. Dworkin: "We talk about it all the time to say how much we like it—nearly as much, one might infer, as jogging." Ouch. "This is the sexuality of those who risk nothing because they have nothing inside to risk." Ouch again. Dworkin may have been the great hater of sex, but can she really be wrong when she charges that the chirpy "sex-positivity" of our time masks a deep and abiding core of disgust?

Dworkin's own writing teems with sexual disgust, but disgust transforms itself into a wellspring of language, into flurries of creative loathing and poetic incantations. Out of the vast woman-hatred of the culture, she managed to create a seductively sordid idiom all her own:

> There are so many dirty names for [a woman] that one rarely learns them all, even in one's native language. There are dirty names for every female part of her body and for every way of touching her. There are dirty words, dirty laughs, dirty noises, dirty jokes, dirty movies, and dirty things to do to her in the dark. Fucking her is the dirtiest, though it may not be as dirty as she herself is. Her genitals are dirty in the literal meaning: stink and blood and urine and mucous and slime. Her genitals are also dirty in the metaphoric sense: obscene. She is reviled as filthy, obscene, in religion, pornography, philosophy, and in most literature and art and psychology. Where she is not explicitly maligned she is magnificently condescended to.

It's hard to argue. Any woman who won't admit it just enforces Dworkin's view that women lose any capacity for self-knowledge and honesty in sex, since to the extent that we reconcile ourselves to enjoying it under the current conditions, our brains turn to mush. In her account of female psychology, women transform themselves into sex scavengers, wanting sensuality and tenderness but settling instead for "being owned and being fucked" as a substitute for the physical affection and approval we crave from men. Women need male approval to be able to survive inside our own skins, and we solicit it through sex. To get sex we have to conform in "body type and behavior" to what men like. Given the vast amount of time, energy, and disposable income so many heterosexual women do invest in achieving and maintaining whatever degree of sexual attractiveness is feasible—well, once again, it's hard to argue. Self-knowledge might be the means to really knowing a lover in sex—the only thing that might make passion personal instead of generic—but achieving self-knowledge is impossible for women to the extent that participating in intercourse in the first place requires eroticizing "powerlessness and self-annihilation." If the argument seems tautological, then you're getting the point: fucking is a vortex, an abyss, a sinkhole.

The topic that Dworkin is not entirely persuasive on is pleasure, which is pretty much absent, except as a form of false consciousness. She's obviously far more animated by violence, which becomes the template for all heterosexual sex. For a woman, trying to eke any pleasure from such experiences is collaborationism; initiating sex is taking the initiative in your own degradation. There's no entry for pleasure in the index, though you will find entries for "Sex act: repugnance toward" and "Sex act: used to express hatred." You must wait until page 158 to find orgasms mentioned in the text—or, more accurately, lack of orgasms, since Dworkin is citing Shere Hite's data to the effect that seven out of ten women don't experience orgasm from intercourse. Dworkin seems not unpleased. How *could* a woman have orgasms under such conditions, she

because men can't fuck equals? Who'd enjoy this kind of thing but colluders

Yes, Dworkin reads like a stampeding dinosaur in our era of bubbly pro-sex post-feminism. Feminist anger isn't exactly in fashion at the moment: these days women just direct their anger inward, or carp at individual men, typically their hapless husbands and boyfriends. Nevertheless, the theme that sex injures women continues to percolate through the culture in a well-meaning nibbled-to-death-by-ducks sort of way—that is, without the feminism and without Dworkin's entertaining rhetorical grandiosity. Consider two recent, rather similar books: Laura Sessions Stepp's *Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both*, and Wendy Shalit's *Girls Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be Good*. You learn pretty much everything you need to know from the subtitles, as each book has one point to make (and make and make): "hooking up" has replaced dating, and this harms young women (Stepp); the decline of sexual modesty is at the root of most social ills, and this harms young women (Shalit). The bad news is that the young women of our nation are having too much sex; the good news is that at least they're not enjoying it—though according to Stepp, they're generally too bombed out of their gourds at the time to remember whether they did or not. Our younger generation are rampant hedonists, but it's hedonism minus the pleasure.

If sexual experimentation ever had any meaning beyond a straight path to female heartbreak, if pleasure was once a political watchword and not only a synonym for self-destruction, Stepp and Shalit want to set the record straight on all that. In other words, both these books are shadow-boxing with the legacies of the '60s and '70s—sexual liberation and feminism—in the guise of instructions to the young. (Lesson One: Return to traditional values—or else.) Various forms of evidence are brought forward to plead their respective cases: Stepp trailed three groups of women around for a year—high schoolers from the Washington, D.C., area, and college students from Duke and George Washington universities. According to her findings, these girls mistakenly think they can have sex on their own terms, hooking up and walking away at will, and they regard this as empowering. Treating boys badly is especially empowering: great pleasure is taken in callously using boys just as boys have once in a while been known to use girls. The fact that her subjects report feeling in control and are often articulate high achievers matters little to Stepp, who argues variously that they don't know what they feel, are doing themselves lasting injury, or should be pursuing serious relationships instead, because sex and commitment should be aligned. (There are a lot of "shoulds" floating around, which reminds me of an old art school teacher of mine who used to say, "Shouldhood is shithood.") But the girls Stepp interviews hardly seem capable of committed relationships: they're immature and self-involved; when they do acquire boyfriends, they invariably break up with them over trivialities. Stepp wants her subjects to have the advanced self-knowledge and settled values of a middle-aged journalist, which seems like a bad case of overidentification.

Shalit agrees with most of this, but she has bigger game in her sights, primarily the sexual oversaturation of modern society. Since sex *is* indeed everywhere, her approach is necessarily scattershot. She calls up a leader of NOW on the phone and tries to get her to indict *Girls Gone Wild*; she interviews college girls leading chastity campaigns; she goes undercover at a "Cuddle Party," where participants pay up to $1,000 to put on pajamas and, well, cuddle (nonsexually, though Shalit has her suspicions); and she offers myriad other examples of modern life gone wrong, from blogging, to immodest camera angles on *What Not to Wear* (a wardrobe-makeover program), to sex education, to college girls wearing pajamas to class, all thrown into a chunky stew of an argument. (One of my own books is also held up briefly to make the case that immorality runs rampant in our society.)

Neither Stepp nor Shalit wants to come off as anti-sex precisely; [illegible] at pains to stress that they're n[illegible] and that they *like* sex, or do u[illegible] right circumstances. Both writ[illegible] sume their own marriages are ti[illegible] els that members of the young[illegible] eration should be aspiring to [illegible] never attain if they're slutting [illegible] (Shalit and her husband follow[illegible] thodox Jewish law and didn't [illegible] each other until after the cere[illegible] Both authors worry that casual [illegible] es its power and mystery, gets [illegible] In her day, Dworkin was less pe[illegible] ed that marriage was the ans[illegible] women's problems, given "the [illegible] ing reality of male sexual domi[illegible] the fucking, the boredom, the[illegible] donment." Stepp and Shalit se[illegible] think sexual boredom affect[illegible] those having casual sex—but hey[illegible] about boring married sex? (To [illegible] Stepp emphasizes love and co[illegible] ment more than marriage per se. [illegible] think men should have to work[illegible] er for sex, that it's the woman's t[illegible] train men to act better than th[illegible] and that with so many women [illegible] ing up, things aren't fair for thos[illegible] won't. Not hooking up these[illegible] sounds like trying to unionize[illegible] right-to-work state—if everyone [illegible] selling it cheaper, how's a higher-[illegible] girl going to stay in the market?

This is all depressingly fam[illegible] So is the litany of harms [illegible] told derive from casual[illegible] Stepp and Shalit do know ho[illegible] thump that fear card: between th[illegible] of them, they manage to ha[illegible] anorexia, depression, suicide, [illegible] cutting, an empty life of careerism[illegible] singlehood, STDs (of course), a[illegible] with rapists and serial killers h[illegible] picking their victims from the pl[illegible] of girls in revealing outfit[illegible] MySpace.com (that one is Shal[illegible] Monocausal arguments (casua[illegible] causes X) shade into hysterical [illegible] (the bogeymen will get you). The [illegible] t[illegible]n I find interesting is why it[illegible] variably sex that produces these [illegible] terical arguments about risk, w[illegible] other social risks get a pass. Most [illegible] would agree that auto fatalities are [illegible] to driving in cars, that driving ca[illegible] risks, but no one—at least in secula[illegible] ciety—is proposing that women [illegible] driving. Maybe it's an unanswer[illegible]

n: Freud started out by trying to
er the mysteries of female hys-
d ended up churning out twen-
volumes. Hysteria is a dybbuk,
g from one generation to the
slightly altered guises, eluding
ndage of reason.

rkin, too, had her female fears,
at least she wasn't peddling
ry that everything used to be
n the old days. All in all, if I had
my vote for a sexual alarmist,
Dworkin, the radical firebrand,
of the well-meaning aunties.
ew alarmism is so tepid com-
vith the old alarmism. Dworkin
sex tragic and disgusting, but
n't trying to spawn a generation
girls—though she also had no
r sexual experimentation, and
iked men (along with sex) too
o concede that nice girls sti-
conventionality and greedy for
n have always pursued it by try-
act like men, whether that
careers, adventurism (from Joan
to Amelia Earhart), or sleeping
. Emulating men has its prob-
o be sure. Men haven't got it
ed out either—other than how
buy books telling them to have
s, which may be why no one
hem. For my money, this in it-
uld be a condition for women to
o.

re are as many ways to assess
ferences between the sexes as
re uses to which such accounts
. Take the version that says sex
women more than men. For
in the propensity for injury be-
th the female anatomy: "Wom-
unspeakably vulnerable in in-
rse because of the nature of the
ntry, penetration, occupation."
usly, Stepp and Shalit cannot
Dworkin down this particular
They're equally invested in fe-
agility, but indicting intercourse
ould implicate marital sex, and
sex is supposed to be the reward
ue in their version of the story.
onally, Dworkin held that the
n to female fragility was femi-
This, too, is unacceptable. For
and Shalit, feminism was the
n: it was *feminists* who persuad-
nen to sleep around. (They seem
have heard about Andrea
in: well-known feminist, not exactly a sex libber.) But if feminism is the problem, obviously some other solution is required, and the solution is—drumroll, please—*men*: finding a man to love and marry you. This is presented as a new idea.

Since men are the solution instead of the problem, a new culprit is required. It turns out that the blame for bad sex goes to—another drumroll, please—*mothers*. I find this refreshing. If you ask me, it's been far too long since moms were in the dock. Remember when they caused homosexual sons and autism? Now they cause promiscuity. At least feminist moms do, according to both Stepp and Shalit—bad mothers carting around antiquated ideas about liberation, compelling their daughters into meaningless sex with assorted men. For Stepp, it's mothers who force their daughters into becoming relationship-averse overachievers with the wrong priorities, valuing careers over love, all to fulfill Mom's own thwarted ambitions. But it's Shalit who really delivers a spanking to Mom, particularly the boomer moms, who learned moral irresponsibility in the 1960s and now are trying to foist it on their daughters. Mothers are the ultimate sleaze queens in Shalit's reportage: they photograph their baby daughters in bikinis, splayed on car hoods like porn stars; they set their teenage daughters up on assignations with older men when they judge it's time for daughter to lose her virginity. (No doubt right-wing talk show hosts will lap it up: America's moms finally exposed as the slimy predators we always knew they were.)

Luckily the daughters are smarter than these louche boomer parents. They're rebelling, embracing virginity, demanding to wear one-piece swimsuits. Shalit says there's a grassroots modesty campaign under way; she herself was in its forefront. Yes, she's the *real* rebel, not those has-been bad girls, closet conformists all. Punctuating the distracting tales of other people are numerous episodes recounting Shalit's own difficult journey as modesty's spokesmodel, forever under attack for her outré views, discriminated against in college for protesting co-ed bathrooms, now continually dissed in the media by boomers publishing digs at her expense (various examples are reprinted here—if you review her negatively, you can expect a mention in her next book). People she wants to interview won't return her calls; feminists refuse to answer her questions. *She's* the victim! In college, the transgendered kids had a support group, but where was the support group for the chaste? Shalit is fond of painting herself as an embattled heroine—an exhaustingly plucky one—though how embattled can she be when her views are the official views of the current administration?

Sex has a way of becoming a complicated story. At least we like generating such stories about it, stories that in turn condition what it feels like and how we experience it. It may be a private act, but it's a social act too: the ways we fuck are historically contingent. For Dworkin that's the problem: she thinks the reasons women want intercourse are foul, "filled with the spiteful but carefully hidden malice of the powerless." Stepp and Shalit would agree that women are often deluded in their reasons for wanting sex. But is this a peculiarly female trait, or merely a human trait? People want to and frequently do have sex with each other for murky and self-deceiving reasons, or for clear-eyed reasons that turn out to be mistaken, or a thousand variations on the theme of erroneous judgment. If young women are experimenting with roles, trying to invent nontraditional relations to their sexuality, the question is why this causes so much hand-wringing. One obvious reason is that they're breaking ranks with the injury story, which alarms those who are invested in conventional femininity. But female sexuality has always generated alarmist narratives—long before feminism, or the sexual revolution, there was something scandalous and dirty about it. Also endlessly fascinating, hence the taboos, the purity rites, the pornography industry . . . It's the problem that generates the succession of solutions that somehow never solve anything. But if it were solved, how distressing that would be: no alarms to raise, advice to dispense, or skirts to peek under. ■

LAST THINGS

The sinister charm of Frederick Seidel

By Benjamin Kunkel



Discussed in this essay:

Ooga-Booga, by Frederick Seidel. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 101 pages. $24.

"Decadent" is the word most often applied to Frederick Seidel's poetry, whether in a spirit of praise, reproof, or moral nervousness. It's not hard to see why:

> Here I am, not a practical man,
> But clear-eyed in my contact lenses,
> Following no doubt a slightly different
> line than the others,
> Seeking sexual pleasure above all else,
> Despairing of art and of life,
> Seeking protection from death by
> seeking it
> On a racebike, finding release and
> belief on two wheels,
> Having read a book or two,
> Having eaten well,
> Having traveled not everywhere in
> sixty-seven years but far . . .

The lines, plainer and less compact than usual, come from the last poem in Seidel's latest collection and exhibit indeed the hallmarks of decadence. Here is languid despair, sexual avidity, the honeyed trappings of leisure-class life (especially his beloved and frankly fetishized Ducati motorcycles), offered up in a tone of sinister sophistication. Formally, too, the poem could be called decadent, in that it fairly drips with belatedness, evoking at once Eliot's "Gerontion" ("Here I am, an old man in a dry month . . .") and Apollinaire's great poem of disabused summation, "*La Jolie Rousse*." And decadence is no doubt a suitable mood: Seidel is an American poet of independent means in late middle age. His cosseted body, his imperial country, and the proud art of poetry have all entered a decline. The poem is called "The Death of the Shah." And in the cruel, spoiled, doomed Shah of Iran—whose cancer-eaten insides Seidel pictured, in a poem written almost twenty years ago, as "turning into caviar"—the poet has found a figure for the self.

Ooga-Booga, with its playfully scary title and truly frightening contents, is Frederick Seidel's ninth and best book. It is also a sort of culmination, bringing to a pitch of skill and outrageousness traits present in his work from the beginning. Seidel has always cast a cold but enchanted eye on the rich, including himself; shown a horrified fascination with politics; and been attended by a sense of decline. Like T. S. Eliot but fifty years later, Seidel was born into comfortable circumstances in St. Louis and educated at Harvard, and also like Eliot, he seems to have been precociously old-aged. At twenty-six, Seidel had produced a volume of dramatic monologues favoring old men as narrators. Even his own voice carried a note of advanced exhaustion. "After the Party" ends with these lines: "Convinced life is meaningless,/I lack the courage of my conviction."

The early work remains impre
but too obviously indebted to R
Lowell. The long enjambed l
mostly unrhymed, crammed like
lors with historical and social
create an effect of impacted prose
their emotional violence and luri
agery ("The cars zombied on/Thr

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chronized lights . . .") likewise
ı in mind of Lowell. In 1962 a
onsisting of Louise Bogan, Stan-
nitz, and Lowell himself select-
lel's first collection, *Final Solu-*
or the Young Men's and Young
n's Hebrew Association's new
prize. Whatever the prize's ad-
ators may have thought of the
's title, they became concerned
idel might have libeled some of
jects. (A willingness to offend
ways belonged to his work.)
to make changes, Seidel refused,
publisher attached to the prize
out. The prize was canceled,
al Solutions did not appear for
r year, from a different house.
as 1979 before Seidel produced
id volume, *Sunrise*. Perhaps the
of sixteen years simply reflects
ne required for precocity to be-
necessity: there is what you *can*
d then what you *have* to say. In
s case, the former becomes the
with middle age; his life had
up with his sensibility. ("What
happened isn't everything/Un-
niddle age it starts to be.") And
rise he emerges as himself, in-
still but no longer beholden to
. Particularly his own, in the
le poem, is the jocular way with
rrific:

r than the time before the baby
vls is the time before he smiles,
aybe.
n's merry moustache, magnetic,
alignant,
vls slowly over a leaf which
nnot move.

nagery is at once cartoonish and
y exact: Stalin's mustache as
llar. And note the musicality—
chiming feminine rhyme
maybe), the trilling alliteration
e assonance ("merry moustache,
tic, malignant")—so at odds
eidel's terrible theme. "Sunrise"
ns several kinds of helplessness:
ı of the poet's girlfriend has been
zed in an accident, and the
an't do anything about it. He is
t between the fantasy that the
ll be reborn, ambulatory, and a
of impending nuclear war—
n, that is, the desire for a second
e and the awareness that it may
y be too late for the boy, and,
perhaps, for everyone. Politics, after all, is another kind of helplessness: a forty-year-old man in 1976, like Seidel in the poem, has spent his adult life in the shadow of a nuclear arsenal first assembled in rivalry with mustachioed Stalin. The blight lies even on the greenest leaf, "which cannot move."

Seidel's poetry is full of these vaulting associations of private with political life. The final, fortieth stanza of "Sunrise" imagines a nuclear missile launched "In an incomprehensible *–1* of might," just as the poet awakes from a dream of the paralyzed boy's recovery:

> Sat up at last, the quadriplegic boy
> Feels beyond pain, feels beyond joy—
> Still, stately as the Christ of
> Resurrection.
> I wake beneath my hypnopompic
> erection,
> Forty stanzas, forty Easters of life,
> And smile, eyes full of tears, shaking
> with rage.

So much of Seidel is here: the intense sympathetic identification with suffering (one reason he is not merely "decadent"); the apocalyptic lust; the nearly religious gratitude at being alive; and grief and rage over the fact that a world dreaming of rebirth is in truth a world of death. And if you want Seidel's poetic persona in a single image, you could do worse than to picture this furious, priapic, smiling, crying man.

Since *Sunrise*, Seidel's work has grown only more outrageous in its self-presentation, its who's-who milieu (various poems celebrate friendship with this famous movie director, that famous clothing designer, and so on), and its sexual perversity. A simple would-be nature poem called "Autumn," from *My Tokyo* (1993), imagines that season of mellow fruitfulness as a ventriloquized mannequin-woman on her knees:

> The garter belt-and-stockings one will
> crawl
> For him, will crawl on all fours down
> the hall,
> His voice between her teeth. She'll
> show him all.
> He'll want to see. He'll walk behind.
> She'll call.

All, all: the poem greedily repeats the sound. Fall foliage is a wholesome American sight, but Seidel doesn't just want to snap pictures. He—well, let him say it himself, as he does in another poem: "I want to date-rape life."

The suave tone setting up the shock, the excellent table manners combined with a savage display of appetite: this is what everyone notices in Seidel. Yet he wouldn't be so special or powerful a poet of what's cruel, corrupt, and horrifying had he not also lately shown himself to be a great poet of innocence. Critics have tended to miss or dismiss this in him, skipping ahead, as it were, to the good stuff. But for now let us go back to what, for Seidel, is clearly the beginning: the innocent oblivion that precedes everything. It seems that for him it is an important feature of a spoiled person, country, or planet ("Contorted and disfigured nature in the dying days of oil") that at one time these things were nothing at all, and might just as easily have been almost anything else.

In 2000, with *The Cosmos Poems*, Seidel turned from writing about nuclear war, mass murder, and child abuse—and about the love, friendship, and travel that offered some respite from these preoccupations—to writing poem after poem on the birth of the universe. The move disappointed and perplexed some sympathetic readers. The critic Adam Kirsch, who has written perceptively about Seidel, objected in *The New Republic* to the poems' lack of "a cosmology, a theology, or even a narrative."

But Seidel's cosmological turn had two important consequences. First, by suggesting that everything might have turned out differently, it gave a tragic cast to an attitude that might otherwise have seemed merely disenchanted. And—a second consequence—Seidel's detour through the heavens supplied his awareness of privilege with a potently cosmic as well as a socioeconomic dimension. Indeed the reigning metaphysic of *The Cosmos Poems* seems to me the one contained in something the Buddha told his followers: Imagine a bangle floating near the bottom of the sea. Imagine also a tortoise living there who extends his neck from his shell once every six hundred years. How unlikely that the tortoise should ever stick its neck out at precisely the moment the bangle

floats by and the bangle slip over its head. Yet to be born a human being is just as unlikely. Modern physics suggests that if anything, the Buddha understated the odds; as Seidel writes, "It is the invisible/Dark matter we are not made of/That I am afraid of./Most of the universe consists of this." As for the *non*-dark matter, infinitesimally little is on earth; of this terrestrial matter, very little consists of humanity; of that humanity, almost none has had the privilege of being American during the American century; and of American humanity, very little is, like Frederick Seidel, independently wealthy and white in a bespoke suit.

Seidel's sense of the unlikeliness of being anyone at all, particularly himself, accounts for the power of gratitude in his later work. In "Galaxies" an elementary astrophysics lecture becomes an ode to everyday life:

> But how many of you know
> That the jellyfish
>
> You see in the picture on page 8—
> Everybody open your book—
> Is eleven million light-years wide?
> It is beautiful, to boot.
>
> It is beautiful to kick
> The ball into the goal.
> It is beautiful to know how
> To answer the phone.

In *The Cosmos Poems*, it's often as if the universe has called up the poet to congratulate him on being alive. Yet many of the images of innocence and bliss in this volume have an overdrawn quality that advertises their unreality: "Angels are swimming/In the sea./Manta rays ripple by/Nearby." Or here are young children at play in the young universe: "And some are swinging on swings,/And seesaws are seesawing." Of course it's the nature of tropical vacations (on which you watch manta rays from the beach) and recess hour not to last. Both sets of lines indicate emotional felicity through childishly infelicitous language, which points up the fragility of what they describe. The children will be called in from recess—and taught history.

How nice it would be if there were a different history to teach them. In one of the *Cosmos Poems*, the very first human, historical event to take place in the world is evidently Lincoln's delivery of the Gettysburg Address: a world-historical wish-fulfillment dream, as if Lincoln's speech had not only refounded the nation but installed an alternate universe innocent of slavery altogether. Perhaps this alternate universe is the same as in another of the *Cosmos Poems*:

> It looks like love
>
> Is everything there is.
> Things in boots
> Are murdering the Jews on Mars
> And other galaxies don't know

But the planet of slavery and genocide isn't Mars, of course. And the result of actual historical knowledge in Seidel resembles what Martin Amis has described as the effects of studying the Holocaust: "a sense of *lousiness*, like an infestation," and something he was tempted to call "species-shame." Quite literally, Seidel can't take a vacation from these feelings. The first poem in his next book, *Life on Earth* (2001), beautifully describes a trip to Bali, Indonesia—only to recall that Bali was also, during the government's campaign against the Communists in the 1960s, the site of mass murder. The second poem, "French Polynesia," describes the more everyday despoliation of another earthly paradise:

> Drinking and incest and endless ease
> Is paradise and child abuse
> And battered wives.
> There are no other jobs.

A few lines later a ripe melon "opens and hisses happiness." On earth as it is—not as it might have been—Seidel can't admire a fruit, or hear the word "happiness," without also detecting a hiss within.

The narrative of *The Cosmos Trilogy*, Seidel's magnum opus, is the familiar one of the fall: we start in the heavens with *The Cosmos Poems*, descend to the savagely mixed blessing of *Life on Earth*, and finish, with several poems set in the autumn of 2001, in Manhattan's *Area Code 212* (2002). The thirty-three poems in each volume echo the thirty-three cantos in each book of *The Divine Comedy*, at the same time that Seidel's sequence—paradise, purgatory, inferno—upends Dante's. Far from being interesting in itself, the scheme, perhaps deliberately, courts banality. But it seems to have been necessary for Seidel, in order to take the measure of his guilt and gratitude, to reckon also the size and frivolity of the universe. Indeed his gratitude and guilt tend to become one and the same: how lucky to be alive, how comfortable, and how rare.

This fusion leads us into the territory of psychoanalysis. Seidel's poetry is already working for us there. In "The Death of Shah," from *Ooga-Booga*, he says the future of psychoanalysis is it has a past, but then he is enamored of all doomed things. The most political of poets, he is also the most psychoanalytically inclined.

Seidel often free-associates, but in the genial daydreaming way of John Ashbery. His poems behave more like actual dreams, made for the most part ending in gratification or fear. And the lyrical moods are the classical and psychoanalytic ones of guilt, lust, anxiety. His poetry can even resemble a caricature of analysis. He has a fixation to rival a nursing infant's when food aid is dropped into starving Ethiopia, "Each parachute a breast/Blind mouths look up"—and, like the shrink or the child, he takes an exaggerated interest in shit: "The latrine covered undigested girls/Inside the mid darkness of his stool."

Seidel writes as if id had been ego, but in the worst way: all in vain, no cure. "Dante's Beatrice" in *Ooga-Booga*, a poem about one of the Ducati bikes, is comically explicit on the subject of sublimation: "I bought the racer/To replace her./It became my slave and I its./All it lacked was tits." People don't usually put things as frankly and lucidly as that; it's being witty about what ought to be unwitting. This is equally true when Seidel writes about the fear of death. Thus, also on the subject of riding motorcycles: "I spend most of my time not dying./That's what living is."

The great project of civilization, in Freud's sense, is the sublimation of aggression, lust, and terror into acceptable behavior. In Seidel, this work is turned on its head so that the highest products of a civilization, socially and aesthetically, reveal the same base underings they are meant to conceal. But Seidel adds to the process a deeply

g self-consciousness; he is ex-
the ironic refinement of the
eudian person, who can see
ı all his actions to their most
ze origins. (Believers in socio-
more numerous these days, do
ır trick: behind every action
effort to maximize one's genet-
ess.) The effect is one Freud
quite anticipate: a monstrous
rence of the self, to itself.

ke the confessional poets of the
generation before him, Seidel
ells his dreams in public; and
ın Berryman on occasion and
more often, he also writes po-
political subjects. What Seidel
ıe differently—or what recent
has forced him to do—is to
is dream songs and his political
one and the same. His latest
testifies to our sense that there
ger is any intervening distance
ective layer between the raw,
lf and the horrific imagery of
olitics as reproduced and dis-
ted by the electronic media.
ı a single line from *Ooga-Booga*
raq War: "Oilcoholics love the
hey attack." It's not just clever
bine Kleinian analysis and the
itics of petroleum addiction
single bad pun; it shows Seidel
ıg his jokey-serious, excessively
sychoanalysis to his country as
to himself.
el can't help, for example, iden-
with the politicians he despis-
re is a stanza from "The Bush
ıistration":

Bush administration likes its rain
nny-side up.
a mania of happiness at being
ive
write you this suicide note.
ve never been so cheerily suicidal,
sui-Seidel.
too cheery to be well.
rge Bush is cheery as well.
cheeriest
vling around on all fours eating
ntle grass
pretending I am eating broken
ass.
ı I throw up the pasture.

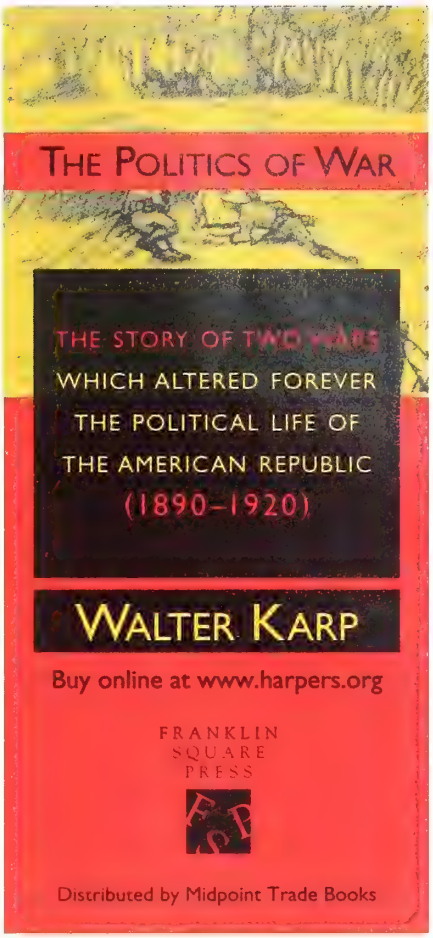
s gladness in the face of the Bush
r reminds him of the adminis-
's own incurable optimism: for
the rain is always "sunny-side

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SOLUTION TO THE AUGUST PUZZLE

G	E	N	U	I	N	E	A	R	T	I	C	L	E
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P	A	R	V	E	N	U	A	Q	U	A	R	I	A
H	T	Y	I	X	I	A	B	U	S	X	S	A	D
I	C	E	P	I	C	K	L	I	M	E	A	D	E
C	H	E	S	T	S	E	E	P	O	D	E	S	S

NOTES FOR "NEWS CLIPPINGS":

*Puzzle editing by Henri Picciotto. Note: * indicates an anagram.*

Slash marks indicate where each clue was divided.

ACROSS: 1. pun; 7. adversaries/as, FO(rev.)-E'S, E.R.-AS; 8. nipper/favoring, O-R.-BITER, FOR-SAKE; 9. heart/on, FELT (two mngs.), OVER (two mngs.); 10. destroying/race, R(U-IN)ING, H(TRIBE)R (rev.); 12. aids/slow. A-B-E-T-S (initials), DENSE*; 14. climbing/water, PAR-VENU(E), AQUA-AIR(rev.); 16. chipper/mix, I-C.(EPIC)K., LIMEADE*; 17. lines/trunks, EPODES*, CHESTS (hidden).

DOWN: 1. means/G.O.P, A-F(FORD)ABLE, GEOGRAPHIC*; 2. astray/for, ERRS (homophone), FO(O)R (rev.); 3. wasting/uncompleted, NABOBERY*, TER(M)-MINUS; 4. instruments/buries, CLAVIERS*, INTERS-EX; 5. holiday/resort, NOEL*, (F)LAKE; 6. upheavals/swamp, EARTH*-QUAKE(R), EVER(GLAD)ES*; 11. drinks/sprites, S(C-IN)OT (rev.), NAIA*-D(T)'S; 13. church/outfit, BAT(rev.)-CH, EQUIP*; 15. canned/vegetable, A-X-ED., V(egetable)-1-P.S.

up." And not only does Seidel identify with Bush; he associates both the president and himself with the Bible's mad King Nebuchadnezzar, driven into the wilderness and forced to subsist on grass until he acknowledged the ultimate kingdom of God. By itself, the reference might indicate only delusion followed by comeuppance. But why pretend the grass is "broken glass," and why is the wilderness a pasture? These details suggest something of the poet's helplessness in the face of effective political power: his sympathy with its victims (the *real* glass-eaters) is nothing but pretending, and his status as poet within the empire is that of a harmless pet, a pastured ruminant. Or something like that: Seidel's lines, for all their seeming lightness, can be too dense with meaning to explicate.

"I am too cheery to be well" might in any case serve as the motto for Seidel's poetics: his language is too cheery to be well. The effect is no longer like Lowell so much as like Sylvia Plath in "Daddy" or "Lady Lazarus." Seidel handles his ugliest themes with a sneering fineness of tone, heavily end-stopped lines, and a frolicsome abundance of rhyme:

> I am flying to Area Code 212
> To stab a Concorde into you,
> To plunge a sword into the gangrene.
> This poem is about a sword of
> kerosene.

And he plays a suicide bomber in much the way that Plath calls her father a Nazi and herself a Jew. Many of Seidel's poems exhibit a courageous bad taste, which permits him access to the political unconscious that another poet might never gain.

Still, in what way can Seidel, who says "I mean every part I play," be a suicide bomber? How can the Shah of Iran be an Islamic fundamentalist, too? The answer goes to the heart of Seidel's work. Here are a few stanzas from *Ooga-Booga*'s "Mother Nature," a gleeful travesty of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*:

> Her breast is bigger than I am.
> Her nipple is bigger than my mouth.
> Let me masturbate to death.
> Let my hand fall off.
>
> Islam is submission.
> Behead the man
> Who will not listen!
> My head and hand are coming to an
> end.
>
> I am coming in Manhattan
> By the shining Big Sea Water.
> I am coming to the end. I am coming
> to.
> The predawn streets are empty

Seidel's relationship to his own hedonism is something like Baudelaire's exultation in his self-torment: "I am the wound and the knife!/I am the slap and the cheek!/I am the limbs and the wheel,/and the victim and the torturer!" Except that Seidel is being more mediumistic than confessional: they are not necessarily even his own, these oddly twinned fantasies of being sybarite and scourge, of pure pornographic desire and the jihadist puritanism that would destroy it. These bad dreams come into all our lives, through laptop and television screens.

It would be one thing to express such agonized ambivalence over sex, sweet light crude, and all good things in straightforward prose or approximately decorous verse. What's particularly disquieting is the way Seidel's poetry acts out this ambivalence. He is never more musically pleasing and light than when dealing with the heaviest and most unpleasant subjects (just as many of the more innocent *Cosmos Poems* rhyme sparingly and avoid singsong cadences). His solution to the problem of poetic decorum—or how to match sound to sense—is simply to abandon it: to turn Grand Guignol into ear candy. Inappropriate speech becomes a token of the unspeakable—unspeakable facts, unspeakable fantasies—while the over-richness of his prosody implies a verdict on civilized pleasure itself.

In "To Die For," black ants stampeding toward a bowl of white sugar remind the poet of the slaves who worked the cane fields:

> The little black specks were shipped
> to Brazil in ships.
> The Portuguese whipped the little
> black specks to bits.
> The sugar plantations on the horrible
> tropical coast where the soil was
> rich
> Were a most productive ant
> Auschwitz.
>
> The sugar bowl on the counter is a
> D-cup, containing one large white
> breast.
> The breast in the bowl is cov
> excited specks . . .

To compare black slaves to
even the worst sugar plant
Auschwitz; to turn the sug
into a huge breast detached
woman, meanwhile sprink
Middle Passage into the su
then to do all this in a rhy
lilting way reminiscent of Doc
or Odgen Nash . . . When Ado
it was barbaric to write poet
Auschwitz, he wasn't even t
about light verse. Yet bene
smirking ugliness lies an aw
that the wealth that slaves li
died to create for others was t
sweetness they longed for, as
ly as a nursling reaches for the
Such thoughts (sometimes abo
slaves, too) seep into many of
pleasures, and their sourness b
his sweet, even saccharine, mu

Of course Seidel is interested
ters as well as slaves. "Kill Poe
of the best in *Ooga-Booga*, is a
ly exquisite evocation of fox h
as a sort of upper-class costum
with real blood. The first sta
stately affair of perfect rhym
prancing iambs; but in the s
these give way to off-rhymes,
the way of spoiled milk, and a r
stumbling into distress:

> We follow blindly, clad in coats
> pink,
> A beast whose nature is to run
> stink.
> I am civilized in my pink but
> Civilized is about having stuff.
> The red coats are called "pinks."
> much is almost enough.
> No one knows why they are. I p
> in the air
> With my stuff and watch the dis
> pearing scut
> Of a deer. I am civilized but
> Civilized life is actually about to
> much.

The lovely first stanza is retroac
spoiled by its successor. An
spoilage is existential: "No one k
why they are" concerns red coats
called "pinks"—but also means n
knows why *he* is, what for. Ca
point of life, at the apex of civiliza
really just be having too much st

Continued on pa

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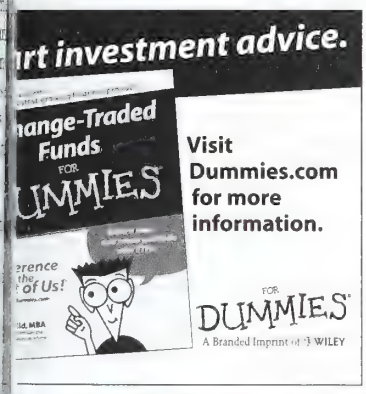
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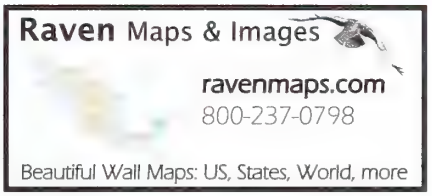


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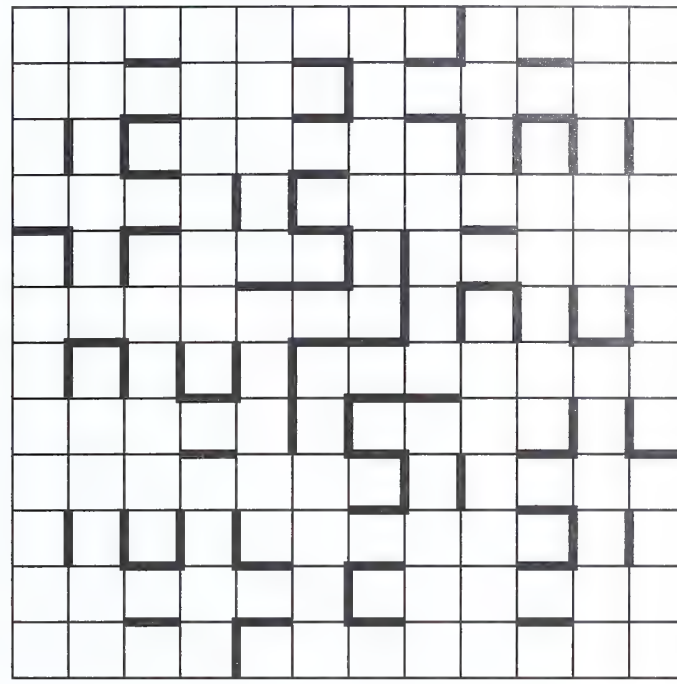
Continued from page 96

It will be interesting to see wh... pens to Seidel's work if it ever m... way onto college reading list. ... all, one of the most common ... studying literature is to demyst... expose the compromising cla... tion of the author, his few, illu... ing obsessions, the sexual disp... implied by his work, his helpl... mersion in the political econ... his day, all the things, that is, th... del already reveals about himse... such harrowing and cheerfu... consciousness. This extrem... consciousness does not exactly ... a consciousness of the self, ho... since at the base of his personal... del has discerned a set of mech... operating as ruthlessly, relentless... impersonally (if not with the san... trinal content) as the laws of Fre... Marx. He is not the only write... this, but you wouldn't have im... that the effect could be pushed ... It's part of what makes Seidel so ... ing and sinister: he knows just ... he's doing. Adding up, line by li... psychic price exacted by civiliz... he then signs the bill before ou... As impressive as the size of the ... the fact that he's willing to pay ...

September Index Sources

1 Wood Mackenzie (Houston)/Fugro Re... Limited (Llandudno, North Wales); 2 U... logical Survey (San Francisco); 3,4 Internati... ergy Agency (Paris); 5,6 U.N. Framewo... vention on Climate Change (Bonn, Germa... Embassy of Ecuador (Washington); 9 Bur... ited (N.Y.C.); 10 U.S. Environmental Pr... Agency; 11,12 U.S. Census Bureau; 13 Ar... Red Cross (Philadelphia); 14 U.S. Depart... State/U.S. Embassy in Baghdad; 15 U.S. Dep... of Veterans Affairs; 16,17 U.S. Senate Selec... mittee on Intelligence; 18,19 U.S. Food ar... Administration (Rockville, Md.); 20 The ... monwealth Fund (N.Y.C.); 21 Institut de rec... et documentation en économie de la santé ... 22 Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates (A... dria, Va.); 23,24 Center for Responsive ... (Washington); 25,26 *Harper's* research; ... *Harper's* research; 30 Alzheimer's Assoc... (Chicago); 31 National Institute for Occu... al Safety and Health (Pittsburgh); 32 Natior... Protection Association (Quincy, Mass.); 33 U... partment of Agriculture Forest Service; 34 ... ny Westerling, University of California, M... 35 Lewis Ziska, U.S. Department of Agric... (Beltsville, Md.); 36,37 City of Chattanoog... lic Works Department; 38 VPI Pet Insurance ... Calif.); 39 American Society for the Preven... Cruelty to Animals (N.Y.C.).

PUZZLE



ABECEDARIAN JIGSAW

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

(with acknowledgments to Dogop of The Listener *and Araucaria of the* Guardian*)*

Clues are listed in the strict alphabetical order of the answers. Each letter of the alphabet is the first letter of at least one answer. Solvers are to determine where the answers fit in the diagram.

Answers include no proper names, although 19 is sometimes capitalized. 8 is a variant spelling. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 95.

CLUES

1. Fool around, photograph some dishes (6)
2. It's swimming in fishbowl! (8)
3. Crow flies up dress (4)
4. For example, Jack Ford—(for example, to a small degree) (4)
5. Act badly, get bad review that's upsetting, retire for a short while (6)
6. 100,000 spices? (6)
7. Had a zest for swallowing drugs, perhaps (5)
8. Old caller rallied in unfortunate circumstances (7)
9. What an undertaker sometimes does makes writing unintelligible! (8)
10. Relax! Relax! English politician being seated inside is ideal (8)
11. Go forward with almost harmless examination for the most promiscuous (7)
12. Brief cases material? (5)
13. Most liberal causes fester somehow (6)
14. For good and bad, take a breather (4)
15. Special plant achieves height by being turned free (6)
16. Become subject to fashionable dog (5)
17. Can a German agreement get support from one on left? (4)
18. Hang out with European bag-maker (4)
19. Audible defect in a sea monster (6)
20. Revile corrupt person who acts according to duty? (6)
21. Delirious person in charge (5)
22. Not one for spinning yarn (4)
23. Start on covering for gear shift's central element (6)
24. In the midst of hoopla, question awards (7)
25. Pound head off seafood (4)
26. What people are putting on the dog? Like, really! (6)
27. Writing name in color brings a tear (4)
28. Find trouble after no longer working in merchandising (6)
29. Gather material? Sure sounds like it! (5)
30. I got involved with Southern ruler going down fast (6)
31. 25 perhaps can be twisted into ringlets (8)
32. Tax theme (6)
33. They're believed by a number of aliens! (6)
34. Employs this after umpire refuses (4)
35. Turning in lutes for a piece of silver (7)
36. Old bag, as evil as evil can be! (6)
37. Suddenly attacks places on a street (7)
38. *Times* takes a year going in a circle looking into things (7)
39. Half a circle in China—more than half a flower! (4)
40. Great deal in axes! Needed for Polish bread! (5)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Abecedarian Jigsaw," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "Hex Signs," are Elizabeth Feinberg, Carlsbad, California; Amy Hamilton, Columbus, Indiana; and Joe Sampson, New Hampton, New Hampshire.



FINDINGS

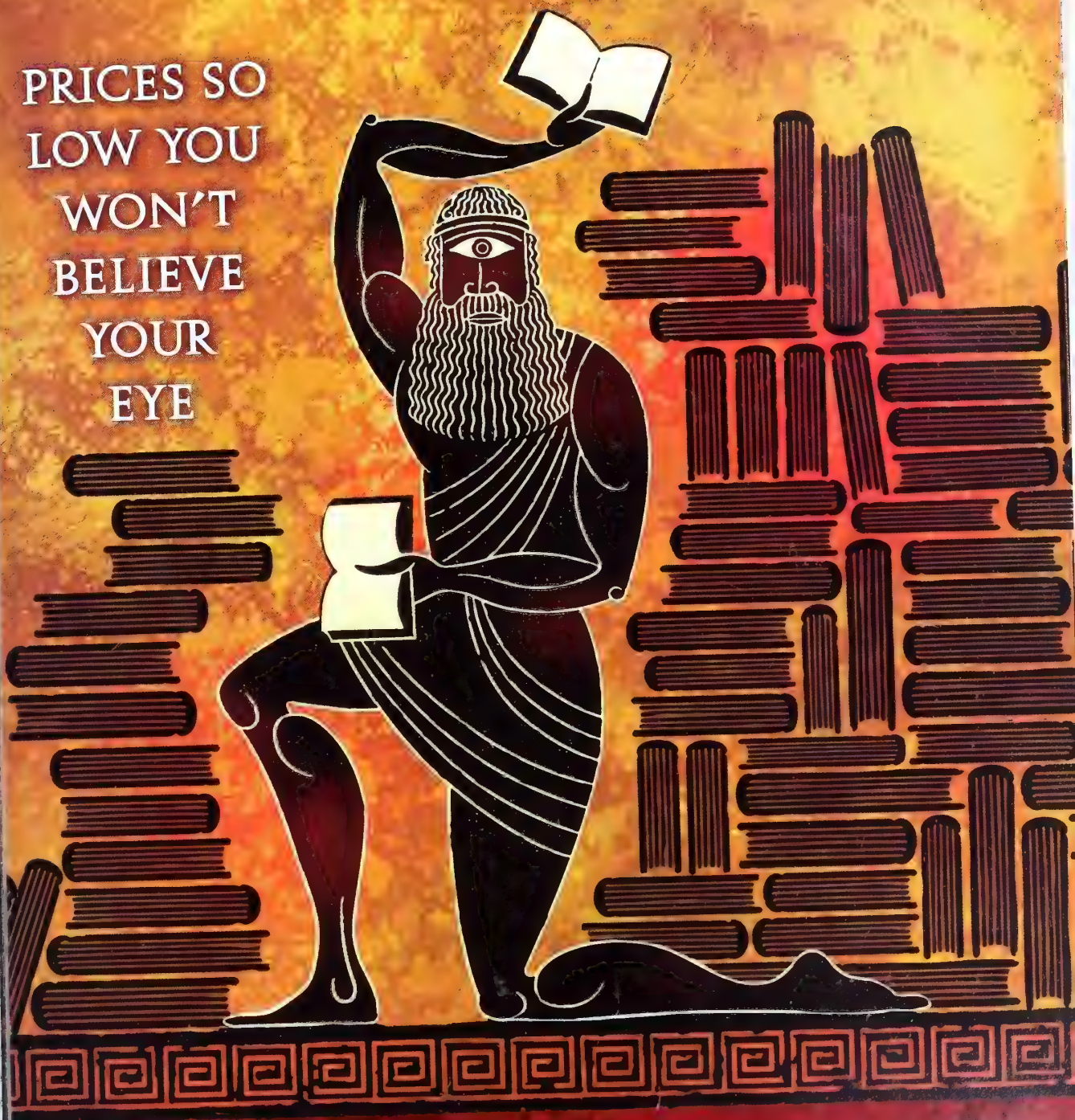
Scientists discovered that obese people, who are more likely to develop heart disease, are also more likely to survive after a coronary event such as unstable angina or a non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction. Italian researchers unveiled a pill designed to make dieters feel full for a few hours; the pill, made from hydrogel, expands into a large gelatinous ball and must still be tested for safety. Psychologists learned that teenagers who have sex feel older than those who don't. Women who suffer from morning sickness during pregnancy are less likely to develop breast cancer later in life, and scientists suggested that afternoon naps might not be good for children after all. Egyptologists discovered the mummy of Hatshepsut, ancient Egypt's greatest queen. A frozen baby mammoth was uncovered in northwestern Siberia with intact eyes and some fur; scientists were hopeful that enough DNA could be harvested from the carcass to create a mammoth clone. Ecological engineers found that human urine makes a good fertilizer for growing the plankton used in fish farms; it worked significantly better than cow urine, vermin compost, chicken droppings, or cow dung.

Scientists found that the models of toxic biomagnification (the process of chemical buildup in tissue over time as one animal eats another) used by regulators ignore differences in the way different species accumulate environmental chemicals. Many toxins are more likely to settle in the tissues of mammals than in algae, shellfish, and fish; hexachlorocyclohexane, for instance, a chemical in the pesticide lindane, does not accumulate to high levels in fish but does in polar bears, because it easily escapes in water but not in a Researchers found that brightly colored birds such orioles and blue tits are less plentiful than drab bir such as tree pipits, coat tits, and chaffinches in cont minated areas near the Chernobyl nuclear plant. A Australian entrepreneur was selling oysters raised tanks laced with Viagra.

Researchers announced that they can now use woman's butt fat to grow new breasts. Using standar liposuction, the "Celution" therapist will extract f cells, from which stem cells will be separated; in ju one hour the stem cells will be ready for injectio The new breasts will fill out over the next six month Promising results were seen in clinical trials of a kin of artificial skin that integrates with the human bod "fully and consistently." Eating too much red mea was again linked to bowel cancer. Lockheed Martin MULE (Multifunction Utility/Logistics and Equip ment) robot successfully navigated a 30-inch ste and crossed a 70-inch gap using only its native self awareness. Taser International announced plans t install its stun guns on robots. The company als demonstrated a shotgun-fired stunning projectile an a weapon, called the Shockwave, that fires six shoc darts at the same time across a 20-degree arc. Chines villagers have been digging up and eating dinosau bones in the apparent belief that they are the remain of flying dragons and as such possess special healing powers. Men with high testosterone levels tend to b irrational negotiators. Smoking was linked to demen tia. Uranus has no diamonds. Piranha attacks were u in Brazil. ■

"Schlangeboot (Snake Boat)" (detail), an archival pigmented print, by Kahn/Selesnick. Courtesy the artists and Pepper Gallery Boston

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The New Economy of Catastrophe

By Naomi Klein

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Cover: Saint Walburga and the Abbess of the Ship (detail), by Peter Paul Rubens © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York City

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LETTERS

High School, Inc.

The notion that public schools in America remain the "great equalizer" is a lie that threatens the well-being of the nation's shrinking middle class. When a wealthy state like New York is able to spend 50 percent more per pupil than the national average, it is clear that equalization ends at the state's edge. With that in mind, it is troubling that in "The Big Enchilada" Jonathan Kozol [Notebook, August] is so quick to dismiss the school-voucher program as nothing more than a mechanism for corporate profiteering. Although I am no less disgusted than Kozol at the notion of EMOs, there is certainly room for a better school-voucher system—one in which a minimum number of publicly run schools would be guaranteed to remain open, for-profit EMOs banned, statewide flat rates of school funding adopted, and the threat of closure based solely on test scores extinguished.

Now is not the time to eliminate options for creating a more equalizing system simply because one poorly produced model has serious problems. Moving forward will require the will to look back at what the principles "great equalizer" were—and wha must be.

Geoffrey Hall
Montréal, Quebec

Jonathan Kozol argues tha scrupulous corporations have to usurp control of our schools ing the language of concern wi public while promising investo bucks from the education m The crucial issue, not discuss Kozol, is that every school di annually tests reading and skills, and low-income studen failing. If private companies ca hance student performance and better job of it than our p schools, they are entitled t thanks and to substantial profits

Stuart Margulies
New York City

Jonathan Kozol errs when h sumes corporations are champio community-based education. C rations have expropriated the "voucher" and destroyed the idea dependent, community-based sch the original voucher system as posed by libertarians like Milton F man (before he became a neocon) Friedman was by no means the fir best proponent of such a syst Thomas Paine and Adam Smith i ined publicly funded schools would be controlled by parents the local community, not by a s

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bureaucracy. Kozol mocks the critics of our present-day schools who attack the state systems as "monopolies," but they *are* monopolies. Kozol should know how difficult it is to get a public school system to do anything right, especially for schools in poor neighborhoods. I'm disappointed that he would defend this rotten system against the only movement that has any political chance of reforming it.

Paul Stephens
Great Falls, Mont.

For decades Jonathan Kozol has worked with and written sensitively about families and schools, yet now in the debate about choice and vouchers he decries the possibility of children of the "more effective parents" getting into what he calls "boutique schools." Aren't these parents acting in the best interests of their children when they seek the best education for them? Instead of bemoaning what effective parents can do, shouldn't we strive to have effective parents as the norm in our society? We should seek ways for parents and children to be as effective as possible, and choosing schools that best fit their own educational needs is one.

Tunya Audain
West Vancouver, B.C.

We Don't Need Another Hero

In "The Idols of Environmentalism" [Readings, August], Curtis White argues that "environmentalism should stop depending upon its alliance with science for its sense of itself." Decrying environmentalists' self-conception as "good children of the Enlightenment," he believes they should adopt a more "spiritual" or "poetic" approach to our ecological predicaments, and proposes a "return to our nobility" that would include a greater awe before "the astonishing fact of Being."

White ignores the degree to which environmentalism is already infused with the anti-rationalist spirit of the nineteenth-century European Romantics and American Transcendentalists. Far from being a product of scientific hyper-rationalism, the environmental movement has always paid homage to the earliest and potent critics of the Enlighte deriving much of its "sense of from the poetic imagery and t of Wordsworth, Shelley, Ro Thoreau, and Whitman, amo ers. What is the Endangered Act but a manifestation of th mantic belief that other specie an inherent value? What driv creation of wilderness areas if desire for a space to explore ou noble savage?

The idea that we will attain "nobility" by abandoning the be Enlightenment values of empiri servation and rational discourse vor of some vague notion of "sp far from convincing. Is there an of spirituality or religion that ha "reverence for what simply is" science? The great virtue of th lightenment is its insistence knowledge of nature must prec our beliefs about it. Environm ists should not dismiss this ligh

David Moser
Seattle

If Curtis White takes the side angels, arguing against the false i scientific rationalism in favor of on "spirit" and communion wit ture, let me take the side of the I accept the premise that the stream environmental moveme gone off track by focusing on g ment crumbs when it comes to re funds and subsidies. But I would s an increased level of materiali motivating people to buy more less—if it were of the kind that save the environment.

There is a growing gap bet people's professed concerns a the environment and their a behavior. This represents a ma ing challenge: how to con people's values with product services that achieve customer faction and also provide an env mental benefit. Consumers are likely to become "green" when products and services offer co and convenience and are afford

Although it may seem heretica must provide people with mor centives to replace their old stuff new stuff, thereby getting gas-guz

f the road and wasteful air-
oning units out of homes. Per-
e "spiritual" message will be a
arketing tool: Replace a green
h a green tithe.

Timberly
ıgton, D.C.

is White falls into the same En-
ıment trap that he criticizes
ıe presents science-based envi-
ıtalism as inescapably opposed
rence for the earth. He sees a
of binary choices: either we
to respect or we choose to un-
ıd; either we embrace spiritual-
e embrace reason. These are ex-
the kinds of choices that
tenment and post-Enlighten-
hinkers have offered. White ar-
ıat the decisions we have made
oor, but he does little to chal-
hose limited options.
should know by now that these
s are faulty. Comprehending the
l world tends to increase our re-
or it, which drives us to deepen
ıderstanding. In order to be ef-
, environmental policy must be
on the best available science. In
for it to be just, it must be moti-
by our inherent feelings of
ction and obligation to one an-
and the natural world.
man nature encompasses both
ı and spirituality, the urge to in-
ate as well as the urge to revere.
ıpting to alienate ourselves from
r of these inherent capacities
disaster. To overcome the deep-
environmental crisis, we will
every tool we have at our dis-
Instead of strengthening the il-
ı of conflict between reason and
uality, we should put our ener-
nto integrating these essential
n qualities and building a society
nderstands, and respects, the val-
both mind and spirit.

uel A. Livermore
York City

ırtis White suggests that our soci-
weak—unable to stop the very ac-
es that will lead to its demise. His
or the individual to rise above the
ness of the masses and rediscover
obility echoes the narrative arc of
many of our traditional tales of heroes. But aren't such stories antithetical to what the environmental movement needs? Shouldn't we learn to recognize our interdependence as a strength?

The culture of capitalism connects our most intimate psychological and physical needs to money, while it distances us from the realities of the people and resources on which we depend. The religious phrases "respect for life" and "reverence for creation"—phrases White prefers to the scientific language of the environmental movement—have been as abused as our resources. For many, the phrases sound hollow, not because, as White holds, they imply spiritual obligations, but because they have been attached to a tradition that has consistently *not* respected life. We need to find new ways to relate spiritually to one another and to our earth. But we do not need another hero who discovers, all by himself, that he is a noble descendant of the gods. This type of spiritual story does not honestly reflect the realities of the current environmental crisis, nor does it envision the types of relationships necessary to expand our environmental consciousness.

Brigid Philbin
Portland, Maine

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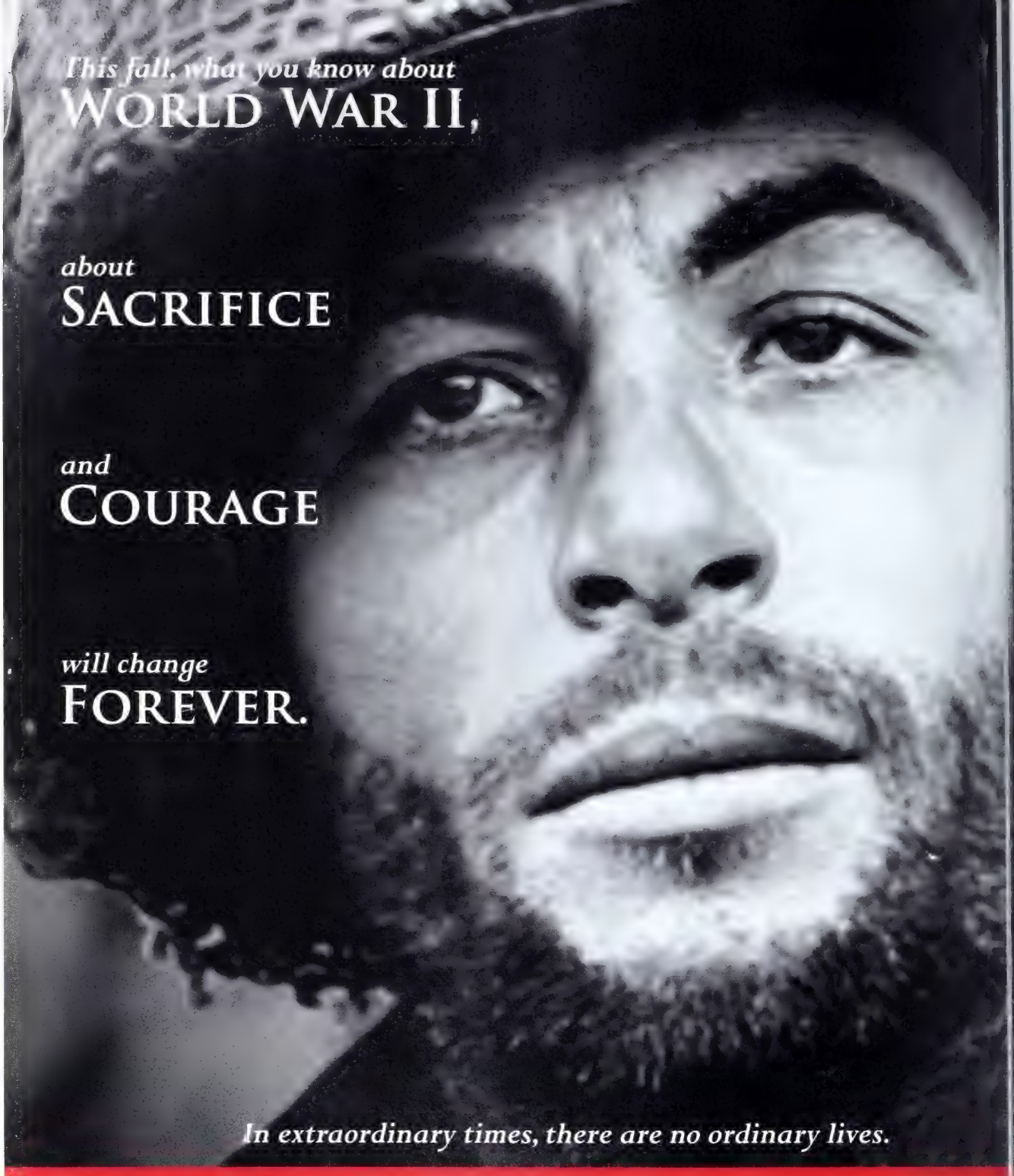
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NOTEBOOK

Specific Suggestion: General Strike

By Garret Keizer

:e and sing, ye that dwell in dust.
—Isaiah 26:19

1.

f all the various depredations
e Bush regime, none has been so
ough as its plundering of hope.
will recover sooner. What was
osed to have been the crux of
oreign policy—a shock-and-awe
ial on the utter futility of any
sition to the whims of Ameri-
ower—has achieved its greatest
perhaps its only lasting success
e American soul.
u will want to cite the excep-
, the lunch-hour protests against
war, the dinner-party ejacula-
s of dissent, though you might
want to ask what substantive dif-
ıce they bear to grousing about
weather or even to raging against
dying of the light—that is, to
ritualized complaint against
es universally acknowledged as
terable. Bush is no longer the
e of a president so much as the
eviation of a proverb, something
veen Murphy's Law and tomor-
s fatal inducement to drink and
ıerry today.
someone were to suggest, for ex-
le, that we begin a general strike
lection Day, November 6, 2007,
he sole purpose of removing this
ne from power, how readily and with what well-practiced assurance would you find yourself producing the words "It won't do any good"? Plausible and even courageous in the mouth of a patient who knows he's going to die, the sentiment fits equally well in the heart of a citizenry that believes it is already dead.

2.

Any strike, whether it happens in a factory, a nation, or a marriage, amounts to a reaffirmation of consent. The strikers remind their overlords—and, equally important, themselves—that the seemingly perpetual machinery of daily life has an off switch as well as an on. Camus said that the one serious question of philosophy is whether or not to commit suicide; the one serious question of political philosophy is whether or not to get out of bed. Silly as it may have seemed at the time, John and Yoko's famous stunt was based on a profound observation. Instant karma is not so instant—we ratify it day by day.

The stream of commuters heading into the city, the caravan of tractor-trailers pulling out of the rest stop into the dawn's early light, speak a deep-throated Yes to the sum total of what's going on in our collective life. The poet Richard Wilbur writes of the "ripped mouse" that "cries Concordance" in the talons of the owl; we too cry our daily assent in the grip of the prevailing order—except in those notable instances when, like a donkey or a Buddha, we refuse to budge.

The question we need to ask ourselves at this moment is what further provocations we require to justify digging in our heels. To put the question more pointedly: Are we willing to wait until the next presidential election, or for some interim congressional conversion experience, knowing that if we do wait, hundreds of our sons and daughters will be needlessly destroyed? Another poet, César Vallejo, framed the question like this:

> A man shivers with cold, coughs, spits up blood.
> Will it ever be fitting to allude to my inner soul?...
>
> A cripple sleeps with one foot on his shoulder.
> Shall I later on talk about Picasso, of all people?

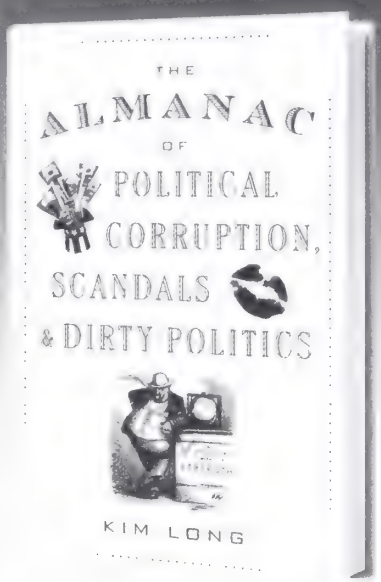
A young man goes to Walter Reed without a face. Shall I make an appointment with my barber? A female prisoner is sodomized at Abu Ghraib. Shall I send a check to the Clinton campaign?

3.

You will recall that a major theme of the Bush Administration's response to September 11 was that life should go on as usual. We should keep saying that broad consensual Yes as loudly as we dared. We could best express our patriotism by hitting

:et Keizer is a Contributing Editor of
per's Magazine. His last Notebook,
nate, Class, and Claptrap," appeared
e June issue.

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the malls, by booking a flight to Disney World. At the time, the advice seemed prudent enough: avoid hysteria; defy the intimidations of murderers and fanatics.

In hindsight it's hard not to see the roots of our predicament in the readiness with which we took that advice to heart. We did exactly as we were told, with a net result that is less an implicit defiance of terrorism than a tacit amen to the "war on terror," including the war in Iraq. Granted, many of us have come to find both those wars unacceptable. But do we find them intolerable? Can you sleep? Yes, doctor, I can sleep. Can you work? Yes, doctor, I can work. Do you get out to the movies, enjoy a good restaurant? Actually, I have a reservation for tonight. Then I'd say you were doing okay, wouldn't you? I'd say you were tolerating the treatment fairly well.

It is one thing to endure abuses and to carry on in spite of them. It is quite another thing to carry on to the point of abetting the abuse. We need to move the discussion of our nation's health to the emergency room. We need to tell the doctors of the body politic that the treatment isn't working—and that until it changes radically for the better, neither are we.

4.

No one person, least of all a freelance writer, has the prerogative to call or set the date for a general strike. *What do you guys do for a strike, sit on your overdue library books?* Still, what day more fitting for a strike than the first Tuesday of November, the Feast of the Hanging Chads? What other day on the national calendar cries so loudly for rededication?

The only date that comes close is September 11. You have to do a bit of soul-searching to see it, but one result of the Bush presidency has been a loss of connection to those who perished that day. Unless they were members of our families, unless we were involved in their rescue, do we think of them? It's too easy to say that time eases the grief—there's more to it than that, more e
the natural tendency to s
from brooding on disast
might happen again. W
thinking of the September
tims because to think of t
have to think also of what
allowed to happen in their
Or, if we object openly to w
happened, we have to parry h
situation that we're unm
their loss.

It is time for us to make
profession of faith that the
who went to work that morni
caught the cabs and rode the
tors and later jumped to their
were not on the whole peop
would sanction extraordinary
tion, preemptive war, and t
pension of habeas corpus;
their heels and suits they
least as decent as any sneak
person standing vigil outside
office with a STOP THE WA
That the government worke
died in the Pentagon were
some strange congenital fluk
obtuse than the high-ranking
who thought the invasion
was a bad idea from the get-g
the passengers who rushed t
jackers on Flight 93 were not
ing the mantra "It won't d
good" while scratching their
and their asses in a happy-hou

An Election Day general
would set our remembrance of
people free from the sarcoph
rhetoric and rationalization. It
be the political equivalent of
them from the dead. It woul
clear if sadly delayed message
darity to those voters in Ohi
Florida who were pretty muc
they could drop dead.

5.

But how would it work? A c
question to ask given that *not*
ing is most of what it would e
Not working until the presiden
the shadow president resign
were impeached. Never mind
happens next. Rather, let our
darins ask how this came to ha
in the first place. Let them a
shock and awe.

People who could not, for wh

son, cease work could at least
l consumption. In fact, that
prove the more effective ac-
f the two. They could vacate
opping malls. They could can-
ir flights. With the aid of their
r Power, they could turn off
ell phones. They could unplug
Vs.
e most successful general strike
nable would require extraordi-
neasures simply to announce
ccess. It would require sound
s going up and down the
s, Rupert Murdoch reduced to
ing through a bullhorn. Bon-
lazing on the hills. Bells tolling
ney cracked. (Don't we have
f those on display somewhere?)
nically, the segment of the pop-
n most unable to participate
be the troops stationed in the
e East. Striking in their circum-
s would amount to suicide. That
ction alone ought to suffice as a
to strike, as a reminder of the un-
ionable underside of our "nor-
existence. We get on with our
they get on with their deaths.

As for how the strike would be publicized and organized, these would depend on the willingness to strike itself. The greater the willingness, the fewer the logistical requirements. How many Americans does it take to change a lightbulb? How many Web postings, how many emblazoned bedsheets hung from the upper-story windows? Think of it this way: How many hours does it take to learn the results of last night's *American Idol*, even when you don't want to know?

In 1943 the Danes managed to save 7,200 of their 7,800 Jewish neighbors from the Gestapo. They had no blogs, no television, no text messaging—and very little time to prepare. They passed their apartment keys to the hunted on the streets. They formed convoys to the coast. An ambulance driver set out with a phone book, stopping at any address with a Jewish-sounding name. No GPS for directions. No excuse not to try.

But what if it failed? What if the general strike proved to be anything but general? I thought Bush was supposed to be the one afraid of science. Hypothesis, experiment, analysis, conclusion—are they his hobgoblins or ours? What do we have to fear, except additional evidence that George W. Bush is exactly what he appears to be: the president few of us like and most of us deserve. But science dares to test the obvious. So let us dare.

6.

We could hardly be accused of innovation. General strikes have a long and venerable history. They're as retro as the Bill of Rights. There was one in Great Britain in 1926, in France in 1968, in Ukraine in 2004, in Guinea just this year. Finns do it, Nepalis do it, even people without email do it . . .

But we don't have to do it, you will say, because "we have a process." Have or had, the verb remains tentative. In regard to verbs, Dick Cheney showed his superlative talent for *le mot juste* when in the halls of the U.S. Congress he told Vermont Sen-

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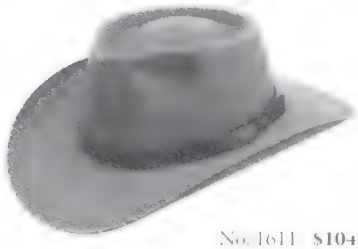
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ator Patrick Leahy to go fuck himself. He has since told congressional investigators to do the same thing. There's your process. Dick Cheney could lie every day of his life for all the years of Methuselah, and for the sake of that one remark history would still need to remember him as an honest man. In the next world, Diogenes will kneel down before him. In this world, though, and in spite of the invitation tendered to me through my senator, I choose to remain on my feet.

"United we stand," isn't that how it goes? But we are not united, not by a long shot. At this juncture we may be able to unite only in what we will not stand for. The justification of torture, the violation of our privacy, the betrayal of our intelligence operatives, the bankrupting of our commonwealth, the besmirching of our country's name, the feckless response to natural disaster, the dictatorial inflation of executive power, the senseless butchery of our youth—if these do not constitute a common ground for intolerance, what does?

People were indignant at the findings of the 9/11 Commission—it seems there were compelling reasons to believe an attack was imminent!—yet for the attack on our Constitution we have evidence even more compelling. How can we criticize an administration for failing to act in the face of a probable threat given our own refusal to act in the face of a threat already fulfilled? As long as we're willing to go on with our business, Bush and Cheney will feel free to go on with their coup. As long as we're willing to continue fucking ourselves, why should they have any scruples about telling us to smile during the act?

7.

Between undertaking the strike and achieving its objective, the latter requires the greater courage. It requires courage simply to admit that this is so. For too many of us, Bush has become a secret craving, an addiction. We loathe Bush the way that Peter Pan loathed Captain Hook; he's a villain, to be sure, but he's half the fun of living in Never Land. He has provi with an inexhaustible supply torial copy, partisan rectitud every sort of lame excuse for r gaging the system he represe that sense, asking "What if the were to fail?" is not even hone some level we would want it to

Certainly this would be t those who've declared themsel presidential candidates ar whom the Bush legacy represe unprecedented windfall of po capital. One need only speak herent sentence—one need breathe from a differently sh smirk—to seem like a savior. dong, the Witch is dead. Alre can see the winged monkeys signed off on the Patriot Act ar Iraq invasion jumping up and for joy. Already I can hear the seating gush: "Such a welcome after Bush!" Relief, yes. But re not hope.

How much better if we coul to our next administration: I talk about Bush. We dealt Bush. We dealt with Bush and doing we demonstrated our abil deal with you. You have a ma more rigorous than looking goo side Bush. You need a program ambitious than "uniting the c try." We are united—at leas were, if only for a while, if on our disgust.

If only I believed all this w happen.

I wrote this appeal during days leading up to the Fourth c ly. I wrote it because for the pas and a half years I have heard people I love best—family mem friends, former students and pa ioners—saying, "I'm sick over w happening to our country, but I don't know what to do." Might pardoned if, fearing civil diso less than I fear civil despair, I "Well, we could do this." It has done before and we could do And I do believe we could. If one has a better idea, I'm kee hear it. Only don't tell me w some presidential hopeful ough do someday. Tell me what people who have nearly lost t hope can do right now.

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VOLUME I, NUMBER 1 FALL 2007



STATES OF WAR

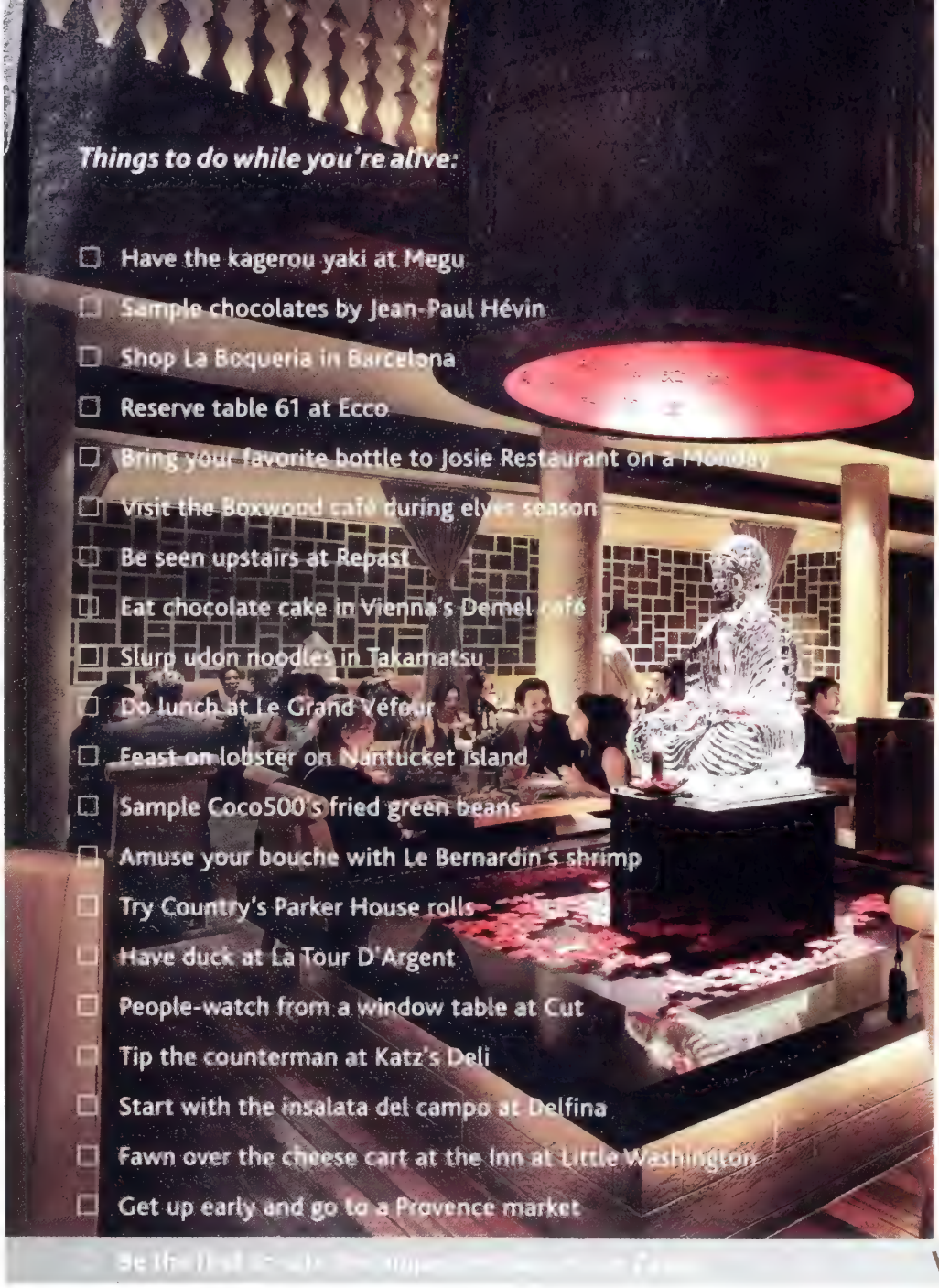
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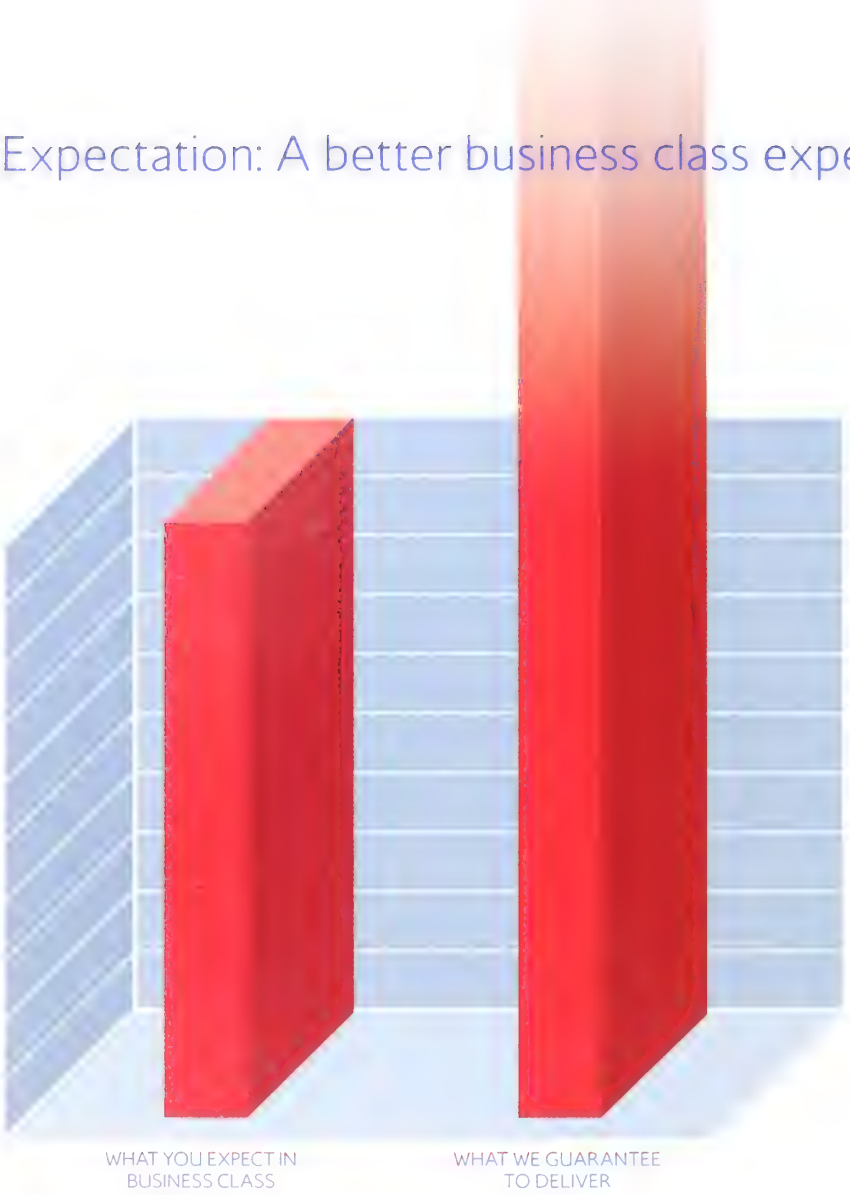
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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of different areas of U.S. infrastructure graded by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 2005 : 15
Average grade and highest grade, respectively, that the group gave out : D, C+
Amount that poor roads cost Americans in repairs and other extra operating costs each year : $67,000,000,000
Estimated amount needed over the next twenty years to maintain U.S. sewer systems : $390,000,000,000
Percentage change since 1990 in the average size of an American master bathroom : +50
Percentage change since 1980 in the average amount of solid waste generated by an American : +24
Number of square feet of U.S. self-storage space built since 1998 : 1,000,000,000
Number of U.S. colleges that have closed since 1990 : 288
umber of the seventeen Islamic universities in sub-Saharan Africa that have been founded in the past ten years : 10
Age at which most German children are slotted into high schools : 10
Chance that a child of immigrants to Germany is granted a spot at a college-preparatory high school : 1 in 7
Chance for all German children : 1 in 3
Percentage change since 2004 in U.S. immigration to Canada : +46
Percentage change since then in total retail sales in Crawford, Texas : –27
Percentage disapproval rating for George W. Bush in July : 66
gs for Harry Truman in 1952 and Richard Nixon in 1974, respectively, the only presidents ever to climb as high : 67, 66
Chance that a CEO who left one of the top 2,500 global companies in 1995 was forced out : 1 in 8
Chance in 2006 : 1 in 3
ber of Wal-Mart employees on whom the company secretly took out life-insurance policies from 1993 to 1995 : 350,000
Minimum number of deceased employees on whom the firm has collected : 453
Head of cattle that Fidelity Investments keeps on a portion of its corporate campus near Fort Worth : 25
Amount in taxes it thereby saves each year through a Texas "agricultural" exemption : $328,000
Minimum amount that religious groups received in congressional earmarks between 2003 and 2006 : $209,000,000
Amount such groups received during the previous fourteen years : $107,000,000
Number of times this year that U.S. media have called Gen. David Petraeus "King David" : 24
Number of times they have called him a "warrior intellectual" or "warrior scholar" : 26
Minimum number of books about the Iraq war published in the United States so far : 835
Number of these that are children's books : 32
Number of copies a book of poems must sell per week to make the Poetry Foundation's bestseller list : 50
k of Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* among Amazon.co.uk's top-selling "Religion and Spirituality" books this year : 1
Rank of Christopher Hitchens's *God Is Not Great* : 2
Number of copies Pope Benedict XVI's book *Jesus of Nazareth* has sold in the United States : 68,000
Estimated number of pieces of silver that could be bought with the royalties : 21,250
Total amount that U.S. Catholic dioceses have paid out since 2002 in child sex-abuse settlements : $1,073,000,000
Number of different reasons for having sex, as identified this year in a University of Texas study : 237
Number of escort services and McDonald's restaurants, respectively, in Washington, D.C. : 26, 23
Percentage change in the average amount of food a person will consume when eating with one other person : +35
Percentage change with four or seven others, respectively : +75, +96
Number of kernels of corn it takes to make the corn syrup used in one kernel of candy corn : 3
Ratio of the number of calories in a candy-corn kernel to the number in a real corn kernel : 8:1

Figures cited are the latest available as of August 2007. Sources are listed on page 118.
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BRITISH AIRWAYS

READINGS

[Proposal]
VIVOLEUM

From "Lifelines, Lifetimes, and Timelines: Hoisting Ourselves Up the Fossil Chain," a presentation delivered June 14 at GO-EXPO, an oil-industry conference held in Calgary, Alberta, by "Shepard Wolff" and "Florian Osenberg," impostors posing as officials working for the U.S. National Petroleum Council and ExxonMobil's alternative-energy program. "Wolff" and "Osenberg" are members of the Yes Men, an activist group based in Brooklyn. After the presentation, both men were issued tickets for trespassing. Lee Raymond retired as CEO of ExxonMobil in 2005 and now chairs the NPC.

SHEPARD WOLFF: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very sorry Lee Raymond couldn't make it today. He's in Washington, discussing a landmark National Petroleum Council study with President Bush before he announces the study's conclusions, complete with presidential approval, later today. But I am very pleased to be able to give you a sneak preview of that study, which shows that the United States and Canada must expand production from the Alberta tar sands by a factor of five within the next five years, and prescribes precisely the sort of government noninterference that will make this a reality. I'm especially pleased that ExxonMobil will be playing a key role in that policy—by developing a renewable energy source that will actually benefit from our development of conventional fuels while providing a fallback position for energy sustainability under any conditions that arise.

[*Slide: Beautiful horizon*]

But first, I need to say how wonderful it is to see, on all the faces here today, the childlike exuberance of a great industry in full flower, biting deep into all of life's opportunities and, like a giddy and well-fed infant, savoring that life to the fullest.

[*Slide: Man holding up ear of wheat*]

And why not? Our product, after all, has made possible everything we see around us—our whole civilization. We depend on oil for food, and for getting food to our tables. Without oil, at least four billion people would starve—and even those of us left would have a very tough time.

But I'm not here today to pat us all on the back; I'm here to speak of Plan Bs. Because the dire situation I've just mentioned is in fact possible.

[*Slide: Lightning*]

As we know, if climate science is right, there's a growing possibility of global calamities, triggering migration, death, and conflicts on a scale never before imagined. This spiral of trouble would make the oil infrastructure utterly useless, and starving would become the new black. We *don't* believe this will happen. Statistically, the chances are still far below 50 percent. But even if they're just 10 percent, we as responsible corporate citizens *must* consider what we would do to keep the fuel flowing. We owe it to ourselves, to our shareholders, and to the very concept of sustainability.

We at Exxon firmly believe that a free market will, if left to its own devices, always find solutions to the dilemmas humanity faces. And in this case, there's a surprisingly simple solution—one that goes hand in hand with current energy policies and actually depends, for example, on our continued development of the tar sands.

[*Slides: The birth of the sun; a barren earth; life; animals*]

To explain how it works, let's take a trip into the past. Five billion years ago, our sun was born. For the next billion years, Earth was a wasteland, full of nothing but the dead stuff of nature.

[*Slide: Sequence of evolution*]

Then, one day, matter in its infinite ingenuity discovered a fabulous new way to store energy. It used sunlight and good old-fashioned rock smarts to turn water and dirt into something that could store power long enough to walk around and develop speech. Today, we call it *life*—but it's just an incredible solar battery that pushed its way across eons, past the shifting of continents and the burning-out of stars, transforming itself into countless species, and leaving them behind—all the way into the present—

[*Slide: Suited man in conference hall*]

—and into this conference hall right here today.

[*Slide: Map of Mesopotamia*]

Along its age-old path, this battery we call life kept getting smarter, until the Mesopotamians. Then, one day, a resident of ancient Uruk made a crucial discovery: other beings were great at storing energy.

[*Slide: Resident of Uruk*]

Who first had the idea to use the oil of a recently living animal to light his or her house? Whoever that Einstein was, he or she single-handedly created the energy industry and thus revolutionized civilization. For the next few thousand years, animals were burned for light and warmth.

[*Slide: Puffin*]

Even today, Shetland Islanders are said to lop the heads off puffins and put wicks in the stumps to make candles.

[*Slide: Captain Ahab*]

Europe's big innovation in this matter was the discovery of the ultimate mobile energy storehouses—those mighty leviathans of the deep, the whales, which until the late 1800s remained Europe's preferred source of illuminant energy.

[*Slide: Canadian striking oil*]

Then, in the mid-1800s, some folks here in Canada discovered that nature had already done a large part of the work that men were still risking their lives for! At some point, maybe an asteroid hit.

[*Slide: Canadian under asteroid*]

Or perhaps the earth's temperature just swung wildly south. Pretty much everything died, and the fields of death, ensepulchered by eons, were compressed into great, deep oceans—of oil. This "petroleum," so much more abundant than the fluids of the more recently departed, made possible an unprecedented scale of market performance, leading inexorably to the panoply of amazing technologies we see in the exhibit halls here today. The battery we call *life* had finally come into its own.

Again, there are dark mutterings today that climate change linked to oil use could lead to massive population loss, migrations, and conflicts, making pipelines and oil wells useless. Without oil, the earth's carrying capacity would go from 6 billion people to as low as 200 million. That would be a great tragedy. Yet why must we tremble like little children before a monster? Why can't we instead be like the man from Uruk, that Ur-industrialist who discovered a new source of energy for the world? After all, if we can ensure an uninterrupted supply of fuel in even the worst of calamities, there will be plenty of ways the market can address the new situation. What we really need is something as plentiful as petroleum but much less dependent on infrastructure—or something as useful as whales but infinitely more abundant. And therein lies the key. Just as the death of ancient life-forms meant oil for us today, so in a fuelless world the massive hydrocarbon store flowing out of the biosphere could mean a massive new resource—*if* we know how to tap in. Why wait millions of years? The energy is there right now. All we need to do is climb back *up* the fossil chain and close the circle of life.

[*Slide: Vivoleum logo*]

We're calling this product Vivoleum. Basically, it compresses the work of brute, stupid time into hours rather than eons. Any biomass whatsoever is quickly and cheaply turned into something close enough to gasoline to run my Escalade.

[*Slide: Animation of factory*]

We envision large-scale plants that will process many thousands of barrels per hour. The feedstock is cold-pressed through a series of vortex separators, blowdown evaporators, et cetera, and then further refined into ethanol, biodiesel, and so on. The plants will be fully off-site-remote-capable, requiring a minimum of on-site hands to operate. But not all plants need be large or sophisticated—the technology is simple, and the low pressures and temperatures required will allow small-scale—even mobile—refining capacity.

[*Slide: Space*]

Anywhere biological resources find themselves freed, Vivoleum can grant the at-risk civilization an income stream—where and when it's most needed. It's so compact that it could even work in outer space!

[*Slide: Ford plant*]

Here on Earth, every Vivoleum plant will be built with environmentality in mind, with living roofs just like Ford's plant in Dearborn, Michigan. All downstream waste will be turned into secondary products such as a building material we're calling Vivaboard, and the liquid effluent can be used as agricultural-grade organic brown water. These will be the greenest manufacturing centers ever built, signaling love for the earth through their very existence.



...by Mamma Andersson, whose work was exhibited this summer at Moderna Museet, in Stockholm, Sweden.

[*Slide: Boxcar from the Holocaust*]

Cultural sensitivity will also be paramount. Historical parallels will need to be considered carefully. But this train of thought needn't derail us. After all, when the railways in Egypt used mummies to fuel their locomotives, they were using a limited resource that could not be replenished, and they were committing a crime against history still keenly felt by Egyptologists. The Vivoleum feedstock, on the other hand, is renewable and *un*precious, and it responds to the needs of a shrinking market by increasing supply, which in turn stimulates the market: the dance of capital appears in full flower.

[*Slide: Captain with telescope peering over tar sands*]

Indeed, unlike all other alternative-energy sources, Vivoleum will need no government push—current policies won't have to change. Vivoleum will never encroach on the market's natural right to continue seeking new pastures. The Alberta tar sands, for example, can continue providing a stimulus to Canada, the U.S., and the global market; and in the event climate change does prove unmanageable, Vivoleum will allow the living superstrate of our precious planet to yield an acceptable future.

Ladies and gentlemen, now I'm going to introduce someone who will explain Exxon's real purpose in coming here today—to hon[illegible] individual no longer with us. Here is the head of public relations for the Exxon Vivoleum pr[illegible] also a special adviser to the NPC on Vivoleum: Florian Osenberg.

FLORIAN OSENBERG: Thank you, Shepard. Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, I'm holding in my hand a candle. Right now there are people fanning out through the room handing out candles just like this. I want each of you to take one, and then I want you to pass the flame to your neighbor. I guess you already know something about passing the flame. From what I hear, you had the Olympic torch here in Calgary, and you managed to keep it from going out even with the oil boom to distract you.

Let me tell you a little bit about these candles. First of all, you'll notice some irregularities, maybe even bits of hair and the like. That's because they're all custom-cast and one-of-a-kind. I already see a couple of you holding your noses. This is something we haven't been able to eliminate yet, but it'll burn off quickly—impurities tend to float to the head.

[*Holds up a candle*]

You might look at your candle and think, What's the big deal? It's just a simple candle. Well, you're right. But that's the point. Like petroleum's liquid subterranean feedstocks, Vivoleum's ambulant feedstocks can be rendered into just about anything: paraffin, gasoline, even plastic to make a container—for an energy drink, for example. *Anything.*

But what's truly amazing about these candles is not that they're slightly irregular, or even that they're made from Vivoleum. What I'm personally in awe of is that the Vivoleum they're made from comes from one point-source, made available by a very generous man. His name was Reggie Watts, a real everyman, an ordinary person who, as ordinary people sometimes do, did something extraordinary. Indeed, more than anyone else I can think of, Reggie gave his all so that our company—and indeed our whole industry—could continue to fuel our fight to the finish. It's because he played such an important role in this product's development that we're honoring him here today. With no further ado, Reggie Watts!

[*Video begins. An African-American man with a large Afro is sweeping a loading dock and singing Debby Boone's "You Light Up My Life."*]

OLDER BUSINESSMAN: I knew Reggie because he was our cleaning man in the Houston head office.

YOUNGER BUSINESSMAN: Reggie was a great worker. He did a great job at our company.

WOMAN AT DESK: Down-to-earth, kindhearted, willing to do anything for anybody.

MAINTENANCE WORKER: He would always be singing, because that's the type of guy he was, always happy. When Reggie was there, the workplace was alive.

REGGIE WATTS: I worked in Maintenance for a while, moved up to Maintenance 2. Started doing cleanup, toxic cleanup. People said I was afraid of it, but I wasn't. I just wasn't. We had a level-three alert. I dunno, I just kind of blew it, I guess. After I heard from the doctor that I was going to die, I felt like I had something to live for.

YOUNGER BUSINESSMAN: It was a very brave choice that Reggie made.

WATTS: I'm gonna die anyways. So, yeah, might as well give it a whirl!

YOUNGER BUSINESSMAN: Reggie was willing to make that sacrifice for the betterment of humanity, so for that we all salute him.

WATTS: I think I would like to be a candle. I think a candle would be fun because there are so many uses for a candle. I think that would be nice, like,

[Farewell]

SLIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

From a letter sent in March by Ann Vchabovic, a forty-five-year-old man who lives in Gradiška, Bosnia, to his friends after only his mother attended his hoax funeral. Translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Michael Leidig.

To all my dear "friends,"

Some of you I have known since early school days, others I have only forged a relationship with in the last few years. Until my "funeral," I considered all of you close friends. So it was with shock and, I admit, sadness and anger that I realized not one of you managed to find the time to come and say goodbye to me when you heard I was to be buried. I would have understood if just some of you came, bearing flowers or words of apology from others who could not make it. But no. Not a single one of you turned up to pay your last respects. I lived for our friendships. They meant as much to me as life itself. But how easy it was for you all to forget the pledges of undying friendship I heard on so many occasions. How different our ideas of friendship seem to be. I paid a lot of money to get a fake death certificate and to bribe undertakers to deliver an empty coffin. I thought my funeral would be a good joke—the kind of prank we have all played on one another over the years. Now I have just one last message for you: My "funeral" might have been staged, but you might as well consider me dead, because I will not be seeing any of you again.

SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

30 DAY* RISK FREE TRIAL

Effects of stress reversed by amazing new medical device.



Now you can enjoy the pleasures of stress-free living and feel younger in just 15 minutes a day. It's surprisingly easy with the ıarkable new medical device called StressEraser.

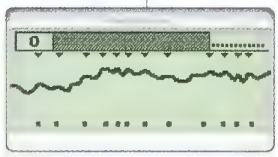
'his medical breakthrough actually erses *ergotropic tuning;* the harmful cess that causes your nerves to pond faster and more strongly to :ss; making you feel it more easily, re quickly, more intensely.

Medical Discovery Leads to Breakthrough in Reducing Stress.

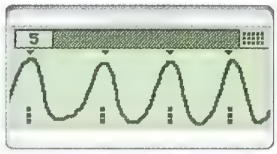


Medical earchers now ow that the rmful effects of *gotropic tuning* intricately nnected to the biological mechanisms breathing. More portantly, they learned at you can actually gulate the stress-oducing activity of this stem by regulating this sic bodily function.

To do this, Helicor, c. has developed the nazing StressEraser that easures the effects of eathing and guides the er to control this basic ological activity.



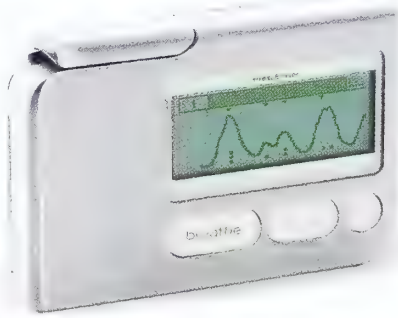
BEFORE: StressEraser indicators show the presence of physical and emotional stress and/or strained breathing.



AFTER 15 MINUTES: Harmful stress levels significantly reduced after using StressEraser cues to synchronize your breathing.

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if I was a candle on a table when people, when they first met each other. On a date. I think that would be great. I would love that. That'd be a hoot.

[*Sings "You Light Up My Life." The video ends, and the organizers eject the presenters from the stage.*]

WOLFF: [*Speaking to reporters on the conference-room floor*] We're not talking about killing anyone. We're talking about using them after nature has done the hard work. After all, 150,000 people already die from climate change–related effects every year. That's only going to go up—maybe way, way up. Will it all go to waste? That would be cruel.

[Grooming]

RED BEARD

From Fidel Castro: My Life, *a book of interviews with the Cuban president by Ignacio Ramonet, forthcoming from Scribner. Ramonet is editor in chief of* Le Monde diplomatique. *Translated from the Spanish by Andrew Hurley.*

The story of our beards is very simple. We didn't have any razor blades. When we found ourselves in the middle of the wilderness, up in the Sierra, we all just let our beards and hair grow, and that turned into a kind of badge of identity. For the *campesinos*, for the press, for the reporters—we were *los barbudos*, the bearded ones. It had its positive side: in order for a spy to infiltrate us, he had to start preparing months ahead of time. Later, with the triumph of the Revolution, we kept our beards to preserve the symbolism. The only disadvantage is that white hairs show up first in your beard. Some of the men cut their beards the minute the white hairs started to show, because you could hide your age better without a beard than with one. Besides that, a beard has a further practical advantage: you don't have to shave every day. If you multiply the fifteen minutes you spend shaving every day by the number of days in a year, you'll see that you devote almost 5,500 minutes to shaving. An eight-hour day of work consists of 480 minutes, so if you don't shave you gain about ten days you can devote to work, to reading, to sports, to whatever you like. Not to mention the money you save in razor blades, soap, aftershave, and hot water.

[Testimony]

THE SPY WHO CAME IN AND WAS COLD

From an April 17 hearing before members of the House of Representatives, on the Central Intelligence Agency's extraordinary-rendition program. Michael Scheuer, the author of Imperial Hubris, *designed and managed the rendition program and was chief of the CIA's Bin Laden unit during the Clinton Administration.*

REP. BILL DELAHUNT (D., MASS.): When you seized individuals in Europe and either held them or transferred them to another country, did you understand that there was legal authority permitting such captures?

MICHAEL SCHEUER: You know, I was born at night but not last night, sir. There is no operation at the CIA that is conducted without the approval of lawyers. It is the bane of our existence, and it is a detriment to the defense of America. Nonetheless, that is the fact. I didn't get paid to make legal decisions. I got paid to protect Americans. And as long as the lawyers signed off, it got done.

DELAHUNT: Did the analysis that such seizures were legal include an assessment that the individuals seized were unlawful enemy combatants?

SCHEUER: I neither know nor care, sir. That is not my concern. My concern is to identify enemies of America.

DELAHUNT: So you don't know?

SCHEUER: I know there was much more consideration under Bush about how to handle these people than under Clinton, sir, when we joked about what would happen to them in Egyptian prisons.

DELAHUNT: You were under orders to remove them from—

SCHEUER: Sir, a half-assed bureaucrat like me is not going to take any prisoner anywhere in this world without the authority of the executive branch.

DELAHUNT: But you have said that, as far as you or senior CIA officers were concerned, you would have preferred to take the seized individuals to the United States as POWs, because interrogation is not monumentally important.

SCHEUER: In very rare cases it is very important, sir, but POW is the best status you can give these people. Throw them in a stockade, let the Red Cross bring them cookies, let them write to their mamas. But let's be clear: the only reason we would have preferred that is that we knew we were going to get hung out to dry. No one really cares what happens to



rs and Stripes, *by Ben Grasso, was on view in July at Thierry Goldberg Projects, in New York City.*

these people. We wouldn't be operating against them unless they were enemies of the United States.

DELAHUNT: What about those who are eventually determined to be innocent?

SCHEUER: Mistakes are made, sir, and if you can prove there wasn't due diligence in assembling the information, then you have a case against someone. Otherwise, it is a mistake.

DELAHUNT: It is just a mistake?

SCHEUER: Yes, sir. They are not Americans. I really don't care. I never got paid, sir, to be a citizen of the world. Maybe you do.

DELAHUNT: I am not paid to be a citizen of the world. I am paid to represent the people in my particular district, and to represent the American people writ large, and to respect the Constitution. And with that, I will yield to the gentleman from California.

REP. DANA ROHRABACHER (R., CALIF.): Today, I have been called Adolf Eichmann.

DELAHUNT: I want to note for the record that we had that person removed.

ROHRABACHER: I am *the* Adolf Eichmann, and my father, who fought in World War II to save our European friends—I guess he was part of the Eichmann brigade. Some have said that the American Revolution is morally equivalent to Al Qaeda. I don't remember Americans going over to Great Britain to bomb Parliament, but we might have, it is conceivable. If mistakes are made in arresting a Muslim who has the same name as a terrorist, I do not put that on a

list of atrocities. I put that on a list of mistakes. Can you guesstimate for us how many people we are talking about? Ten? Twenty? A hundred?

SCHEUER: I can only tell you what I read in the paper, and I think it is three.

ROHRABACHER: All right. I'm married. My family is the number-one consideration. The fact is that our families mean something to us, and, frankly, this gentleman is protecting our families. That's our number-one goal, and I don't care how some terrorists who would murder our families are treated. I don't care.

REP. JEFF FLAKE (R., ARIZ.): This has been illuminating. Mr. Scheuer, do you believe that we can win this war on our own?

SCHEUER: Yes, sir. I believe Americans can do anything, sir.

FLAKE: Without the assistance of Europe?

SCHEUER: Europe is a declining continent.

FLAKE: I think you would concede that, though Europeans might be declining, they are going to be around for a while.

SCHEUER: They may be, sir. They may not be.

DELAHUNT: In your book you said that John O'Neill, the FBI chief of counterterrorism, "was interested only in furthering his career and disguising the rank incompetence of senior FBI leaders."

SCHEUER: Yes, sir. I think I also said that the only good thing that happened to America on September 11 was that the building fell on him.

DELAHUNT: You know, you are really tough on Senator McCain. You said he is "a little man with mediocre intelligence, a taste for bullying, and an appalling temper who thinks the presidency is his birthright."

SCHEUER: Sir, he is a perfect example of a man who is tremendously courageous and patriotic, but that does not necessarily correlate with brain power.

REP. ED MARKEY (D., MASS.): This is good TV. I mean, ordinarily C-SPAN is pretty much "get-a-life" TV, but this is a very interesting hearing. Three years ago, Dr. Scheuer, I introduced a bill to ban extraordinary rendition. It would also have banned the United States from transferring prisoners to countries that torture. How do you feel about diplomatic promises not to torture from countries like Syria?

SCHEUER: Those aren't, sir, as Mr. Roosevelt's vice president said, worth a bucket of warm spit, sir.

MARKEY: The president has yet to apologize for the fact that he knew or should have known there was no nuclear weapons program in Iraq, and no Al Qaeda connection. Mr. Bush is chronically incapable of saying the toughest words to say in the English language: I made a mistake. Why can't he do that?

SCHEUER: I don't know Mr. Bush, sir. You may find it hard to believe, but he doesn't particularly care for me.

[Epistle]

CONSTITUENT OUTREACH

From a July 12 letter by Cleveland City Councilman Michael D. Polensek to Arsenio Winston. The letter was posted on The Smoking Gun.

Dear Mr. Winston,

Once again you have been arrested for dealing drugs in my ward, this time in the parking lot of the Convenient Food Mart. You have to be dumber than mud. Don't you know that one of your so-called friends from the 8th Avenue gang ratted your stupid ass out that you were dealing drugs in the parking lot? He cut a deal. So much for your wonderful pals, you idiot. I am so glad that you are now eighteen years of age, because now you are an adult and can no longer hide behind the juvenile court system, Mr. Quarterback, loser. Remember when you told me to "kiss your black ass" at the playground and that you were going to be an NFL quarterback? Well, the NFL, despite perceptions, is not for losers!

I told you just recently to stay out of my neighborhood, you crack-dealing piece of trash. Yet you keep coming back because you think you are a big man. Well, real men go to school or to work every day and take care of their families, and not through illegal drug activity. You are a thug, and you know what? There are only two places you will end up at the rate you are going—prison or the nearest funeral home. Quite frankly, I don't care which one you get to first as long as your dumb stupid ass is out of my neighborhood. Have a wonderful life, Arsenio. I am sure you have made your mother real proud. Remember when I spoke to her one of the other times you were arrested, for assaulting a police officer on East 185th Street? Only a moron would do that. Your fate is totally in your own hands, which is a scary thought.

Go to jail or the cemetery soon,
Michael D. Polensek

[Manual]

THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS

From The Engineers of Death, *an eighty-page booklet by Mohammed Irman, a thirty-two-year-old Hamas militant whose cell killed at least thirty-five people in attacks, including the 2002 bombing of Hebrew University's cafeteria. The cell was arrested in August 2002 by Israeli police, and Irman is currently in prison serving thirty-five life sentences. Translated from the Arabic by McClatchy Newspapers.*

Many brothers encouraged me to write about our military activities to help the coming generation of jihadists. This special report aims to preserve the history of the resistance, reveal some of its details, and highlight the experience of its creators: how they thought, planned, and carried out their attacks. This booklet is a fantastic resource for those who want to improve their security awareness, and for anyone who wants to develop creative methods of confronting the enemy. It reveals the most dangerous mistakes the mujahedeen can make, mistakes that can cause their capture. I hope it will be helpful and improve the effectiveness of the next stage of the resistance. There are some rules of the game that cannot be broken. Our work was a reaction to our enemies' crimes in our villages and cities. We did not kill for killing's sake but as a means of reaching our goal (liberating our lands from occupation).

We knew the life of every cell is limited, so we wanted to make large-scale attacks before the enemy captured us. After I was trained to make explosives and detonators, our cell was ready for its first military operation. It was a failure.

Our reconnaissance noted that a jeep carrying six soldiers arrived every day at the Ein Arik checkpoint between 6:30 A.M. and 7:30 A.M. to replace the soldiers already stationed there. In the morning, the checkpoint was quiet, and there were few Palestinian vehicles on the road, so we monitored the jeep for two weeks and planned our attack. We would plant the bomb, and I would go with a video camera to film the operation. (I was going to claim responsibility at Friday prayers in order to gain greater popular support.) I installed the shrapnel (almost 1,500 metal balls), armed the bomb, and hid it in the grass on a hill close to the operation, at a high point parallel to the heads and bodies of the Israeli soldiers. We imagined that all 1,500 pieces of shrapnel would fly like bullets in a semicircle toward our target.

Because our target was mobile, we decided to use a remote control like the ones used with garage doors. When you push the button, the bomb immediately explodes, so the target can be struck accurately no matter how fast it is going. We had to handle the remote control carefully and avoid putting it in a pocket, especially if we were close to the bomb and had switched on the safety key. (Here I have to mention Awad Slimy, who on another mission kept the remote in his pocket while planting a bomb. He accidentally pushed it, the bomb exploded, and he died.)

I sent Huthaifa Injas to the spot where the bomb would be detonated and asked him to test the remote signal from there. Everything was okay, so I switched on the safety key. A few minutes later, I heard a huge explosion that shook the whole area. I thought the Israelis had shelled

[Provocations]

TAKE MY KNIFE, PLEASE!

Lists of common "false declarations," requiring emergency procedures, and "careless or inflammatory statements," requiring only cursory attention, from a May 16 Screening Operations Bulletin issued by the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority.

FALSE DECLARATIONS

The person over there is carrying a bomb.
I have a bomb in my bag.
There's a bomb in the washroom.
The bag I checked in upstairs contains an IED.
I am going to set fire to the airplane with this blowtorch.
I've got plastic explosives that can blow up this airport.
He is going to hijack the aircraft.
I'm going to blow up this plane over the Atlantic.
You better look through my suitcase carefully, because there's a bomb in there.
The man in seat 32F has a machine gun.
SCREENER: What's in that bottle?
PASSENGER: Liquid explosives.

CARELESS OR INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS

Do you think I have a bomb in my suitcase?
There's no bomb in my shoe.
What do you think I look like, a terrorist?
My gun misfired when I was hunting.
This security does nothing to stop hijacking.
Hi, Jack.
Your hockey team is going to get bombed tonight.

[Accusation]

NO SHOES, NO SERVICE

From a civil rights complaint filed in June by Dawn Larson against McDonald's Restaurants of Illinois. Larson alleges that she was denied service at two McDonald's drive-through windows in Rockford, Illinois, in separate incidents in 2006 and 2007, and is suing the company for more than $3 million in damages. McDonald's first denied the allegations and later declined to comment to the media.

Dawn Larson was born with Holt-Oram syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes abnormalities in the hands, arms, and heart. Both of her diminutive hands are located approximately six inches from her shoulders, and she has three fingers and a thumb on each. As a result of her condition, she writes, drives, eats, and does nearly every other daily task with her feet and toes.

On November 3, 2006, Larson drove herself and her four children to a McDonald's drive-through in Rockford, where she placed an order totaling $23.59. At the first drive-through window, she gave the cashier her credit card using the toes of her left foot. The cashier took the card, processed her payment, and returned the card, handing it back to her left foot. At the second drive-through window, a McDonald's employee with the first name of "Fallon" saw Larson and asked her, in a tone of disgust and repulsion, "What's the matter with you? Let me see your arms. You ain't got no arms." Fallon immediately drew the bags of food away from Larson's outstretched foot and made additional rude, insensitive, and demeaning comments and gestures. Fallon refused to give the bags of food to Larson, then closed the drive-through window and went to consult the on-duty manager, identified by Larson as "Trish." Trish and Fallon appeared at the window, and Trish stared with disgust at Larson and also refused to hand the bags of food to her. Humiliated and still without the food she had paid for, Larson proposed they should hand the food to her nine-year-old son, Craig, who was also born with Holt-Oram syndrome and whose four-fingered hands are approximately twelve inches from his shoulders. But for this, Larson and her children would have been denied service. Following the incident, Larson spoke with the restaurant's operations manager, who responded to her complaint with a form letter and $10 in McDonald's gift certificates.

us from the nearby Jewish settlement, so I ran to the car and waited for Huthaifa, and then we drove back to the village. On our way back, Huthaifa told me that he had mistakenly pushed the remote-control button and caused the bomb to explode too soon.

I cut my ties with Huthaifa then, because a small mistake in bomb-making can cost the lives of those involved, and the same is true when you control the remote. He is now in jail, sentenced to six and a half years. In military work, there is a saying that the first mistake is the last mistake.

[Anatomy]

ELBOWS

By Tiziano Scarpa, from "Body (II)," published in the Spring issue of Raritan. *Translated from the Italian by Gregory Conti.*

My elbows poke their way through the ghosts. Several times a day I raise my bent arm to the level of my shoulder. I thrust it back behind me, apparently for no reason. I procure a black eye for a dead man that was following me at too close range. My elbows help me keep the spirits at bay.

The dead men walking beside me have dark bags under their eyes, their eyelids swollen with livid blood. From those offended eyes gushes a gloomy gaze, a swill of envious glances.

When I bump up against a corner with a certain spot on my elbows, I feel a shock inside that runs the length of my forearm and paralyzes my fingers. Inside of me there's a resistor that, opportunely activated by the switch in my elbow, can function as: a radiator for heating small rooms; a burner for boiling water in a handheld pan; a prod for torturing enemy prisoners.

When I torture my enemies with the shocks from my elbows, I stick my ten fingers into their nostrils, caress their nipples with these ten piezoelectric cigarette butts, send their scrota sizzling in a tempest of blue sparks.

When my elbows electrocute my forearm, I ask for mercy and try to resist with all my energies. I'll never confess to myself who I am, where I can track myself down, how many effectives my soul is composed of, where the headquarters of my ego are located.

At lunch I lean my elbows on the table and speak into my neighbors' ears, pointing to the other table companions with my index finger. "How rude!" I hear them murmur. So then I try to regain some stature by doing exactly the opposite. I lean on the table with my fingers and point with my elbows.

When I arm-wrestle, my elbow buttresses the strength of my muscles. It stays under there holding its position, not letting on, stealing precious centimeters, cheating. It acts as if what's going on is a contest of pure muscle, when what's really happening is a bitter struggle between levers. The conflicts set in motion by the working classes are calibrated by the changes in ideological position effected by my elbow. My elbow is a party intellectual on the barricades of class conflict.

The skin on my elbows is able to stretch and relax to the max; a second ago it was perfectly taut, and now it's all bunched up and wrinkly; it's turned into a loose sack, completely empty. No sign of testicles inside this little scrotum of skin. But my elbows can go back to being vigorous whenever they want, stuff themselves with bone, soundly menacing once again.

Bending, distending. Flexing, relaxing. Taut skin, wrinkly skin. My elbows play at aging for fun, amuse themselves with their sudden rejuvenation.

My elbows are my sharp corners. I, too, am an angular creature! I can impersonate rectitude, acuteness, obtuseness.

My elbows are stopping places along my arms.

My elbows can turn into pointed lances. Who said that the tip of things is always to be found at the top, at the head of the line? My elbows are two extremists in the middle of the road.

[Ends]

TO THE BAT CLOSET

From a list of homosexual comic-book characters and their fates. The list was compiled by Perry Moore, the author of Hero, *a young-adult novel about a gay teenage superhero, published last month by Hyperion.*

AMAZON: crippled, made a supervillain terrorist, electrocuted
APOLLO: gang-raped
BATWOMAN: revealed as a closeted lesbian, kid-

[Prank]

TOOTH AND CONSEQUENCES

From a July 26 dissenting opinion by Washington State Supreme Court Justice James M. Johnson in Woo *v.* Fireman's Fund Insurance. *Reversing a lower court's decision, the majority decided in favor of Dr. Robert C. Woo, ruling that "Woo's practical joke did not interrupt the dental surgery procedure."*

Tina Alberts worked as an assistant for Dr. Woo. She informed Woo that she cared for abandoned pot-bellied pigs and had named one "Walter." Woo made such remarks as, "I am going to hunt Walter down and kill him," and "I will find him and eat him." Woo brought photographs of a dead boar to the office to show Alberts, as well as a picture of himself in front of a skinned pig hanging on a hook. Woo claims his comments were part of the "friendly working environment" he encouraged in his office.

Alberts had two baby teeth that had never been replaced by permanent teeth. Woo told her he would replace them with implants. Alberts was given general anesthesia so that her baby teeth could be removed. Woo had prepared a pair of artificial boar tusks without her knowledge. While she was anesthetized, he inserted the boar tusks in her mouth and took photographs. She remained unconscious throughout. Woo then took out the boar tusks and resumed the dental procedure.

A few days later, Alberts was given a birthday present. Upon opening the package, she found the pair of boar tusks. Moments later, Woo's assistants gave Alberts another envelope, containing pictures of her under anesthesia with boar tusks protruding from her mouth while her lips and eyes were pried open.

Alberts filed suit against Woo alleging battery, invasion of privacy, public disclosure of private acts, medical negligence, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. Woo's insurance provider notified Woo that his policy did not cover the claims asserted in the suit.

Woo then brought suit against Fireman's Fund Insurance. He contends that the professional liability provision protects him from any claims that allege faulty dental services, and that creating the boar tusks and inserting them in Alberts's mouth constituted the practice of dentistry. I strongly disagree.

napped, tortured; stabbed herself through the stomach with a sword

BLARNEY COCK: disemboweled, whereupon a gerbil crawled out of his anus

BLOKE: killed on first mission

NED CAMPBELL: slashed into bits after his wife finds him having sex with a male lover

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS: decapitated

CAPTAIN POWER: disfigured by an explosion, driven to insanity, murder

CHAIN: dead

KAROLINA DEAN, HUEKING, & WRYAN: tortured while straight teammates were not

DESTINY: dead

DESTROYER: in the closet

FRENCHIE DUCHAMP: alcoholic, double-amputee; beaten nearly to death with his prosthetic leg

ELECTRO: realized he was a homosexual after a lengthy stint in prison

EL EXTRANO, "THE STRANGE ONE": attacked by an AIDS vampire

FAUNA: dead

FREEDOM RING: finger sliced off; impaled on twenty-eight spikes, including one through the groin and anus

GREEN ARROW II/CONNOR HAWKE: made retroactively heterosexual

HOODED JUSTICE: murdered by teammate

ICE: murdered, last seen in hell

JARVIS: shot through the head, dead

JERICHO: impaled on his father's sword

JETMAN: blackmailed by a villain who threatens to out him

KARMA: raped as a child, kidnapped, disfigured; later reappears but is too fat to move on her own

WALTER KASKO: killed in a botched gang-slaying

MADAME FATAL: dead; his funeral, attended by drag queens, is mocked

MIDNIGHTER: heart ripped out

MONSIEUR MALLAH & THE BRAIN: sadistic gorilla and disembodied brain in a jar; searching for a body for the Brain so they can consummate their love

MOONDRAGON: kidnapped, ear ripped off by a villain who makes her girlfriend deliver it to Moondragon's father as a ransom note

NORTHSTAR: killed in three different realities, resurrected as a zombie assassin

OBSIDIAN: depowered, corrupted by his sexual strife, manipulated by dark forces, thwarted in an attempt to destroy the world, made a security guard for a team of heterosexual superheroes but not allowed to sit with them at the table

PHAT: dead

PIED PIPER: parents murdered by teammate

RAWHIDE KID: revealed he was only pretending to be gay

ROBIN: exposed as a villain; explained that his turn to the dark side was due to his unrequited love for Batman

SHATTERSTAR: rewritten as a heterosexual

SHOUT OUT: thumbs ripped off

SILHOUETTE: murdered, along with her lover, after being outed

SUNFIRE II: dead

ULTIMATE NORTHSTAR: shot at point-blank range, left to die

UNION JACK II: dead

WING: admitted crush to his mentor, who broke his arm and beat him; given a check for $750,000 and forced to leave his superhero group in dishonor

[Outing]

HEROES

From complaints submitted by four San Diego firemen who were ordered to drive a fire truck in a July 21 gay pride parade

While I was sitting there waiting for the parade to start, I felt forced against my will to see men in tight shorts dancing provocatively and other men kissing and hugging, wearing T-shirts with sexually suggestive material like GIRTH AND MIRTH or SUIT UP BEFORE YOU DIVE IN.

I was told multiple times to pull out my hose.

A man approached me and stated that I looked hungry, why don't I have a Twinkie? I was polite and said, "No, thank you," but I felt like he was insinuating something sexual.

Children were waving at us. Initially, I would return the waves, but on at least three separate occasions, sexual gestures were directed at me in response.

I saw a man gesture to his shirt, which read, HAVE YOU EVER RIDDEN A FAT MAN? I became so distraught that my knees began to shake.

I heard obscenities like, "I'm feeling short of breath. I think I need mouth-to-mouth," and "Hey, honey." Not only was I subjected to these comments, but I was told by Christian protesters that homosexuality is a sin, and I'm going to hell, and I will be judged by God. This wasn't right! I was getting criticized all the way around.

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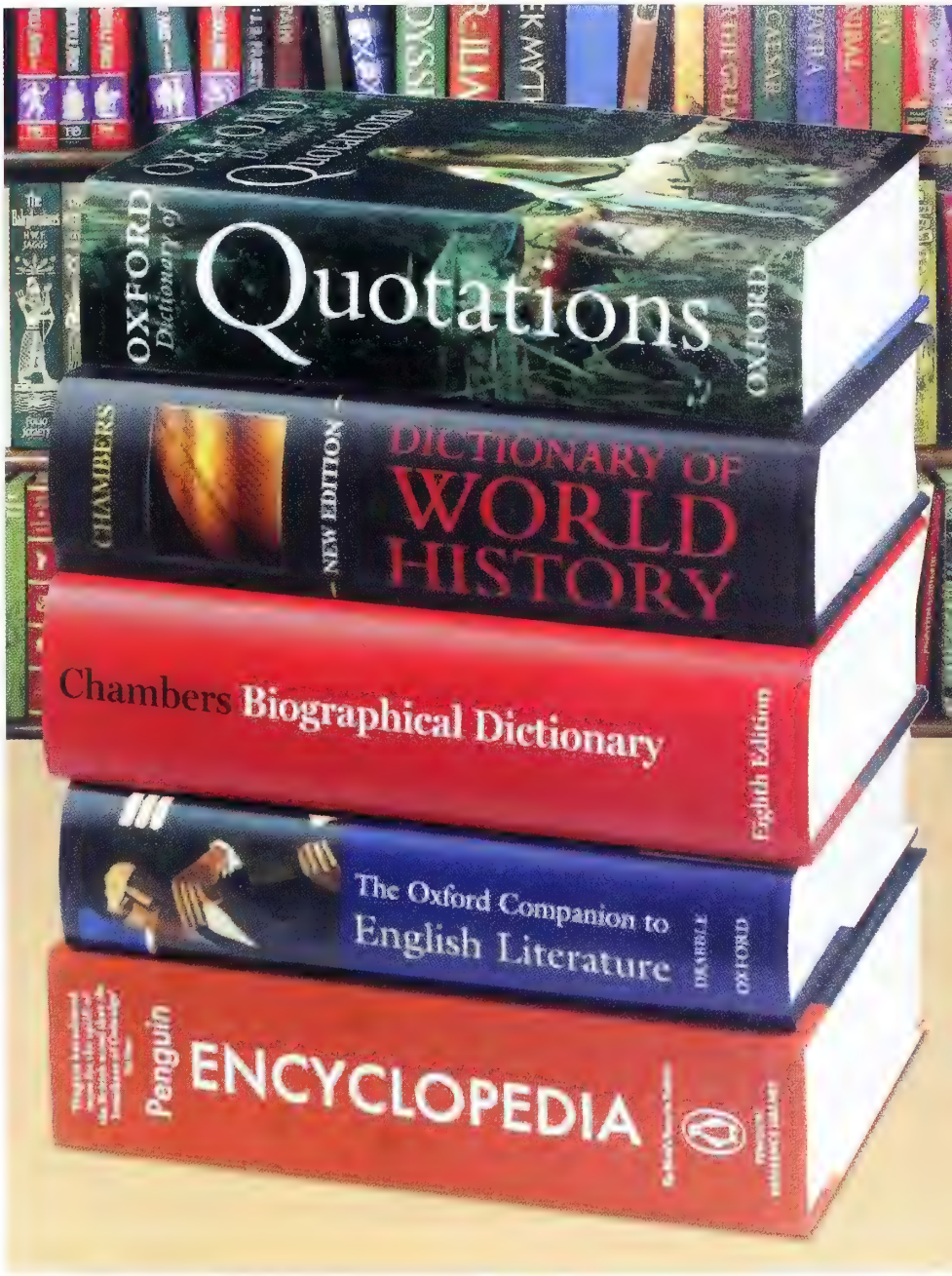
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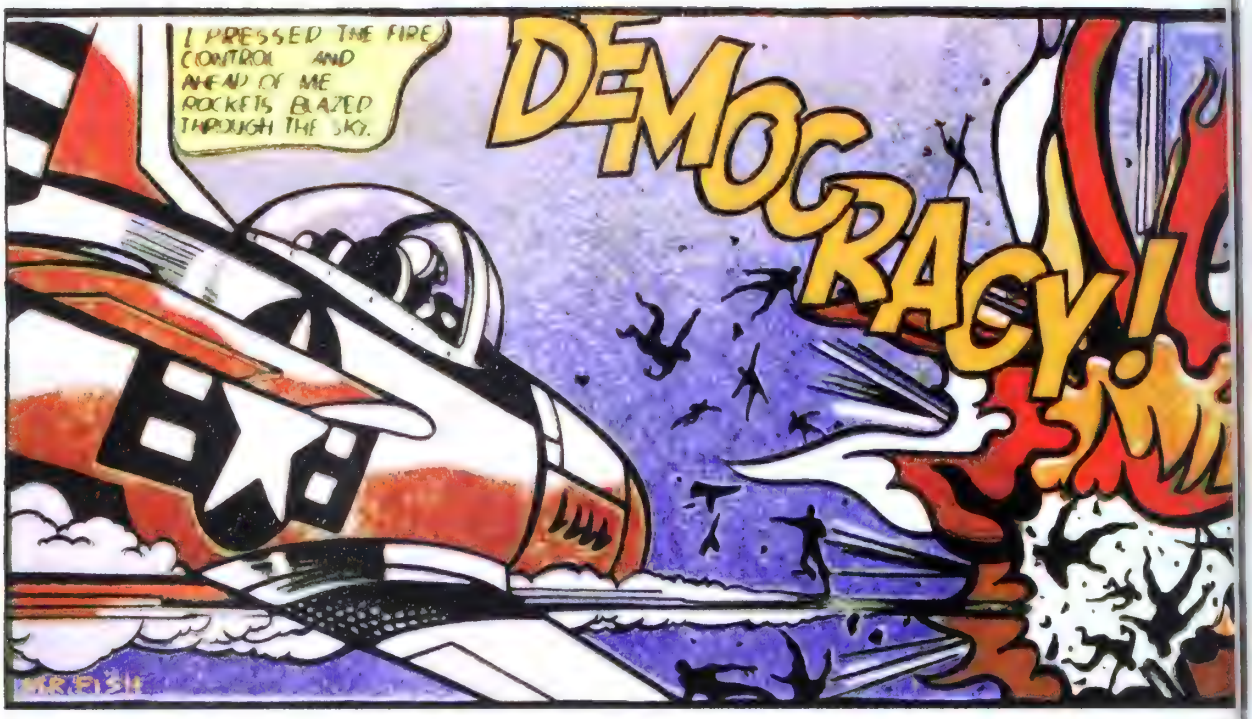
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By Mr. Fish. The cartoons of Mr. Fish, whose work appears every week on Harpers.org, are on exhibit this fall at the Finch Gallery, in Chicag

[Exchange]

GOD HAS BEEN CLONED!

From a book of interviews between Jean Baudrillard and Enrique Valiente Noailles, Exiles from Dialogue, *to be published next month by Polity. Baudrillard, who died in March, was the author of more than fifty works of philosophy and criticism, including* Simulacra and Simulation. *Noailles is a philosopher and journalist. Translated from the French by Chris Turner.*

ENRIQUE VALIENTE NOAILLES: You say there's sometimes a simultaneous upsurge of good and evil—that combating evil leads to reactivating it.

JEAN BAUDRILLARD: You've only to take the "zero deaths" formula, a basic concept of the security order. It's clear that this equates mathematically to "zero lives." By warding off death at all costs (burdensome medical treatment, genetics, cloning), we're being turned, through security, into living dead. On the pretext of immortality, we're moving toward extermination. It's the destiny of maximum good, of absolute happiness, to lead to a zero sum. Illusion—that is, evil—is vital. When you exchange this vital illusion for the unconditional promotion of good, then you're heading for a blowback from the accursed share. This is how things are getting better and better yet, at the same time, worse and worse.

NOAILLES: History might be an attempt to annihilate one part of the duality.

BAUDRILLARD: Human beings can't bear this duality either in the world or in themselves. They can't bear failing the world by their very existence, nor the world failing them. They've sown disorder everywhere, and in wishing to perfect the world, they end up failing themselves. Self-hatred fuels the whole technological effort to make the world over anew. It's on this failing of existence that all religions thrive. You have to pay. In the past, it was God who took the reprisals; now we do it. We have undertaken to inflict the worst on ourselves, and to engineer our disappearance in an extremely complex and sophisticated way, in order to restore the world to the pure state it was in before we were in it.

NOAILLES: Perhaps the Last Judgment has taken place, and we're carrying out the punishment.

BAUDRILLARD: A fine metaphysical hypothesis, except that this self-hatred is a turn taken by Western subjectivity, and also one it's currently imposing on the rest of the world. This nihilism begins with Romanticism, but it has now become a major undertaking, an enter-

prise of self-immolation by technology against a background of obscure resentment at the evil spirit that's dragging us into it. So depending on how you see it, it can be taken as a challenge in suicidal form or as the enactment, as you said, of God's judgment.

NOAILLES: What makes it look more like a punishment being carried out than a suicide is that it's taking place in slow motion.

BAUDRILLARD: And cloning can be said to be a slow-motion suicide—not a sudden disappearance but an innovative form of extinction of the species by doubling. The obliteration of something by that selfsame thing is the definition of suicide.

NOAILLES: This could also be a repetition of the original act: in the same way as we received it, giving the world over to another species, handing on the torch. We can't do any more with it, so over to you!

BAUDRILLARD: It's a way of being rid of the problem, of relieving ourselves of the responsibility by devolving it to another—artificial—species; a way of telling God, "Sort it out with them!" But that's just a dream. One question remains: Isn't the process of artificial perpetuation of the species—which runs counter to evolution—itself part of evolution? "Natural" evolution wants species to disappear. It isn't just a biological fact that every species and every individual wishes both to survive and at the same time to disappear. It isn't just that it's destined to disappear but that it wants to, by another kind of will, and does all it can to do so. Human beings are opting to break that rule today by aiming for immortality, through cloning and many other things. But aren't they actually obeying the same rule or even bringing about an accelerated disappearance? It might be an opportunity for the human race, by putting a world of clones into orbit, to recover its original form, but God will be forced to clone himself too! It would take a clone-God to manage a world of clones.

NOAILLES: Nietzsche's madman, who went looking for God with a lantern in the daytime, would run off horrified, shouting, "God has been cloned!" And if we've materialized the kingdom of God in this world, we've created an immanence with all the tools of transcendence, including salvation and damnation. If what Saint Thomas Aquinas cruelly points out is true—"So that the saints may enjoy their beatitude and the grace of God more abundantly, they are permitted to see the punishment of the damned in hell"—it is perhaps this deep delight in the misfortune of others that's the engine of the duplication.

BAUDRILLARD: But we're already in this artificial world. We've already become clones here and now. We've already exchanged transcendence for the law of DNA. The moral law, Kant's law, the one that was written in the starry sky and in man's inner world, is now inscribed in the genetic code. There's no ideal site of consciousness any longer. And if in the past we could symbolically exchange this world with God under the sign of a moral law we'd invented, we can't exchange it for anything any longer, except the spectral universe that awaits us. Even in the economic field, the field of exchange par excellence and of value, we're beginning to realize, as generalized speculation takes over, that it's the nothing that circulates. And this is why things are going faster and faster, no longer being hampered by either the moral law or the law of value. There's obviously an extraordinary fragility in this, which shows up in the perpetual crisis of the economic and political spheres. But there's a complicity in this exchange of the nothing, a deep complicity that has a bright future because it's a collusion between criminals, between accomplices in the perfect crime. There will no longer be anyone to say the emperor has no clothes, no longer anyone to betray the fact that all this generalized exchange is based on nothing and that it can generalize itself only on the basis of the nothing. If this were revealed, it would be the apocalypse in the literal sense, and we would stand before the nothing as a *fait accompli*.

[Strategy]

KINDER, GENTLER

The following letter from George H. W. Bush to his wife, Barbara, was written on August 8, 1988, during his presidential campaign against Michael Dukakis. It was included in My Dear President: Letters Between Presidents and Their Wives, *recently published by Black Dog & Leventhal.*

Sweetsie:

Please look at how Mike and Kitty do it. Try to be closer in, more—well, er, romantic—on camera. I am practicing the loving look, and the creeping hand. Yours for better TV and more demonstrable affection.

Your sweetie-pie-coo-coo.
Love ya,
G.B.



"Book/Nest," by Rosamond Purcell, from Bookworm, published last year by Quamtuck Lane Press

[Fragment]

NOTES FOR THE TIME OF ULTIMATE CANDOR

By Laura (Riding) Jackson, from The Failure of Poetry, The Promise of Language, *published this summer by University of Michigan Press. Jackson (1901–1991), the author of many works of poetry, criticism, and fiction, renounced poetry in 1941. The new volume, edited by John Nolan, collects her late writings on poetry.*

How much of what human life—human ways of living, being human, thinking, behaving, acting—is becoming, is characterizable as a vulgarization of what have been its better parts, its higher levels in intelligence, purpose, imagination of the good, vision of the happy? The whole of it began in this century to be converted, with chaotic speed, into a property for human beings to rob themselves of. Nothing must be set apart for the perfect use of it. Nothing must be left to shine of itself; all must be dragged forth into the glare of a united greed. To have, to consume, be done with wanting, waiting, finding the fitting match to desire: the all of human sentience become a mob.

Apply this to any of the treasured forms of the human best. Apply it to poetry. Poetry now is, much, a foppery of new casual word-wit. Old vulgarity is made, in it, a preciosity of a new vulgarity; poet-wisdom readies itself for promenade in the mirror of a new literary worldliness; and there is a playing upon the instruments of metaphor and measure, with a resolutely careless air of modern ease in the technicalities of traditional poet elegance and eloquence. There is an everything of exhibition of capacity to string out line and line of poetic verbal agility; and a nothing of straining love of the rare truth-sound and truth-sense long dreamt of under the name of poetry, and given a tremorous reality by the unhesitant bearing of poems—as to say, "We speak of the best speaking."

Do I think there will be an end of this nothing, this poetry of a time of human leveling of the essential grace of the human to the floor of self-ignorance upon which the human first knew life? The human has returned itself to this floor, all that it had learned collapsing, from failure of the mortar of self-knowledge. I believe there will be no end of the nothing that the human has made of itself until, above the din of the mob-music of the private patter and chatter of this poet-many, there rises as above a loud silence, heard only by itself, a smallest number of voices calling upon each other from lonely afar-s. "Speak best! Speak best!—or the human fact will die of the fast-descending estimate it is making of itself as a low-cost mass-pride."

[Verse]

TWO POEMS

By Breyten Breytenbach, from Windcatcher: New and Selected Poems 1964–2006, *to be published next month by Harcourt. Breytenbach's "Imagine Africa" appeared in the June issue of* Harper's Magazine.

RIMBAUD'S JOURNEY

when they had to carry Rimbaud
in a litter for three hundred kilometers
from the desert city where hyenas
even in the brightness of noon
snort-laugh and cough outside
the protecting wall,
to the Sea of Reeds where he hoped to board
a steamer headed for France
to have the rotten leg amputated

when the leg was bloated as big
and gleet-yellow as a spongy gourd
and each little bump or knock
had him laughing and coughing and
  hiccupping from pain

the bearers had to put him down
on hard earth for the night
and with utmost exertion he then ass-shifted
a foot to the side to claw
with raw fingers a hollow in the ground
in which to shit
and cover with clods
the excretion like a dead poem
as underground sign
for the road back through the maze

on one occasion some camels wandered off
among thorn trees and specters and spurted
  lightning
so that everybody had to go in search
and under seething skies
the bearers left him swaddled in rags
like a corpse forgotten on its way to the hole

then clouds obliterated the glimmer
and for sixteen hours Rimbaud
with his face turned to the vomiting rain
for deliverance from above
laughed and sobbed and guffawed

THE COMMUNIST REMEMBERS

fall: and advent of the colder season
with smoldering skylines
summer dreams of revolt and peace
careen through remembrances
are dead spiders on paper

trapped on Tower City's sidewalks
in brightness mirrored by glass cliffs
where clouds cavort
(the little sun man shrinks smaller by the day)
old Chinese ladies with dead eyelids sit
cross-legged in blackout
to protest the torturing of Falun Gong
yellow cabs cruise; a flash of sounds
resonates wall to wall through ravines
from shrubs in the park protrude
the scabbed ankles and torn feet of a drifter

with darkness the city is a surging heart
of veiled passions and sleepless regrets
a whirl of white moths each the size
of this waving hand glitters and whorls
and fists in blue-pillared searchlights
above the gap where heaven-lurching
skyscrapers of capitalism once soared
and now but a pool of lost thoughts
helicopters twirl like moths from hell
above the somber copse of chimneys and
  spires
and shoot light-beams on roof and garden and
  lane

who ever promised you a hollow for your
  foot?
who knew all belief must lead to slaughter?
who could suspect that conscience is but a
  crease
of forgetting within smoldering skylines?

when fire chariots cease lowing
and the moon blossoms strangely
and screens flicker their silent news of war
in the lodges of slumbering doormen
you crouch on the sill
to track the wakening of gull and crow

one eye peeled for the swathe
of first light sweeping the East River
like the memory of another distant land's
summer dreams of uprising and peace
still signaling in the dead tongue
the green pastures of your past
the flat-roofed houses, reeds, a wind and
  smoke

and when the glimmer is sheer
you again notice your hands
already the color of moldy pumpkin
(the little sun man shrinks smaller by the day)
and *know* that spider's blood over pale paper
  tells
thus your dying word by word,
to reconcile death's wonder-making



Bird and Egg, *by Wade Schuman, was on view this spring at Forum Gallery, in Los Angeles*

Artwork courtesy the artist and Forum Gallery, New York City/Los Angeles



above: Saipan, 1944.
Courtesy of the National Archives

THE WAR

A KEN BURNS FILM

DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY [illegible]

A Viewer's Guide to the Seven-Part Series Beginning Septe[illegible]

An Introduction from Walter Cronkite

As a war reporter, the breadth of ground I covered, from Morocco to London, the Netherlands, Belgium, Nuremberg and Moscow, gave me a broad perspective of World War II and its conflicts. I rode in ships, jeeps, airplanes and gliders, and from every viewpoint war looked like hell. In this PBS series, Ken Burns provides a breathtaking account of the war by focusing on the lives of soldiers from a few American towns, giving the viewer a very personal insight into the experiences of those individuals. In watching this series, I heard the echoes of the brave men I met in the convoys of the North Atlantic, the rural villages of Great Britain and the great forests of Europe. It also was a vivid reminder of the profound effect the war had on the lives of Americans on the home front while I was away.

WWII filled American soldiers and citizens with a solidarity of purpose and noble intentions. It affected everyone. Although the degree of sacrifice varied, participation was universal, and the nation was unified in its willingness to forgo creature comforts on a level that has yet to be surpassed.

The media coverage of the war was exemplary, as evidenced by the depth of historical perspective offered in the Burns series. Correspondents and photographers freely roamed the battlefront. The key restriction was that censors had to clear our copy and photos to avoid the inadvertent revelation of military secrets to the enemy. The system worked extraordinarily well; public sympathy remained high throughout the rigors of war, and the archives, from which *The War* was created, provide us with a detailed and personal perspective of our soldiers' and citizens' travails.

Though it was considered to be a necessary war, the toll in human lives and the extent of physical and mental casualties were astounding. We were unequipped to deal with the brutal effects of war on our soldiers. Some of the conditions they suffered were completely new to us, such as the debilitating illness we now know to be post-traumatic stress syndrome. It was a devastating reality for many.

When asked if I was ever frightened as a war reporter, I admit I often was terrified. We correspondents and photojournalists were in foxholes, on the front lines and in the air war. Some of my colleagues made the ultimate sacrifice in their dogged pursuit of reporting nothing less than an eyewitness account of the war. But nowhere was courage more visible than in the grit and honor of the men who had to return to battle again and again on both the European and Pacific



fronts. These soldiers fought the same enemy under the same horrendous conditions day after day, week after week, knowing that every mission might be their last.

World War II was a rite of passage for a generation of Americans. The lessons we learned left indelible impressions, many of which were deeply personal. For a time during the war I was fortunate enough to be assigned to cover the American and British air forces. My coverage consisted primarily of interviewing bomber crews as they returned from their missions. I watched one day as an aircraft came gliding down to its landing. It appeared undamaged, except for a red flare, used as a distress signal, hanging over it. An ambulance drove up to the end of the runway and then departed, apparently for the hospital. As the open truck that taxied the plane's crewmembers drew closer, I noticed there were only nine men—or make that, boys—onboard. There should have been ten.

The captain of the mission, Don Stockton, was one of the most popular men of the 303rd Heavy Bombardment Group. He was 26, with a beguiling smile and a warm greeting for all. He planned to marry an Air Force nurse he had met in London. We had spent many evenings together and became good friends.

A single bullet hit his plane. It pierced the windshield—and his heart. As the transport carrying the surviving members of the crew made its way from the tarmac to the debriefing shack, I noticed they were all crying uncontrollably. It was on that day that I learned that no one—not even soldiers and war correspondents—is too tough to cry.

I was privileged to have served as a correspondent during World War II and am honored to have met and worked with the men and women who served our country—on the battlefields of the world and on the home front. The tragedies of war were great indeed, but the ultimate prize of freedom was won by the extraordinary courage and honor of the heroes whose sacrifices assured it.



Walter Cronkite

The Second World War was fought in thousands of places, too many for any one accounting.

This is the story of four American towns and how their citizens experienced that war.



THE WAR, a seven-part series directed and produced by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, tells the story of the Second World War through the personal accounts of a handful of men and women from four American towns: Waterbury, Connecticut; Mobile, Alabama; Sacramento, California; and the tiny farming town of Luverne, Minnesota. The series explores the most intimate human dimensions of the greatest cataclysm in history — a worldwide catastrophe that touched the lives of every family on every street in every town in America — and demonstrates that in extraordinary times, there are no ordinary lives.

Throughout the series, the indelible experience of combat is brought vividly to life as veterans describe what it was like to fight and kill and see men die at places like Monte Cassino and Anzio and Omaha Beach, the Hürtgen Forest and the Vosges Mountains and the Ardennes; and on the other side of the world at Guadalcanal and Tarawa and Saipan, Peleliu and the Philippine Sea and Okinawa. In all of the battle scenes, dramatic historical footage and photographs are combined with extraordinarily realistic sound effects to give the film a terrifying, visceral immediacy.





In every episode, veterans' accounts of battle are interwoven with the poignant recollections of their loved ones back home who, for four long years, carried on with their lives, contributed to the war effort, and lived in constant fear of telegrams containing news too terrible to bear.

The film honors the bravery, endurance and sacrifice of Americans who lived through what will always be known simply as THE WAR.

top right: Long Beach, California, October 1942.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress
middle right: Solomon Islands, March 1944.
Courtesy of the National Archives
left: California, May 1942.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Episode One Sunday, September 23, 2001 | 9 | 8 Hours (ET)

"A Necessary War"

December 1941 - December 1942



After a haunting overview of the Second World War, an epoch of killing that engulfed the world from 1939 to 1945 and cost at least 50 million lives, the inhabitants of four towns — Mobile, Alabama; Sacramento, California; Waterbury, Connecticut; and Luverne, Minnesota — recall their communities on the eve of the conflict. For them, and for most Americans finally beginning to recover from the Great Depression, the events overseas seem impossibly far away. But on December 7, 1941, their tranquil lives are shattered by the shock of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and America is thrust into the greatest cataclysm in history. Along with millions of other young men, Sid Phillips and Willie Rushton of Mobile, Ray Leopold of Waterbury, and Walter Thompson and Burnett Miller of Sacramento enter the armed forces and begin to train for war.

In the Philippines, two Americans thousands of miles from home, Corporal Glenn Frazier and Sascha Weinzheimer (who was 8 years old in 1941), are caught up in the Japanese onslaught there, as American and Filipino forces retreat onto Bataan while thousands of civilians are rounded up and imprisoned in Manila.

Meanwhile, back home, 110,000 Japanese Americans all along the West Coast, including some 7,000 from Sacramento and the surrounding valley, are forced by the government to abandon their homes and businesses and are relocated to inland internment camps. On the East Coast, German U-boats menace Allied shipping just offshore, sending hundreds of ships and lions of tons of matériel to the bottom of the sea. The United States seems utterly unprepared for this kind of total war. Witsing all of this is Katharine Phillips of Mobile, who remembers sightings of U-boats just outside Mobile Bay, and Al McIntosh, editor of the *Rock County Star Herald* in Luverne, who chronicles the travails of every family in town.

une 1942, the Navy manages an improbable victory over the Japanese at the Battle of Midway. In August, American land es, including Sid Phillips of Mobile, face the vaunted Japanese army for the first time at Guadalcanal, armed with single shot, t-action rifles and just 10 days' worth of ammunition. Abandoned by their fleet with no support from the sea or air, the men are strafed and bombed daily and under constant ack from enemy troops hidden in the jungle. After six long nths the Americans finally prevail and, in the process, stop an's expansion in the Pacific.

the end of America's first year of war, more than 35,000 nericans in uniform have died. Before the war can end, 10 es that many will lose their lives.



top left: Hartford, Connecticut, June 1942. Courtesy of the Library of Congress
right: Pearl Harbor, December 1941. Courtesy of the National Archives

Episode Two *Monday, September 24, 2007 / 8-10pm (ET)*

"When Things Get Tough"

January 1943 - December 1943

By January 1943, Americans have been at war for more than a year. The Germans, with their vast war machine, still occupy most of Western Europe, and the Allies have not yet been able to agree on a plan or a timetable to dislodge them. For the time being, they will have to be content to nip at the edges of Hitler's enormous domain. American troops, including Charles Mann of Luverne, are now ashore in North Africa, ready to test themselves for the first time against the German and Italian armies. At Kasserine Pass, Erwin Rommel's seasoned veterans quickly overwhelm the poorly led and ill-equipped Americans, but in the following weeks, after George Patton assumes command, the Americans pull themselves together and begin to beat back the Germans. In the process, thousands of soldiers learn to disregard the belief that killing is a sin and come to adopt the more professional outlook that "killing is a craft," as reporter Ernie Pyle explains to the readers back home.



Across the country, in cities such as Mobile and Waterbury, nearly all manufacturing is converted to the war effort. Factories run around the clock, and mass production reaches levels unimaginable a few years earlier. Along with millions of other women, Emma Belle Petcher of Mobile enters the industrial workforce for the first time, becoming an airplane inspector, while her city struggles to cope with an overwhelming population explosion.

In Europe, thousands of American airmen are asked to gamble their lives against preposterous odds, braving flak and German fighter planes on daylight bombing missions over enemy territory. All of them, including Earl Burke of Sacramento, know that each time they return to the air their chances of surviving the war diminish.



Allied troops invade Sicily and then southern Italy, where, as they try to move towards Rome, the weather turns bad and the terrain grows more and more forbidding — twisting mountain roads, destroyed bridges — all under constant German fire. With them is Babe Ciarlo of Waterbury, whose division loses 3,265 men in 56 days of fighting in Italy — and moves less than 50 miles.

As 1943 comes to a close, Allied leaders draw up plans for the long-delayed invasion of the European continent, while Hitler puts tens of thousands of laborers to work strengthening his coastal defenses. For the people of Mobile, Sacramento, Waterbury and Luverne, things are bound to get tougher still.

top right: Aceno, Italy, September 1943
Courtesy of the National Archives
left: New Orleans, Louisiana, March 1943
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Episode Three Tuesday, September [illegible] (ET)

"A Deadly Calling"

November 1943 - June 1944



In fall 1943, after almost two years of war, the American public is able to see for the first time the terrible toll the war is taking on its troops when *Life* publishes a photograph of the bodies of three GIs killed in action at Buna. Despite American victories in the Solomons and New Guinea, the Japanese empire still stretches 4,000 miles, and victory seems a long way off. In November, on the tiny Pacific atoll of Tarawa, the Marines set out to prove that any island, no matter how fiercely defended, can be taken by all-out frontal assault. Back home, the public is devastated by color newsreel footage of the furious battle, including the bodies of Marines floating in the surf, and grows more determined to do whatever is necessary to hasten the end of the war.



bile, Sacramento and Waterbury have been transformed into booming, overcrowded towns," and in Mobile — as in scores of other cities — that transformation leads to frontation and ugly racial violence.

can Americans, asked to fight a war for freedom while serving in the strictly segregated ed forces, demand equal rights, and the military reluctantly agrees to some changes. ks are allowed, for the first time in two centuries, to join the Marine Corps, and many, uding John Gray and Willie Rushton of Mobile, sign on. They are trained for combat, most are assigned to service jobs instead. Japanese-American men, originally designated enemy aliens," are permitted to form a special segregated unit, the 442nd Regimental nbat Team. In Hawaii and in the internment camps, thousands sign up, including Robert hiwagi, Susumu Satow and Tim Tokuno of Sacramento. They are sent to Mississippi for ning, where they are promised they will be treated "as white men."

taly, Allied forces are stalled in the mountains south of Rome, unable to break through the German lines at Monte Cassino. he mud, snow and bitter cold, the killing goes on all winter and spring as the enemy manages to fight off repeated Allied at-cs. A risky landing at Anzio ends in utter failure, with the Germans gaining the high ground, and thousands of Allied troops, luding Babe Ciarlo of Waterbury, are totally exposed to enemy fire unable to advance for months.



May, Allied soldiers at Cassino and Anzio finally break through, and June 4 they liberate Rome. But in heading towards the city, they fail capture the retreating German army, which takes up new positions the Adolf Hitler line north of Rome. Meanwhile, the greatest test for Allies — the long-delayed invasion of France — is now just days ay.

top left: Richmond, California, 1943.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress
middle right Waterbury, Connecticut.
Courtesy of the Ciarlo Family
right: Gilbert Islands, 1943.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Episode Four Wednesday, September 26, 2007 / 8-10:30pm (ET)

"Pride of Our Nation"

June 1944 - August 1944



By June 1944, there are signs on both sides of the world that the tide of the war is turning. On June 6, 1944 — D-Day — in the European Theater, a million and a half Allied troops embark on one of the greatest invasions in history: the invasion of France. Among them are Dwain Luce of Mobile, who drops behind enemy lines in a glider; Quentin Aanenson of Luverne, who flies his first combat mission over the Normandy coast; and Joseph Vaghi of Waterbury, who manages to survive the disastrous landing on Omaha Beach, where German resistance nearly decimates the American forces. It is the bloodiest day in American history since the Civil War, with nearly 2,500 Americans losing their lives. But the Allies succeed in tearing a 45-mile gap in Hitler's vaunted Atlantic Wall, and by day's end more than 150,000 men have landed on French soil. They quickly find themselves bogged down in the Norman hedgerows, facing German troops determined to make them pay for every inch of territory they gain. For months, the Allies must measure their progress in yards, and they suffer far greater casualties than anyone expecte

In the Pacific, the long climb from island to island toward the Japanese homeland is well underway, but the enemy seems ind ingly determined to defend to the death every piece of territory they hold. The Marines, including Ray Pittman of Mobile, h the costliest Pacific battle to date — on the island of Saipan — encountering, for the first time, Japanese civilians who, like t soldiers, seem resolved to die for their emperor rather than surrender.

Back at home, while anxiously listening to the radio, watching newsreels and scanning casualty lists in the newspapers for de tive information from the battlefront, Americans do their best to go about their normal lives, but on doorsteps all across the country, dreaded telegrams from the War Department begin arriving at a rate inconceivable just one year earlier.

In late July, Allied forces break out of the hedgerows in Normandy, and by mid-August, the Germans are in full retreat out of France. On August 25, after four years of Nazi occupation, Paris is liberated — and the end of the war in Europe seems only a few weeks away.





top right: Indianapolis, Indiana, c1940s.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress
middle right: Normandy, France, June 1944.
Courtesy of the National Archives
left: Laons, France, 1944.
Courtesy of Quentin Aanenson

Episode Five Sunday, September 3rd, 8 p.m. (ET)

"FUBAR"

September 1944 - December 1944



By September 1944, in Europe at least, the Allies seem to be moving steadily toward victory. "Militarily," General Dwight Eisenhower's chief of staff tells the press, "this war is over." But in the coming months, on both sides of the world, a generation of young men will learn a lesson as old as war itself — that generals make plans, plans go wrong and soldiers die.

On the Western Front, American and British troops massed on the German border are desperately short of fuel, having outrun their supply lines. Allied commanders gamble on a risky scheme to drop thousands of airborne troops, including Dwain Luce of Mobile and Harry Schmid of Sacramento, behind enemy lines in Holland, but nothing goes according to plan; it becomes painfully clear that the war in Europe will not end before winter.

r the next three months, American soldiers are ordered into some of Germany's most forbidding and most fiercely defended ain. In the Hürtgen Forest, tens of thousands of GIs, including Tom Galloway of Mobile, fight an unwinnable battle in which only victory to be had is survival. During his missions over Germany, fighter pilot Quentin Aanenson of Luverne loses so ıy friends and sees so much death that he comes close to collapsing from despair. In the Vosges Mountains, the 442nd Regiıtal Combat Team, including Robert Kashiwagi, Susumu Satow and Tim Tokuno of Sacramento, is assigned to an overly amous general and endures weeks of brutal combat. At the end of October, they are ordered to break through to a battalion of as soldiers caught behind the lines — no matter the cost.

he Pacific, General MacArthur is poised to invade the Philippines at Leyte. Although the nearby island of Peleliu holds little ical value for his campaign, the 1st Marine Division, including Eue Sledge and Willie Rushton of Mobile, is ordered to take it anyway. e battle is expected to last four days, but the fighting drags on for re than two months in one of the most brutal and unnecessary camgns in the Pacific.



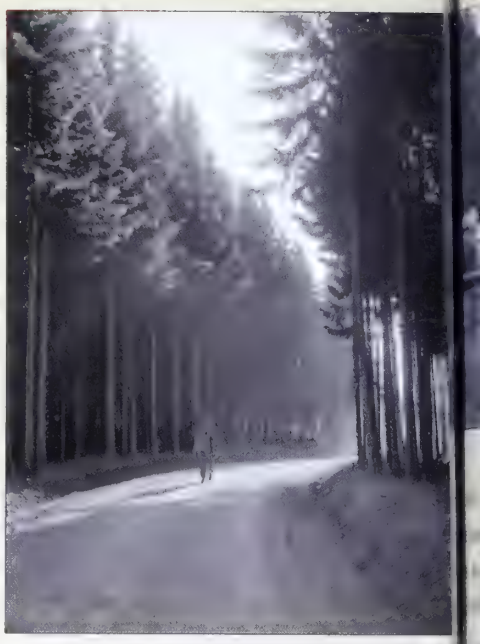
October, with their food supplies dangerously low, Sascha einzheimer of Sacramento and the other internees at Santo Tomas ıp in Manila thrill to the sight and sound of American carrier-based nes bombing Japanese ships in the nearby bay; a few weeks later, ıerican troops land on the island of Leyte, 350 miles away. In the vie theaters back home, as Katharine Phillips of Mobile recalls, ıericans cheer the newsreels of General MacArthur "returning." But nths of bloody fighting lie ahead before the Philippine Islands — and people imprisoned on them — can be liberated.

top left: Geich, Germany, December 1944.
Courtesy of the National Archives
right: France, 1944.
Courtesy of the National Archives

Episode Six Monday October 1, 2007 / 8-11pm (ET)

"The Ghost Front"

December 1944 - March 1945



By December 1944, Americans have become weary of the war their young men have been fighting for three long years; the stream of newspaper headlines telling of new losses and telegrams bearing bad news from the War Department seems endless and unendurable.

In the Pacific, American progress has been slow and costly, with each island more fiercely defended than the last. In Europe, no one is prepared for the massive counterattack Hitler launches on December 16 in the Ardennes Forest in Belgium and Luxembourg. Tom Galloway of Mobile, Burnett Miller of Sacramento and Ray Leopold of Waterbury are there, among the Americans caught up in the biggest battle on the Western Front — the Battle of the Bulge. Back home, Katharine Phillips of Mobile and Burt Wilson of Sacramento are shocked to see newspaper headlines showing the Germans on the offensive and begin to wonder, "Are we losing now that we're this close?"

Meanwhile, at Santo Tomas Camp in Manila, thousands of internees, including Sascha Weinzheimer of Sacramento, are now starving, desperately trying to hold onto life long enough to be liberated.

At Yalta, Allied leaders agree on a plan to end the war that includes massive bombing raids aimed at German oil facilities, defense factories, roads, railways and cities. In March alone, Allied warplanes drop 163,864 tons of bombs on Germany — almo as many as they have dropped in the preceding three years combined.



In the Pacific, Allied bombers are ready to batter Japan as well — but first, the air strip on Iwo Jima, an inhospitable volcanic island halfway between Allied air bases on Tinian and the Japanese home islands, needs to be taken. There the Marines, including Ray Pittman of Mobile, face 21,000 determined Japanese defenders who, with no hope of reinforcement or re-supply, have been ordered to kill as many Americans as possible before being killed themselves. After almost a month of desperate fighting, the island is secured, and American bombers are free to begin their full-fledged air assault on Japan. In the coming months, Allied bombings will set the cities of Japan ablaze, killing hundreds of thousands and leaving millions homeless.



By the middle of March 1945, the end of the war in Europe seems imminent. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are crossing the Rhine and driving into th heart of Germany, while the Russians are within 50 miles of Berlin. Still, back i Luverne, Al McIntosh warns his readers to keep their heads down and keep wor ing "until there is no doubt of victory any more" because "lots of our best boys have been lost in victory drives before."

top right: Belgium, December 1944. Courtesy of the National Archives
middle right: Hürtgen, Germany, December 1944. Courtesy of the National Archives;
left: Pennsylvania Station, New York, New York, 1943. Courtesy of Getty Images

Episode Seven Tuesday, October 2, 2007 / 9:00-10:30pm ET/PT

"A World Without War"

March 1945 - December 1945



In spring 1945, although the numbers of dead and wounded have more than doubled since D-Day, the people of Mobile, Sacramento, Waterbury and Luverne understand all too well that there will be more bad news from the battlefield before the war can end. That March, when Americans go to the movies, President Franklin Roosevelt warns them in a newsreel that, although the Nazis are on the verge of collapse, the final battle with Japan could stretch on for years.

In the Pacific, Eugene Sledge of Mobile is once again forced to enter what he calls "the abyss" in the battle for the island of Okinawa — the gateway to Japan. Glenn Frazier of Alabama, one of 168,000 Allied prisoners of war still in Japanese hands, celebrates the arrival of carrier planes overhead, but despairs of ever getting out of Japan alive.

ıid-April, Americans are shocked by news bulletins announcing that President Roosevelt is dead; many do not even know name of their new president, Harry Truman. Meanwhile, in Europe, as Allied forces rapidly push across Germany from the and west, American and British troops, including Burnett Miller of Sacramento, Dwain Luce of Mobile and Ray Leopold of erbury, discover for themselves the true horrors of the Nazis' industrialized barbarism — at Buchenwald, Ludwigslust, hau, Hadamar, Mauthausen and hundreds of other concentration camps.

ılly, on May 8, with their country in ruins and their führer dead by his own hand, the Nazis surrender. But as Eugene Sledge embers, to the Marines and soldiers still fighting in the Pacific, "No one cared much. Nazi Germany might as well have been he moon." The battle on Okinawa grinds on until June, and when it is finally over, 92,000 Japanese soldiers, as well as tens of ısands of Okinawan civilians, have been killed. Okinawa is also the worst battle of the Pacific for the Americans, and, as they ɔare to move on to Japan itself, still more terrible losses seem inevitable. Allied leaders at Potsdam set forth the terms under ch they will agree to end the war, but for most of Japan's rulers, despite agony their people are enduring, unconditional surrender remains un- ıkable.



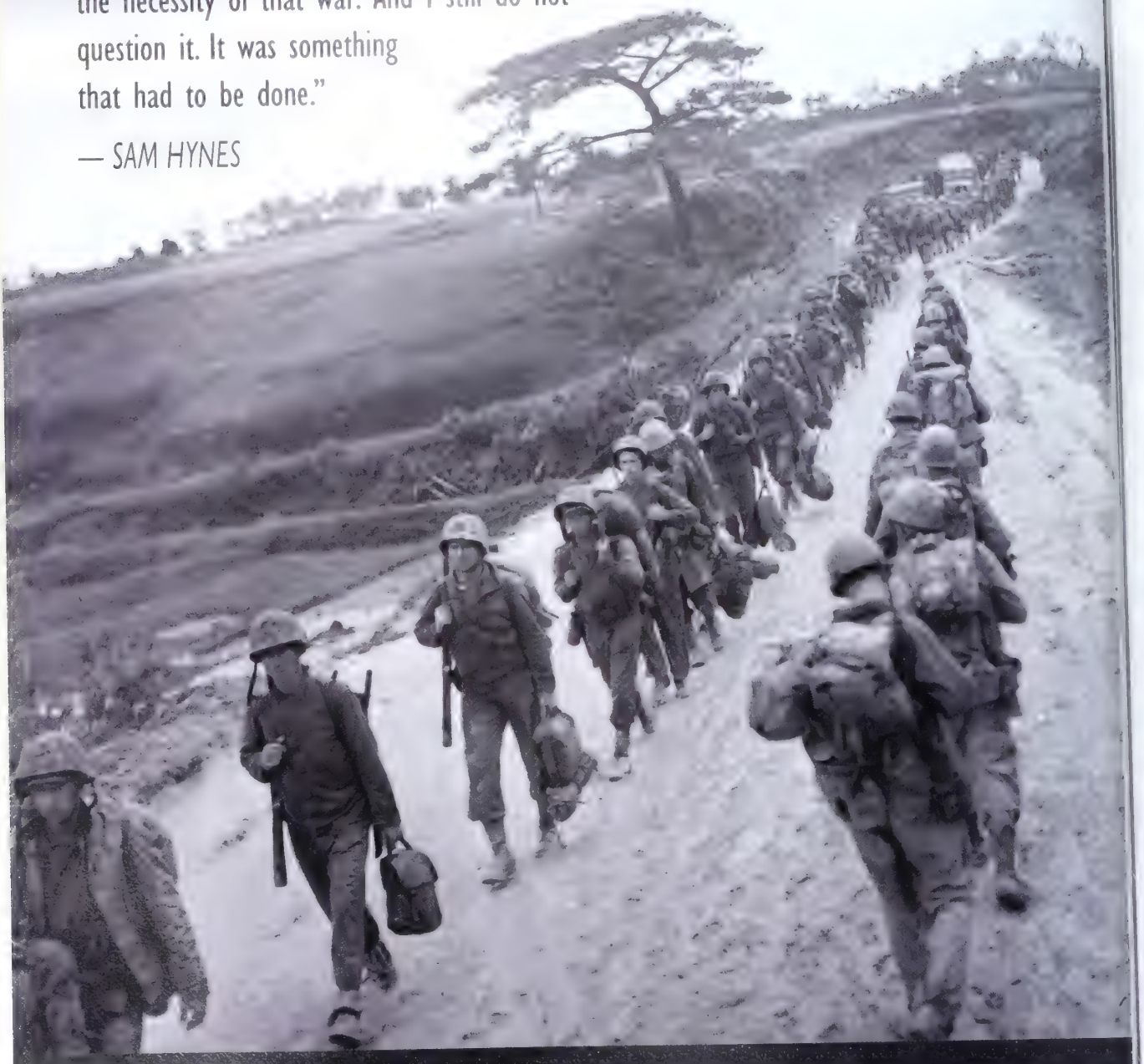
en, on August 6, 1945, under orders from President Truman, an Ameri- plane drops a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, obliterating)00 men, women and children in an instant; 100,000 more die of burns l radiation within days; another 100,000 will succumb to radiation soning over the next five years. Two days later, Russia declares war inst Japan. On August 9, a second American atomic bomb destroys the of Nagasaki; the rulers of Japan decide at last to give up — and the atest cataclysm in history comes to an end.

the following months and years, millions of young men return home — to k up the pieces of their lives and to try to learn how to live in a world hout war.

top left: Okinawa, May 1945. Courtesy of the National Archives
right: Bitche, France, March 1945. Courtesy of the National Archives

"I don't think there is such a thing as a good war. There are sometimes necessary wars. And I think one might say 'just' wars. I never questioned the necessity of that war. And I still do not question it. It was something that had to be done."

— SAM HYNES



Be more PBS.

above: Okinawa, May 1945.
Courtesy of the National Archives

DISASTER CAPITALISM

The new economy of catastrophe

By Naomi Klein

Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around.

—Milton Friedman

Three years ago, when I was in Baghdad on assignment for this magazine, I paid an early-morning visit to Khadamiya, a mostly Shiite area. An Iraqi colleague had heard that part of the neighborhood had flooded the night before, as it did regularly. When we arrived, the streets were drenched in slick green-blue liquid that was bubbling up from sewage pipes beneath exhausted asphalt. A family invited us to see what the frequent floods had done to their once lovely home. The walls were moldy and cracked, and every item—books, photos, sofas—was caked in the algae-like scum. Out back, a walled garden was a fetid swamp, with a child's swing dangling forlornly from a dead palm tree. "It was a beautiful garden," Durdham Yassin, the owner, told us. "I grew tomatoes."

For the frequent flooding, Yassin spread the blame around. There was Saddam, who spent oil money on weapons instead of infrastructure during the Iran-Iraq War. There was the first Gulf War, when U.S. missiles struck a nearby electricity plant, knocking out power to the sewage-treatment facility. Next came the years of U.N. sanctions, when city workers could not replace crucial parts of the sewage system. Then there was the 2003 invasion, which further fried the power grid. And, more recently, there were companies like Bechtel and General Electric, which were hired to fix this mess, and which failed.

Around the corner, a truck was idling with a large hose down a manhole. "The most powerful vacuum loader in the world," it advertised, in English, on its side. Yassin explained that the neighbors had pooled their money to pay the company to suck away the latest batch of sludge, a costly and temporary solution. The mosque had helped, too. As we drove away, I noticed that there were similar private vacuum trucks on every other block.

Later that day I stopped by Baghdad's world-famous Green Zone. There, the challenges of living without functioning public infrastructure are also addressed by private actors. The difference is that in the Green Zone, the

Naomi Klein's most recent article for Harper's Magazine, *"Baghdad Year Zero," appeared in the September 2004 issue. Her new book,* The Shock Doctrine, *from which this essay was adapted, was just published by Metropolitan Books*

LIKE MOST PEOPLE, I THOUGHT THE DIVIDE BETWEEN BAGHDAD'S GREEN AND RED ZONES WAS A SIMPLE BY-PRODUCT OF THE WAR

solutions actually work. The enclave has its own electrical grid, its own p and sanitation systems, its own oil supply, and its own state-of-the-art tal with pristine operating theaters—all protected by walls five meters t It felt, oddly, like a giant fortified Carnival Cruise ship parked in the dle of a sea of violence and despair, the boiling Red Zone that is Iraq. I could get on board, there were poolside drinks, bad Hollyw movies, and Nautilus machines. If you were not amon chosen, you could get shot just for standing too clo the wall.

Everywhere in Iraq, the wildly divergent values assigned t ferent categories of people are on crude display. Westerners and Iraqi colleagues have checkpoints at the entrances to their streets, walls in front of their houses, body armor, and private security guar call at all hours. They travel the country in menacing armored con with mercenaries pointing guns out the windows as they follow prime directive to "protect the principal." With every move they b cast the same unapologetic message: We are the chosen, our lives ar finitely more precious than yours. Middle-class Iraqis, meanwhile, to the next rung down the ladder: they can afford to buy protection local militias, they are able to ransom a family member held by kid pers, they may ultimately escape to a life of poverty in Jordan. But vast majority of Iraqis have no protection at all. They walk the st exposed to any possible ravaging, with nothing between them and next car bomb but a thin layer of fabric. In Iraq, the lucky get Kevlar rest get prayer beads.

Like most people, I saw the divide between Baghdad's Green and zones as a simple by-product of the war: This is what happens when the est country in the world sets up camp in one of the poorest. But now ter years spent visiting other disaster zones, from post-tsunami Sri L to post-Katrina New Orleans, I've come to think of these Green Zone Zone worlds as something else: fast-forward versions of what "free mar forces are doing to our societies even in the absence of war. In Iraq phones, pipes, and roads had been destroyed by weapons and trade bargoes. In many other parts of the world, including the United States, have been demolished by ideology, the war on "big government," th ligion of tax cuts, the fetish for privatization. When that crumbling i structure is blasted with increasingly intense weather, the effects can l devastating as war.

Last February, for instance, Jakarta suffered one of these predictable d ters. The rains had come, as they always do, but this time the water d drain out of Jakarta's famously putrid sewers, and half the city filled up l swimming pool. There were mass evacuations, and at least fifty-se people were killed. No bombs or trade sanctions were needed for Jaka infrastructure to fail—in fact, the steady erosion of the country's pu sphere had taken place under the banner of "free trade." For deca Washington-backed structural-adjustment programs had pampered vestors and starved public services, leading to such clichés of lopsided velopment as glittering shopping malls with indoor skating rinks surro ed by moats of open sewers. Now those sewers had failed completely.

In wealthier countries, where public infrastructure was far more robus fore the decline began, it has been possible to delay this kind of reckon Politicians have been free to cut taxes and rail against big government as their constituents drove on, studied in, and drank from the huge pul works projects of the 1930s and 1940s. But after a few decades, that trick working. The American Society of Civil Engineers has warned that United States has fallen so far behind in maintaining its public infrast ture—roads, bridges, schools, dams—that it would take more than a tril and a half dollars over five years to bring it back up to standard. This summer those statistics came to life: collapsing bridges, flooding subways

ıg steam pipes, and the still-unfolding tragedy that began when New
ns's levees broke.

er each new disaster, it's tempting to imagine that the loss of life and
ctivity will finally serve as a wake-up call, provoking the political class
nch some kind of "new New Deal." In fact, the opposite is taking
disasters have become the preferred moments for advancing a vision
ıthlessly divided world, one in which the very idea of a public sphere
› place at all. Call it disaster capitalism. Every time a new crisis hits—
when the crisis itself is the direct by-product of free-market ideology—
ar and disorientation that follow are harnessed for radical social and
›mic re-engineering. Each new shock is midwife to a new course of eco-
: shock therapy. The end result is the same kind of unapologetic par-
between the included and the excluded, the protected and the damned,
s on display in Baghdad.

nsider the instant reactions to last summer's various infrastructure dis-
. Four days after the Minneapolis bridge collapsed, a *Wall Street Jour-*
litorial had the solution: "tapping private investors to build and oper-
ıblic roads and bridges," with the cost made up from ever-escalating tolls.
heavy rain caused the shutdown of New York City's subway lines, the
York Sun ran an editorial under the headline "Sell the Subways." It called
dividual train lines to compete against one another, luring customers
he safest, driest service—and "charging higher fares when the competing
stingier on their investments, were shut down with tracks under wa-
It's not hard to imagine what this free market in subways would look
ıigh-speed lines ferrying commuters from the Upper West Side to Wall
t, while the trains serving the South Bronx wouldn't just continue
long decay—they would simply drown.

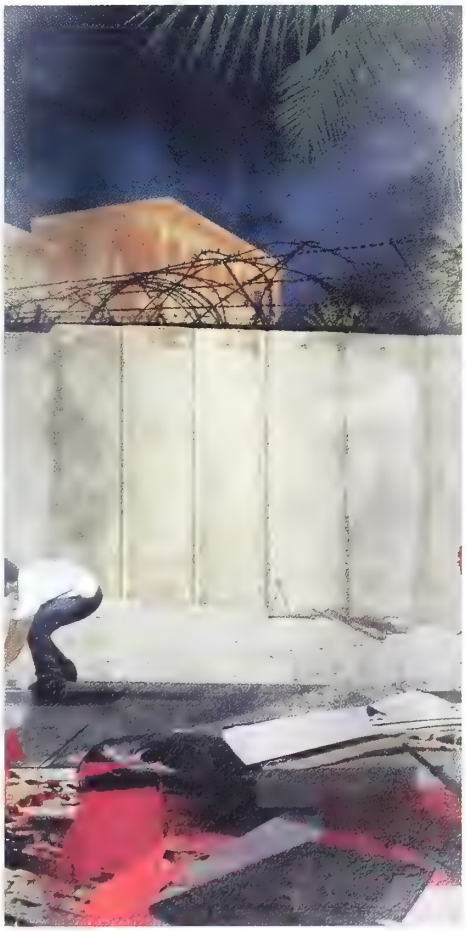
ıe same week as the bridge collapse, hysteria erupted over canceled
s and delays at London's Heathrow airport, prompting *The Economist* to
nd "radical reform" of the "grubby, cramped" facility. London's airports
lready privatized, but now, according to the magazine, they should be
ulated, allowing terminals to compete against one another: "different firms
l provide different forms of security checks, some faster and dearer than
s." Meanwhile, in New Orleans, schools were getting ready to reopen
ll. More than half the city's students would be attending newly mint-
arter schools, where they would enjoy small classes, well-trained teach-
nd refurbished libraries, thanks to special state and foundation funding
ng into what the *New York Times* has described as "the nation's pre-
ent laboratory for the widespread use of charter schools." But charters
nly for the students who are admitted to the system—an educational
n Zone. The rest of New Orleans's public-school students—many of them
special emotional and physical needs, almost all of them African Amer-
—are dumped into the pre-Katrina system: no extra money, overcrowded
rooms, more guards than teachers. An educational Red Zone.

ther institutions that had attempted to bridge the gap between New Or-
,'s super-rich and ultra-poor were also under attack: thousands of units
bsidized housing were slotted for demolition, and Charity Hospital, the
s largest public-health facility, remained shuttered. The original disaster
reated and deepened by public infrastructure that was on its last legs; in
ears since, the disaster itself has been used as an excuse to finish the job.

ıere will be more Katrinas. The bones of our states—so frail and aging—
keep getting buffeted by storms both climatic and political. And as key
es of the infrastructure are knocked out, there is no guarantee that they

ıese solutions seemed to present themselves with uncanny speed, it is largely because
ington's think tanks have been on such an aggressive campaign to privatize the essential
ions of the state. As a May 2007 cover story in Business Week *explained, "In the*
ear, banks and private investment firms have fallen in love with public infrastructure.
're smitten by the rich cash flows that roads, bridges, airports, parking garages and ship-
›orts generate—and the monopolistic advantages that keep those cash flows as steady
›eating heart. . . . Investors can't get in fast enough."

EVERY TIME A NEW CRISIS HITS, THE FEAR AND DISORIENTATION THAT FOLLOW LEAD TO RADICAL ECONOMIC RE-ENGINEERING



ations by John Ritter

THE DISASTER-CAPITALISM COMPLEX AIMS, ULTIMATELY, TO REPLACE THE STATE WITH ITS OWN PROFITABLE ENTERPRISES

will be repaired or rebuilt, at least not as they were before. More likely will be left to rot, with the well-off withdrawing into gated communities needs met by private suppliers.

Not so long ago, disasters were periods of social leveling, rare moments atomized communities put divisions aside and pulled together. Toda are moments when we are hurled further apart, when we lurch into cally segregated future where some of us will fall off the map and oth

cend to a parallel privatized state, one equipped with paved highways and skyways, safe bridges, boutique cl schools, fast-lane airport terminals, and deluxe subway

As Iraq and New Orleans both reveal, the markets opened up by aren't only the roads, schools, and oil wells; the disasters themselves ar jor new markets. The military-industrial complex that Dwight D. Eisen er warned against in 1961 has expanded and morphed into what is bes derstood as a disaster-capitalism complex, in which all conflict disaster-related functions (waging war, securing borders, spying on citizen building cities, treating traumatized soldiers) can be performed by corpora at a profit. And this complex satisfied merely to feed off the the way traditional military cor tors do; it aims, ultimately, to re core functions of government wi own profitable enterprises, as it Baghdad's Green Zone.



It happened in New Orl Within weeks of Hurricane Kat the Gulf Coast became a dom laboratory for the same kind of ernment run by contractors tha pioneered in Iraq. The compa that snatched up the biggest tracts were the familiar Bagh gang: Halliburton's KBR uni ceived a $60 million contract t construct military bases along coast. Blackwater was hired to pr FEMA operations, with the cor ny billing an average of $950 a per guard. Parsons, infamous fo sloppy work in Iraq, was brough for a major bridge-construction p ect in Mississippi. Fluor, Shaw, Bechtel, CH2M Hill—all top contracto Iraq—were handed contracts on the Gulf Coast to provide mobile hom evacuees just ten days after the levees broke. Their contracts ended up t ing $3.4 billion, no open bidding required. To spearhead its Katrina operat Shaw hired the former head of the U.S. Army's Iraq reconstruction office. or sent its senior project manager from Iraq to the flood zone. "Our rebu ing work in Iraq is slowing down, and this has made some people availabl respond to our work in Louisiana," a company representative explained. Allbaugh, whose company, New Bridge Strategies, had promised to b Wal-Mart and 7-Eleven to Iraq, was the lobbyist in the middle of many of deals. The feeling that the Iraq war had somehow just been franchised wa striking that some of the mercenary soldiers, fresh from Baghdad, were h ing trouble adjusting. When David Enders, a reporter, asked an armed g outside a New Orleans hotel if there had been much action, he replied, "N It's pretty Green Zone here."

Since then, privatized disaster response has become one of the hottest dustries in the South. Just one year after Hurricane Katrina, a slew of new porations had entered the market, promising safety and security should

Source photograph by FEMA News P

Big One hit. One of the more ambitious ventures was launched by a char- service in West Palm Beach, Florida. Help Jet bills itself as "the world's urricane escape plan that turns a hurricane evacuation into a jet-setter ion." When a storm is coming, the charter company books holidays for embers at five-star golf resorts, spas, or Disneyland. With the reservations , the evacuees are then whisked out of the hurricane zone on a luxury No standing in lines, no hassle with crowds, just a first class experience urns a problem into a vacation. . . . Enjoy the feeling of avoiding the usu- ricane evacuation nightmare." For the people left behind, there is a dif- t kind of privatized solution. In 2006, the Red Cross signed a new er-response partnership with Wal-Mart. "It's all going to be private en- se before it's over," said Billy Wagner, chief of emergency management e Florida Keys. "They've got the expertise. They've got the resources." as speaking at the National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Florida, -growing annual trade show for the companies selling everything that t come in handy during the next disaster. Dave Blandford, an exhibitor ing off his "self-heating meals" at the conference, observed: "Some folks said, 'Man, this is huge business—this is my new business. I'm not in the caping business anymore; I'm going to be a hurricane-debris contractor.'" uch of the parallel disaster economy has been built with taxpayers' mon- hanks to the boom in privatized war-zone reconstruction. The giant actors that have served as "the primes" in Iraq and Afghanistan have spent portions of their income from government contracts on their own cor- e overhead—between 20 and 55 percent, according to a 2006 audit of contractors. Much of those funds has, quite legally, gone into huge in- nents in corporate equipment, such as Bechtel's battalions of earth ers, Halliburton's fleets of planes and trucks, and the surveillance archi- re built by L-3, CACI, and Booz Allen. Most dramatic has been Black- r's investment in its paramilitary infrastructure. Founded in 1996, the com- has used its steady stream of contracts to build up a private army of 20,000 all mercenary soldiers and a military base in North Carolina worth be- n $40 million and $50 million. It reportedly has the ability to field mas- humanitarian operations faster than the Red Cross, and boasts a fleet of aft ranging from helicopter gunships to a Boeing 767.[2]

lackwater has been called "al Qaeda for the good guys" by its right-wing irers. It's a striking analogy. Wherever the disaster-capitalism complex landed, it has produced a proliferation of armed groups that operate de the state. That is hardly a surprise: when countries are rebuilt by people don't believe in governments, the states they build are invariably weak, creating a market for alternative security forces, whether Hezbollah, Blackwater, the Mahdi Army, or the gang down the street in New Orleans.

The reach of the disaster industry extends far beyond policing. When contractor infrastructure built up during the Bush years is looked at as hole, what we see is a fully articulated state-within-a-state that is as cular and capable as the actual state is frail and feeble. This corporate low-state has been built almost exclusively with public resources, including training of its staff: 90 percent of Blackwater's revenues come from state tracts, and the majority of its employees are former politicians, soldiers, civil servants. Yet the vast infrastructure is all privately owned and trolled. The citizens who funded it have absolutely no claim to this llel economy or its resources.

ne of the most alarming aspects of this industry is how unabashedly partisan it is. kwater, for instance, is closely aligned with the anti-abortion movement and other -wing causes. It donates almost exclusively to the Republican Party, rather than ing its bets like most big corporations. Halliburton sends 93 percent of its campaign ributions to Republicans; Fluor, 78 percent. Is it far-fetched to imagine a day when ical parties will hire these companies to spy on their rivals during an election cam- n—or to engage in covert operations too shady even for the CIA?

THE VAST INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE DISASTER INDUSTRY, BUILT UP WITH TAXPAYERS' MONEY, IS ALL PRIVATELY CONTROLLED

THE COMPANIES AT THE HEART OF THE DISASTER COMPLEX INCREASINGLY SEE THE STATE AND NONPROFITS AS COMPETITORS

The actual state, meanwhile, has lost the ability to perform its core f tions without the help of contractors. Its own equipment is out of date, the best experts have fled to the private sector. When Katrina hit, FEMA to hire a contractor to award contracts to contractors. Similarly, wh came time to update the Army manual on the rules for dealing with contrac the Army outsourced the job to one of its major contractors, MPRI, bec it no longer had the in-house expertise. The CIA has lost so many staffe the privatized spy sector that it has had to bar contractors from recruiti the agency dining room. "One recently retired case officer said he had approached twice while in line for coffee," reported the *Los Angeles Ti* And when the Department of Homeland Security decided it needed to "virtual fences" on the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada, Michael P. son, deputy secretary of the department, told contractors, "This is an u al invitation. . . . We're asking you to come back and tell us how to do our ness." The department's inspector general explained that Homeland Sec "does not have the capacity needed to effectively plan, oversee, and exe the [Secure Border Initiative] program."

Under George W. Bush, the state still has all the trappings of a gov ment—the impressive buildings, presidential press briefings, p battles—but it no more does the actual work of gov ing than the employees at Nike's Beaverton, Ore campus stitch running shoes.

The implications of the decision by the current crop of politicia systematically outsource their elected responsibilities will reach far beyo single administration. Once a market has been created, it needs to be prote The companies at the heart of the disaster-capitalism complex increas regard both the state and nonprofits as competitors; from the corporate spective, whenever governments or charities fulfill their traditional r they are denying contractors work that could be performed at a profit.

"Neglected Defense: Mobilizing the Private Sector to Support H land Security," a 2006 report whose advisory committee included son the largest corporations in the sector, warned that "the compassio federal impulse to provide emergency assistance to the victims of disa affects the market's approach to managing its exposure to risk." Publi by the Council on Foreign Relations, the report argued that if pe know the government will come to the rescue, they have no incenti pay for protection. In a similar vein, a year after Katrina, CEOs from ty of the largest corporations in the United States joined together u the umbrella of the Business Roundtable, which includes in its men ship Fluor, Bechtel, and Chevron. The group, calling itself Partnershi Disaster Response, complained of "mission creep" by the nonprofit s in the aftermath of disasters. The mercenary firms, meanwhile, have loudly claiming that they are better equipped than the U.N. to enga peacekeeping in Darfur.

Much of this new aggressiveness flows from suspicion that the golde of bottomless federal contracts might not last much longer. The U.S. ernment is barreling toward an economic crisis, thanks in no small pa the deficit spending that has bankrolled the privatized disaster econ Sooner rather than later, the contracts are likely to dip significantly. In 2006 defense analysts began predicting that the Pentagon's acquisi budget could shrink by as much as 25 percent in the coming decade.

When the disaster bubble bursts, firms such as Bechtel, Fluor, and Bl water will lose much of their primary revenue streams. They will still all the high-tech equipment bought at taxpayer expense, but they will to find a new business model, a new way to cover their high costs. The phase of the disaster-capitalism complex is all too clear: with emerge on the rise, government no longer able to foot the bill, and citizens str ed by their hollow state, the parallel corporate state will rent back its d ter infrastructure to whoever can afford it, at whatever price the m

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IMAGES OF PEOPLE STRANDED ON ROOFTOPS IN NEW ORLEANS FORESHADOW A COLLECTIVE FUTURE OF DISASTER APARTHEID

will bear. Inside will be everything from helicopter rides off rooftops to ing water to beds in shelters.

Wealth already provides an escape hatch from most disasters. early-warning systems for tsunami-prone regions and stockpiles of Tam the next outbreak. It buys bottled water, generators, satellite phones, and a-cops. During the Israeli attack on Lebanon in 2006, the U.S. gover initially tried to charge American citizens for the cost of their own ev tion, though it was eventually forced to back down. If we continue in th rection, the images of people stranded on New Orleans rooftops wi only have been a glimpse of America's unresolved past of racial inequali will also have foreshadowed a collective future of disaster apartheid, in survival is determined primarily by one's ability to pay.

Perhaps part of the reason so many of our elites, both political and c rate, are so sanguine about climate change is that they are confident the be able to buy their way out of the worst of it. This may also partially ex why so many Bush supporters are Christian end-timers. It's not just that need to believe there is an escape hatch from the world they are creatin that the Rapture is a parable for what they are building down on Earth—a system that invites destruction and disaster, swoops in with private helicopters and airlifts them and friends to divine safety.

As contractors rush to develop alternative stable sources of enue, one avenue of business is in disaster-proofing other corporations. was Paul Bremer's line of work before he became Bush's proconsul in Iraq: ing multinationals into security bubbles able to function smoothly even states in which they are doing business crumble around them. The earl sults can be seen in the lobbies of many office buildings in New York or don—airport-style check-ins complete with photo-ID requirements an ray machines—but the industry has far greater ambitions, including priva global communications networks, emergency health and electricity serv and the ability to locate and provide transportation for a global workfor the midst of a major disaster. Another potential growth area identified b disaster-capitalism complex is municipal government: the contracting o police and fire departments to private security companies. "What they d the military in downtown Fallujah, they can do for the police in downt Reno," a spokesperson for Lockheed Martin said in November 2004.

The contracting industry predicts that these new markets will expand matically over the next decade. A frank vision of where these trends leading is provided by John Robb, a former covert-action mission comm der with Delta Force turned management consultant. In a widely circul manifesto for *Fast Company* magazine, he describes the "end result" of the on terror as "a new, more resilient approach to national security, one built around the state but around private citizens and companies. . . . Security become a function of where you live and whom you work for, much as he care is allocated already."

Robb writes, "Wealthy individuals and multinational corporations wil the first to bail out of our collective system, opting instead to hire private itary companies, such as Blackwater and Triple Canopy, to protect th homes and facilities and establish a protective perimeter around daily life. allel transportation networks—evolving out of the time-share aircraft c panies such as Warren Buffett's NetJets—will cater to this group, leapfr ging its members from one secure, well-appointed lily pad to the next." T elite world is already largely in place, but Robb predicts that the middle c will soon follow suit, "forming suburban collectives to share the costs of curity." These "'armored suburbs' will deploy and maintain backup gen tors and communications links" and be patrolled by private militias "that h received corporate training and boast their own state-of-the-art emerge response systems."

In other words, a world of suburban Green Zones. As for those outside

d perimeter, "they will have to make do with the remains of the national
. They will gravitate to America's cities, where they will be subject to
tous surveillance and marginal or nonexistent services. For the poor,
will be no other refuge." The future Robb describes sounds very much
ne present in New Orleans, where two very different kinds of gated
unities emerged from the rubble. On the one hand were the so-called
-villes: desolate, out-of-the-way trailer camps for low-income evacuees,
y Bechtel or Fluor subcontractors and administered by private securi-
panies that patrolled the gravel lots, restricted visitors, kept journal-
t, and treated survivors like criminals. On the other hand were the gat-
nmunities built in the wealthy areas of the city like Audubon and the
n District, bubbles of functionality that seemed to have seceded from
te altogether. Within weeks of the storm, residents there had water and
ful emergency generators. Their sick were treated in private hospitals,
eir children went to private or charter schools. And they had no need
blic transit. In St. Bernard Parish, a New Orleans suburb, DynCorp had
over much of the policing; other neighborhoods hired security companies
ly. Between the two kinds of privatized city-states was the New Orleans
version of the Red Zone, where the murder rate soared and
neighborhoods like the storied Lower Ninth Ward descend-
ed into a postapocalyptic no-man's-land.

OUTSIDE THE WEALTHY SUBURBS, THE NEW ORLEANS VERSION OF THE RED ZONE RESEMBLED A POST-APOCALYPTIC NO-MAN'S-LAND

Another glimpse of a disaster-apartheid future can be found in a
hy Republican suburb outside Atlanta. Its residents decided that they
ired of watching their property taxes subsidize
ls and police in the county's low-income
n-American neighborhoods. They voted to in-
rate as their own city, Sandy Springs, which
spend most of its taxes on services for its
00 citizens and minimize the revenue that
be redistributed throughout Fulton County.
nly difficulty was that Sandy Springs had no
nment structures and needed to build them
scratch—everything from tax collection to
g to parks and recreation. In September 2005,
me month that New Orleans flooded, the res-
s of Sandy Springs were approached by the
ruction and consulting giant CH2M Hill with
que pitch: Let us do it for you. For the starting
of $27 million a year, the contractor pledged
ild a complete city from the ground up.
few months later, Sandy Springs became the
'contract city." Only four people worked di-
y for the new municipality—everyone else was
ntractor. Rick Hirsekorn, heading up the proj-
r CH2M Hill, described Sandy Springs as "a
sheet of paper with no governmental process-
place." The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* re-
d that "when Sandy Springs hired corporate
ers to run the new city, it was considered
ld experiment." Within a year, however,
ract-city mania was tearing through Atlanta's
thy suburbs, and it had become "standard pro-
re in north Fulton [County]." Neighboring communities took their cue
Sandy Springs and also voted to become stand-alone cities and contract
heir government. One new city, Milton, immediately hired CH2M Hill
he job—after all, it had the experience. Soon, a campaign began for the
corporate cities to join together to form their own county. The plan has
untered fierce opposition outside the proposed enclave, where politicians
hat without those tax dollars, they will no longer be able to afford their



IT WAS FORMERLY BELIEVED THAT GENERALIZED MAYHEM WAS A DRAIN ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. THAT TRUISM IS NO LONGER TRUE

large public hospital and public transit system; that partitioning the ci
would create a failed state on the one hand and a hyperserviced one o
other. What they were describing sounded a lot like New Orleans and
tle like Baghdad.

In these wealthy Atlanta suburbs, the long crusade to strip-min
state is nearing completion, and it is particularly fitting that the new gr
was broken by CH2M Hill. The corporation was a multimillion-dollar
tractor in Iraq, paid to perform the core government function of ove
ing other contractors. In Sri Lanka after the tsunami, it not only had
ports and bridges but was, according to the U.S. State Department,
sponsible for the overall management of the infrastructure program." In
Katrina New Orleans, CH2M Hill was awarded $500 million to
FEMA-villes and was put on standby for the next disaster. A master o
vatizing the core functions of the state during extraordinary circumsta
the company was now doing the same under ordinary
If disasters had served as laboratories of extreme privatiza
the testing phase was clearly over.

For decades, the conventional wisdom was that generalized mayhem
a drain on the global economy. Individual shocks and crises could be
nessed as leverage to force open new markets, of course, but after the in
shock had done its work, relative peace and stability were required for
tained economic growth. That was the accepted explanation for why
Nineties had been such prosperous years: with the Cold War over, econo
were liberated to concentrate on trade and investment, and as countrie
came more enmeshed and interdependent, they were far less likely to b
one another.

At the 2007 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, however
litical and corporate leaders were scratching their heads over a state o
fairs that seemed to flout this conventional wisdom. It was being called
"Davos Dilemma," which *Financial Times* columnist Martin Wolf descr
as "the contrast between the world's favourable economics and troubles
politics." As Wolf put it, the economy had faced "a series of shocks: the s
market crash after 2000; the terrorist outrages of September 11, 2001;
in Afghanistan and Iraq; friction over US policies; a jump in real oil pr
to levels not seen since the 1970s; the cessation of negotiations in
Doha round [of WTO talks]; and the confrontation over Iran's nuclear
bitions"—and yet it found itself in "a golden period of broadly shared grow
Put bluntly, the world was going to hell, there was no stability in sight,
the global economy was roaring its approval.

This puzzling trend has also been observed through an economic ind
tor called "the guns-to-caviar index." The index tracks the sales of fighter
(guns) and executive jets (caviar). For seventeen years, it generally found
when fighter jets were selling briskly, sales of luxury executive jets w
down, and vice versa: when executive-jet sales were on the rise, fighter-jet s
dipped. Of course, a handful of war profiteers always managed to get rich f
selling guns, but they were economically insignificant. It was a truism of
contemporary market that you couldn't have booming economic growth
the midst of violence and instability.

Except that the truism is no longer true. Since 2003, the year of the
invasion, the index has found that spending has been going up on both fi
er jets and executive jets rapidly and simultaneously, which means that
world is becoming less peaceful while accumulating significantly more p
it. The galloping economic growth in China and India has played a par
the increased demand for luxury items, but so has the expansion of the
row military-industrial complex into the sprawling disaster-capitalism c
plex. Today, global instability does not just benefit a small group of a
dealers; it generates huge profits for the high-tech-homeland-security sec
for heavy construction, for private health-care companies, for the oil and
sectors—and, of course, for defense contractors.

scale of the revenues at stake is certainly enough to fuel an eco- boom. Lockheed Martin, whose former vice president chaired the Com- for the Liberation of Iraq, which loudly agitated for the invasion, re- $25 billion in U.S. government contracts in 2005 alone. Democratic essman Henry Waxman noted that the sum "exceeded the gross do- product of 103 countries, including Iceland, Jordan, and Costa Rica] was also larger than the combined budgets of the Department of Com- , the Department of the Interior, the Small Business Administration, e entire legislative branch of government." Lockheed itself deserved haracterized as an emerging market. Companies like Lockheed (whose rice tripled between 2000 and 2005) are a large part of the reason why .S. stock market was saved from a prolonged crash following Septem- . While conventional stocks have underperformed, the Spade De- Index, "a benchmark for defense, homeland security and aerospace ," went up 76 percent between 2001 and 2006—while Standard & Poor's verage dropped 5 percent in that same period.

e Davos Dilemma is being fueled further by the intensely profitable mod- rivatized reconstruction that was forged in Iraq. Share prices of heavy- uction companies, which include the big engineering firms that land no-bid contracts after wars and natural disasters, went up 300 percent en 2001 and July 2007. Reconstruction is now such big business that ors greet each new disaster with the excitement of hot initial public offerings: $30 billion for Iraq reconstruction, $13 billion for tsunami struction, $110 billion for New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, $7.6 bil- or Lebanon.

rorist attacks, which used to send the stock market spiraling downward, eceive a similarly upbeat market reception. After September 11, 2001, ow Jones plummeted 685 points as soon as markets reopened. In sharp ast, on July 7, 2005, the day four bombs ripped through London's pub- ansportation system, killing dozens and injuring hundreds, the U.S. market closed higher than it had the day before, with the Nasdaq up nts. A year later, on the day British law-enforcement agencies arrested y-four suspects who had allegedly planned to blow up jetliners headed e United States, the Nasdaq closed 11.5 points higher, largely thanks to ng homeland-security stocks.

en there are the outrageous fortunes of the oil sector—a $40 billion in 2006 for ExxonMobil alone, the largest profit ever recorded, and its agues at rival companies like Chevron were not far behind. Like the for- of corporations linked to defense, heavy construction, and homeland se- , those of the oil sector improve with every war, terrorist attack, and Cat- 5 hurricane. In addition to reaping the short-term benefits of high prices d to uncertainty in key oil-producing regions, the oil industry has con- ntly managed to turn disasters to its long-term advantage, whether by en- g that a large portion of the reconstruction funds in Afghanistan went in- e expensive road infrastructure for a new pipeline (while most other r reconstruction projects stalled), or by pushing for a new investor-friend- law in Iraq while the country burned, or by piggybacking on Hurricane na to plan the first new refineries in the United States since the Seven- The oil and gas industry is so intimately entwined with the economy of disaster—both as a root cause behind many disasters and as a beneficiary from them—that it deserves to be treated as an honorary adjunct of the disaster-capitalism complex.

The recent spate of disasters has translated into such spectacular prof- hat many people around the world have come to the same conclusion: the and powerful must be deliberately causing the catastrophes so that they exploit them. In July 2006, a national poll of U.S. residents found that e than a third of respondents believed that the government had a hand he 9/11 attacks or took no action to stop them "because they wanted the ted States to go to war in the Middle East." Similar suspicions dog most

TERRORIST ATTACKS, WHICH USED TO SEND THE STOCK MARKET SPIRALING DOWNWARD, NOW ENJOY UPBEAT RECEPTIONS

THE CREEPING EXPANSION OF THE DISASTER INDUSTRY INTO THE MEDIA MAY PROVE TO BE A NEW KIND OF CORPORATE SYNERGY

of the catastrophes of recent years. In Louisiana in the aftermath of K
the shelters were alive with rumors that the levees hadn't broken but ha
covertly blown up in order to keep the rich areas dry while cleansing t
of poor people. In Sri Lanka, I often heard that the tsunami had been
by underwater explosions detonated by the United States so that it coul
troops into Southeast Asia and take full control over the region's econ

The truth is at once less sinister and more dangerous. An econom
tem that requires constant growth while bucking almost all serious att
at environmental regulation generates a steady stream of disasters all
own, whether military, ecological, or financial. The appetite for easy,
term profits offered by purely speculative investment has turned the
currency, and real estate markets into crisis-creation machines, as the
financial crisis, the Mexican peso crisis, the dot-com collapse, an
subprime-mortgage crisis demonstrate. Our common addiction to dirty
renewable energy sources keeps other kinds of emergencies coming: r
al disasters (up 560 percent since 1975) and wars waged for control over
resources (not just Iraq and Afghanistan but lower-intensity conflicts
as those in Colombia, Nigeria, and Sudan), which in turn spawn terrorist
back (a 2007 study calculated that the number of terrorist attacks has incr
sevenfold since the start of the Iraq war).

Given the boiling temperatures, both climatic and political, future
ters need not be cooked up in dark conspiracies. All indications are t
we simply stay the current course, they will keep coming with ever mo
rocious intensity. Disaster generation can therefore be left to the ma
invisible hand. This is one area in which it actually delivers.

The disaster-capitalism complex does not deliberately scheme to c
the cataclysms on which it feeds (though Iraq may be a notable except
but there is plenty of evidence that its component industries work very
indeed to make sure that current disastrous trends continue unchallenged.
oil companies have bankrolled the climate-change-denial movement for
ExxonMobil alone has spent an estimated $19 million on the crusade ove
past decade. Although the phenomenon is well known, the interplay bet
disaster contractors and elite opinion makers is far less understood. Sever
fluential Washington think tanks—including the National Institute for
lic Policy and the Center for Security Policy—are heavily funded by wea
and homeland-security contractors, which profit directly from these i
tutes' ceaseless portrayal of the world as a dark and menacing place, its t
bles responsive only to force. The homeland-security sector is also becor
increasingly integrated with media corporations, a development that has
wellian implications. In 2004 the digital-communications giant LexisNexis
$775 million for Seisint, a data-mining company that works closely on
veillance with federal and state agencies. That same year, General Elec
which owns NBC, purchased InVision, the major producer of controversial h
tech bomb-detection devices used in airports and other public spa
InVision received a staggering $15 billion in homeland-security contracts
tween 2001 and 2006, more of such contracts than any other company.

The creeping expansion of the disaster-capitalism complex into the m
may prove to be a new kind of corporate synergy, one building on the ve
cal integration that became so popular in the Nineties. It certainly makes so
business sense. The more panicked our societies become, convinced t
there are terrorists lurking in every mosque, the higher the news ratings s
the more biometric IDs and liquid-explosive-detection devices the comp
sells, and the more high-tech fences it builds. If the dream of the open, b
derless "small planet" was the ticket to profits during the Clinton years,
nightmare of the menacing, fortressed Western continents, under siege fr
jihadists and illegal immigrants, plays the same role in the new millenni

There is only one cloud that looms over the thriving disaster economy
from weapons to oil to engineering to surveillance to patented drugs. It is
threatening if unlikely scenario that this latest boom could somehow be
terrupted by an outbreak of climatic stability and geopolitical peace.

THE RIVER IS A ROAD

Searching for peace in Congo

By Bryan Mealer

Just after dawn in early October I stood on the banks of Kinshasa's commercial port and stared into a wall of rippling heat that danced on the water. Enormous cranes loomed like giant headless chickens near the water's edge, and beyond them sat the triple-decker tugboat that would take me up the Congo River.

The captain of the *Ma'ungano* was a stout Frenchman named Albert-Henri Buisine, an old soldier who'd been raised in Congo and had spent two decades in the service of Mobutu Sese Seko, the dictator whom he once considered his closest friend, a genius he thought the world was cruel to dismiss. The captain's office was decorated with maps of the region's many rivers, all eight thousand miles of which snaked and splintered across weathered charts on the walls. Sitting behind his desk, the captain explained how the war had closed the rivers and tributaries, isolating millions of Congolese. Soldiers had killed and raped in the villages, so the people had escaped to the capital, leaving behind a way of life they'd nurtured since the proud days of the African kingdoms. Many had walked hundreds of miles through the jungle, leaving their dead along the trail. "And you should see them all now," the captain said. "Starving in the slums while still dreaming of the forest."

The 1996–2003 conflicts had sucked in six African armies, and more than 4 million people had died, most of them from starvation and sickness as villagers fled through jungles to escape the gunfire and pillage. The fighting still flared in spurts along the eastern borders near Rwanda

Bryan Mealer's book about Congo, All Things Must Fight to Live, *will be published in May by Bloomsbury USA. Illustrations by Danijel Zezelj.*



and Uganda, but most of Congo was now at peace. In July the country had even held presidential elections, the first since independence from Belgium in 1960.

The end of conflict was good news for the river and the forest, the captain said, because things were finally beginning to heal. Peace and elections had given people a sense of confidence, and for the first time in a century a dream of prosperity was taking hold among the Congolese. Boat captains were braving the river, people were returning home, and money was changing hands. As for the captain, he'd be pushing 2,600 tons of freight on two barges all the way to Kisangani, which is where I wanted to go.

For three years I had covered the bloody aftershocks of the conflict, as a freelancer and as the

The Congo River hooks like a scythe over the equator before emptying into the Atlantic at a rate of one million cubic feet of water per second

Kinshasa correspondent for the Associated Press. I came to Congo looking for war and I found it, spending every waking minute engrossed in its senseless death. In the end, all the blood had gotten to me, and I left Congo and the AP. But now, with peace taking hold, I was beginning to feel some hope for this damaged country. If a revival was happening along the river, I wanted to see it.

I had already spent three days combing the ports, sucking in the dust and exhaust and having no luck finding a ride, discovering I'd just missed one boat going upriver or that another wasn't leaving for weeks. Now, sitting across from Buisine, I was so relieved that I started to gush, explaining how anxious I was to finally pierce the interior and be with the people, see how they really lived. "Live instead of die!" I said, regrettably.

"*Bon*," the captain said, smiling, and walked around the desk. "But tell me somet
Will you prefer local or European cui
It's important I give the chef
of notice."

The Congo River, like the rain forest it
etrates, is the second largest in the world;
the Amazon carries a greater volume of wa
stretches 3,000 miles from the country's s
ern highlands and hooks like a scythe ove
equator before emptying into the Atlantic
rate of more than one million cubic feet o
ter per second. The sheer force of that u
has created grooves in the ocean floor alm
mile deep.

The 1,077-mile trip upriver from Kinsha
Kisangani is one of the world's great journe
was along this legendary stretch of water
Arab slave ships once sailed with human c
bound for the Middle East; here that Henry M
ton Stanley battled cannibal tribes and st
the first flags for colonial Belgium, which ruled
country for almost eight decades, killing and
turing tens of millions of Congolese for the iv
and rubber in their forests. And it was on this j
ney in 1890 that a colonial station agent na
Joseph Conrad witnessed so much death tha
was inspired to write *Heart of Darkness*, a
scription the country has yet to live down.

I was traveling with Riccardo Gangale, a p
tographer based in Kigali, Rwanda, one of a fr
wheeling fraternity of Italian photographers w
usually made their way through bloody Cent
Africa on motorcycles. I'd also hired a fixer in K
shasa to help with translations. Severin Mpia
was an electrical engineer with a university
gree, but since unemployment was nearly a
solute, he was now working with foreign jo
nalists. Severin came from a solidly middle-cl
family, a rarity in Congo. His father was a bank
who'd put five children through college. Sever
had never traveled the interior of his own cou
try, so the trip was as much an adventure for hi
as it was for me.

Our plan was to ride with Buisine as far
Mbandaka, about five days upriver, then jump



ıblic barges that cruised the waters carry-
ındreds of traders on their decks. We had
that the barges were crowded and filthy,
ɔme boats were marooned on sandbars for
and others sank from overcrowding or col-
s in the night. Sanitary conditions were
vith most barges having only one toilet for
eds of people. It was a demoralizing and of-
eadly way to trade and travel, but the re-
Congolese sucked it up and endured. And
uld we.

th the *Ma'ungano* leaving the next day, we
work preparing for our journey. We spent
eltering afternoon in Kinshasa's central
et, purchasing the necessary gear: a
le orange tarp for slapdash shelters; nylon
foam mattresses; pots and pans; plastic
and buckets; pills for pain, malaria, and
ıs; and dozens of cans of sardines, beans,
orned beef hash. For days, Riccardo and I
dedicated ourselves to a rigorous Get Fat
gorging on steaks, doughnuts, and lots of
beer, trying to gain weight we'd inevitably
hrough sweat and diarrhea. I also brought
the *Traveler's Guide to the Belgian Congo,*
d tour book published in Brussels in 1951,
when the colony was the dazzling gem in
est Africa. For seventy-five years, the
ıial masters had ruled the Congolese with
arism and oppression. But they'd also
sleek European cities connected by gor-
s highways, luxury trains, and river steam-
How quickly all of that had vanished in
years since independence. The forest
attacked the empire as if it were a gaping
nd, leaving only ugly scars.

ne *Ma'ungano* was one of the last vestiges of
olonial era, and it was only fitting to begin
ourney along its decks. My experience in
go had always been looking down, from Unit-
lations choppers and armored personnel car-
and balcony apartments shielded by guards
razor wire, from the Land Rovers we used to
pe the misery and smell of disease when it all
me too much. I knew there'd come a time on
journey when turning back wasn't an op-
tion, and it was only then that I'd find what I wanted to know.

That evening we stayed aboard the *Ma'ungano* drinking cans of Castle beer on the decks, content with our good fortune. Not only did we have a personal chef; we also had a private cabin equipped with soft beds, a hot shower, and an air conditioner more efficient than most I'd owned in the States. I went to bed wired with anticipation and awoke to the rumble of engines in the pink 5:00 A.M. haze. Running outside, I saw the river bubbling under the rudders; it was the color of clean motor oil. Seconds later we were moving, but so slowly that landmarks stayed in view for hours. By late afternoon, we could still see Kinshasa. I passed the next several days in regimental fashion, waking up before light to climb atop the wheelhouse and watch the sunrise, kicking away the thousands of silver-winged moths that had perished in the searchlights the night before. A large breakfast of omelets, bread, and avocado was served on the terrace, and afterward I would jump down to the barges and hang with the crewmen.

One morning Severin and I walked to the tip of the first barge to take in the view. The two barges stretched the length of a football field and were fully loaded, the rounded humps of freight covered in brightly colored tarps. We tiptoed delicately over the ropes and tie-downs that crisscrossed our path, and squeezed around two Chinese passenger vans bound for a customs station deep in the trees. Once we reached the end of the barge, the ever-present sound of the engines faded, leaving only the bright splash of water against the slow-moving steel. In front of us the river stretched five miles across. Patches of puffy green hyacinth floated past, along with colossal islands of grassy earth ripped from the shore by the fierce current. The best seat in the house, I thought, and I wasn't the only one. One of the crewmen already occupied a chair at the edge of the barge. He was fast asleep, with one hand tucked lazily down his pants.

His name was Kalu, and for the past two years he'd worked as a loader and deckhand, traveling the river with Buisine about five times a year.



His true field of expertise was botany, which he'd studied as a forestry student in Kisangani. It was also at university that he'd sung lead vocals in a band that played the dark and sweaty nightclubs of the city.

"My friend and I played all the time. We loved to sing," Kalu said. "I wrote songs about every thing: love, disappointment, the slave trade."

Singing was Kalu's passion, but the pressures of a career and a family forced him to abandon the dream. He felt the muse slipping away, so he often spent time on the bow of the boat, waiting for inspiration to strike.

"Maybe the view will make me want to write a song," he said, sighing. And after two minutes of absolute silence, he sat up with a jolt of revelation and calmly proclaimed, "The Congo River is a road. And I am only a witness on this road."

One of his old bandmates, Papi, was also working for Buisine aboard the *Ma'ungano*. Although they saw each other every day on the river, they never reminisced about old times, and Kalu told me he hadn't even sung a note in two years. But this was just a rough patch, a thirty-two-year-old man going through one of life's transitions.

"My music is still in my blood," he said, pausing to gather his thoughts off the soft river sheen. "Maybe it's not over. I figure all I need to do is record two songs, really big songs, and then my voice will become immortal."

A golden voice could do wonders to balance the weight of life along the river. The dark legends still hung like bad fruit from the trees. Beyond these riverbanks were the red-rubber graveyards where Belgium's King Leopold built his rubber kingdom and helped fuel the Industrial Revolution. For decades, thousands of tons of rubber and ivory were carted out of the jungles on the backs of Congolese slaves; it was a horrific era of murder and insanity that emptied the country of half its population. The places we now passed—Kwamouth, Bolobo, Lukolela—were the hunting grounds of the colonial Force Publique, where villages were once torched for failing to meet quotas, where children were butchered, their tiny hands severed and delivered to headquarters.

When one of the crewmen told me the[y] hauled raw rubber on the barges, I launched a long speech about the atrocities that had en place along these *very banks*—the amp tions, the village raids, the heads on pikes. I I was hoping for some kernel of survivor wis in return, something we could all lean on in t of struggle. But when Severin finished transla the crew stared at me like I'd just asked ho buy a MetroCard.

"No," the guy said, looking at his friends t actions. "We don't know about this stuff. might want to ask the old people."

Walking back, Severin shook his head gasped. "So many people here, they have no of their own history."

Perhaps the span of two cruel wars had b enough history for the crewmen to endure. Bu Buisine, history was everything, and it all c together right here. "To understand C go," he'd say, "you must first un stand the river."

During the afternoons, when the heat dr us indoors, the captain would stand at the wh and mix the bad lessons with the good. His e would focus on the channel and he'd explain things he knew, like how the water silvere dusk and hid the sandbars, or how the bank peared dangerously close in the cool morning He'd point out whirlpools roiling in the d spots, crocodiles camouflaged in the mud, along a wooded island, a tree whose leaves cu hemorrhoids. After the rains, we trained our e upriver and watched ghost ships hover over t water. Low pressure from the storm can play tri on your eyes, the captain explained, and throu a pair of binoculars the boats returned to earth the rust-eaten barges they really were.

At other times Buisine would point to the d tant bank, where a brick building stood shrou ed in vines and decay, a remnant of colon days, and tell the story of the hospital or timb mill the locals had permitted the forest reclaim. He told me how during the grand da of the colony, rivermen pushed more than 2



on tons of product a year up and down the go. Now, he says, they're lucky if they move 2 million. And because there were more bigger boats, the river was dredged then, a well-trained captain was easy to find. e were signs posted along the banks indig sandbars and snags, depth and direction ibutaries; signs telling the rivermen they n't alone on the black water at night. The ain would wax sentimental about these before the collapse, when he was young the country made sense, and during these ries his eyes never left the river.

e'd been there from the beginning and had hed the dominoes fall one by one. He'd grown the eastern town of Bukavu, where his famwned a quarry and cinchona plantation on Kivu. He later served in the French navy and, discharged, returned to Bukavu looking for k money and adventure, organizing gorilla s in nearby Kahuzi-Biega National Park and ing tourists up the smoldering Nyiragongo ano in the Virunga Mountains.

ut the government seized the family's plan-on in the mid-1970s, during Mobutu's onalist land-grab campaign known as rianization." Buisine's uncle walked into his e one morning and found an African sitting is chair, a mid-level government official Kinshasa who'd never picked up a shovel. chona (the natural source of quinine) ires meticulous pruning and cultivation, but new owner rushed the harvest, and the re crop died. "People whose families had ked there a century committed suicide right ," said Buisine. Years later, Buisine was king at Kinshasa's Palace of the People when received a phone call one morning at 5:00 . It was President Mobutu, screaming over line: "Buisine! From now on you work for " Mobutu had been impressed by the nchman's military background and family ory in Congo. Buisine took the job. "Despite rything that had happened," he explained, hen the president calls, you can't say no."

Buisine served as Mobutu's personal superintendent for sixteen years, organizing the dictator's daily schedule, security, and logistics. He was chained to Mobutu's shadow at all times, even living four straight years aboard the lavish presidential yacht, the *Kamanyola*, as it drifted aimlessly down the Congo River. Sometimes, when the Big Man's mood was right, Buisine would mention his family's land. "He'd tell me, 'We'll fix that, we'll fix that. *C'est pas grave*,'" Buisine remembers. "Other times he'd say, 'Look at everything Europe lost during the world wars, and it's doing fine now. Don't make such an issue of this Zairianization.'"

And while Mobutu siphoned off billions in public funds to build palaces, like the one deep in the jungle equipped with a runway for Concorde jets, and to fly in masseuses direct from China, the country rapidly fell apart. Civil servants went unpaid for years, soldiers mutinied and looted the cities clean, inflation soared, water and electricity disappeared, and the average Congolese suffered on $120 a year. Mobutu's era of kleptocracy and neglect finally ended when rebels marched into Kinshasa in early 1997 and installed Laurent Kabila as president. The Big Man fled to Morocco and later died, and Buisine was taken from his home and arrested. He spent nine months in prison, then retreated, upon his release, to the relative quiet of Kinshasa. There, he waited out the war as it ravaged everything Mobutu hadn't already destroyed.

Beyond these riverbanks were the red-rubber graveyards where King Leopold built his rubber kingdom and helped fuel the Industrial Revolution

Buisine now led the simple life of a river rat, making his run six or seven times a year. Each trip was spent in the company of his commander, Abraham Bukasa, a tall, slender man with salt-and-pepper hair, whose own military career had



also been destroyed by the Big Man's many whims. In 1978, gendarmes threw the young navy sergeant into an underground prison on suspicion of aiding a failed coup. Many of his friends were executed or died from abuse.

Bound by military experience and their own place in Congo's tragic history, the two friends now spent their days on the river. "The river was created by God," said the commander. "It won't change. Only men change."

When United Nations peacekeepers arrived in 2001 to help maintain a cease-fire, Buisine volunteered to help pilot the first U.N. boats upriver to assess the damage; in recent years, as river traffic slowly increased, he has helped the U.N. draft the first modern navigational maps of the Congo River. Many of the earth's navigable bodies of water have been mapped using satellite images, which can be downloaded into onboard computer systems or sold as discs. The images are reflected in the printed charts used by most captains, to update new construction of levees or bridges, and to account for bank erosion and shifts in sandbars. In Congo, maps like these were just another bit of the modern world that had passed by the jungle.

Smoke from breakfast fires crept through the huts' porous roofs, giving them the appearance of giant animals steaming in the mist

Buisine picked up a thick, spineless book of weather-beaten pages and slapped it down on a nearby stool. It was a set of hand-drawn charts issued by the old Belgian-run river authority, meticulously drafted in black and white, and last updated in 1936. "This is all we have in Congo," he said.

Buisine told me that the U.N. recently provided him with military satellite images of the river that he runs through a global-positioning program. On a large monitor inside the wheelhouse a red icon of a boat chugged up the bend. Buisine updated the digital map with each trip, recording changes in current speeds, shifts in sandbars and average depth in the rainy and dry seasons. Village names and coordinates appeared in pop-up windows, along with tribal affiliations and logistical data in the event of U.N. intervention. The information will someday combine to form a comprehensive database of the river, which Buisine hopes will be available to the public. Each morning I duck into the wheelhouse to check the progress of the tiny red boat, and each morning the jungle had squeezed in a little closer. Outside, the unimposing brick settlements of the old colony disappeared and gave way to moldering huts set high above the river on stilts of bamboo. Smoke from breakfast fires crept through their porous roofs, giving the huts the appearance of giant animals steaming in the mist.

But the solitude of the forest was alleviated by the traders who lived there and flocked to the *Ma'ungano* day and night as she passed. They would strike out from shore in long dugout canoes filled with fish and vegetables, four or five people in each one, stabbing the current with heavy carved paddles the shape of raindrops. We could watch them from a kilometer out, standing upright as they pumped their arms in perfect unison to make the interception. The traders supplied the crew with their meals, and it was also how we supplemented ours. We'd buy huge, ten-pound tilapia and give them to the cook, along with spinach, roasted peanuts, green onions, plantains, papaya, and exotic wild apples. I bought wild honey so fresh that bees still clung to the arm of the old man who poured it. And we bought mangoes to store in the ship's deep freeze, taking them out on hot afternoons and peeling them with pocketknives. It was like eating ice cream.

In my old guidebook, the local "natives" were dressed in rows of beads and colorful loincloths, their bodies covered with sprawling mutilating



os, their lips and ears adorned with brass
s and trinkets. It was as if nothing had
ged since the days of the old monarchies,
the mighty Kongo and Bakuba kingdoms,
their sophisticated systems of law and gov-
nce, held sway in this region, back when
sat on thrones inlaid with ivory. Back
e they were discovered. The photos in the
book were likely posed, snapped by one of
ith-helmeted agents who also appeared in
pages. Even under the colonial thumb, the
golese looked proud and dignified. But find-
hat spirit now was like looking for warrior
es on the Great Plains of North America.
people standing along the riverbank were
tute. No ornamentation here, just rotten
ndhand rags that barely hid their nakedness.
ted children would rush out of thatched
and wave when they saw white faces. Their
hers often stood behind them, rubbing their
achs and begging for money. The farther we
, the worse off they appeared. And every
I saw them I felt a little more lost. The
t of no return was near, and I began to won-
when the little red boat on the captain's
en would disappear altogether.

uisine joined me on the deck one afternoon
watched the villagers along the banks. The
really leveled these people, I offered. He
gged. "They had nothing even before the
" he said. "They have no education, and their
is nothing but fish and alcohol from the cra-
o the grave. Nothing has changed for hun-
ls of years. I mean, they still make fires by
bing sticks together."

sometimes teased Severin about moving out
he "country" and settling down, living the
ple life with the river people, but the joke
uld fall flat. "To think we had one of the
atest civilizations in Africa," he said once,
king his head. "But now . . ." Severin had
wn up around some of the world's nastiest
erty just outside his door in Kinshasa, and I
nk he was hoping, like me, to find something
ter in the vast, green interior. "Now these
ple can't even read, only count," he'd say,
echoing Buisine. "No school, no prospects
for the future. What will become of
their children?"

One afternoon, Buisine explained an elaborate plan he'd been pondering for years, a plan to turn the Congo River into a national park for tourists. I laughed at first, since anything related to tourism in Congo struck me as an impossible dream. But he was serious. "I used to speak with Mobutu about this for hours," he said. "Mobutu was very passionate about the land and environment." The plan was to transform the river into a massive nature preserve that stretched from Kisangani to the Atlantic. The vast chain of hundreds of river islands would be stocked with wild game, which would be imported from South Africa, where private game parks were becoming wildly overpopulated. Instead of killing the animals, Buisine said, the businessmen who owned the reserves were eager to partner with people in Congo, where many of the animals have been decimated by war. "All the islands on this river represent the ecosystems of Central Africa," said Buisine. "You have primary and secondary forests, swamps, savannah—everything."

There would be antelope and zebras, leopards and lions, elephants and hyenas. All the villagers living along the river would be appointed game wardens and rangers in order to maintain the park and guard the animals from poachers. Tourists would spend days cruising the park by riverboat, stopping at rustic lodges along the way to camp, barbecue, and sip cocktails. Villagers would visit the boats during the day for "cultural lessons," teaching tourists how to fish, weave casting nets, or carve the masks this section of Congo was famous for.

"It would be the greatest, most unique national park in all the world," Buisine mused. "And every person who lives on this river would be part of its glory." He explained how he'd been pitching the plan for the past decade, first to Mobutu, then to various environmental groups. Everyone agreed it was a good idea, but nothing was ever done. The South African business partners were



already lined up. The plan would cost billions to implement, but it was necessary if the river were to maintain its virgin ecosystem before democracy and peace brought development and ruin. "The Congo River is the great lungs of the world," he said. "We must preserve and maintain this living thing. It's the only good thing we have left."

Upriver in Ngombe, the *Ma'ungano* was intercepted by two motorboats carrying men with guns. Several muscled men with AK-47s and aviator sunglasses jumped aboard and ran toward the captain's room. I was sitting on the terrace when they charged past. At first I thought we were being hijacked by pirates or robbed by the army, but they turned out to be soldiers loyal to Jean-Pierre Bemba, a popular rebel leader who had once controlled this region during the war. Bemba's troops had officially joined the army in order to share in the new government, and Bemba himself had become vice president. In the recent elections, Bemba had run for president and narrowly lost in the first round to Joseph Kabila, who came to power in 2001 after his father, Laurent Kabila, was assassinated. Just weeks after the vote, Bemba's men battled the presidential guard in the streets of Kinshasa and trapped me in the Grand Hotel. The two men would face off again in a runoff election on October 29, which Riccardo and I planned to cover somewhere upriver.

The soldiers told Buisine they had a prisoner they were transporting to Mbandaka. They needed a ride, a free ride. Buisine cringed and agreed, and one of the soldiers signaled for the prisoner to come aboard. He was barefoot and dressed in fatigues, his arms flexi-cuffed behind his back. His face was swollen and red from a heavy beating. The soldiers pushed him into a metal shed on the barge and sat guard out front, eating bananas and tossing the peels into the river. With guns now aboard the *Ma'ungano*, the mood quickly darkened throughout the boat, and everyone became tense and agitated. No matter how far you ran, I thought, the war would always find you.

There was a major dressed in a crisp uniform aboard the prisoner's barge, and after instru his men, he walked into the captain's room, v Buisine sat at the wheel. Buisine smiled and ed him warmly. The major had once be Mobutu bodyguard during the heyday of champagne and Concorde flights. When rent Kabila's rebels stormed the interior o country in 1997 to oust Mobutu, the major sition was overrun, and he was forced to joi rebels or be killed. He joined the rebels, when Kabila's men took Kinshasa, he attacke former troops. He later deserted and jo Bemba's thriving rebel army in the jungl their fight against Laurent Kabila. Despite b in the national army, the major still consid himself a rebel officer.

Buisine hadn't seen him for years, and for next few hours the two dinosaurs did some ca ing up. Have you seen so-and-so? No, he's d What about so-and-so? Dead, too. And so- so? He's in Europe, couldn't find a place in the government. They talked about the upcom runoff, how a Kabila victory could spell disa for those sympathizing with Bemba. The ma men were scared. "Do yourself a favor," Bui told the major. "Keep a low profile. In six mon this whole place could be fucked."

Buisine instructed the cook to prepare a m and a bed for the major, and once the captain alone, I asked him if the army had a satel phone in Ngombe. It was just a small fishing lage and there was no cellular coverage. No, said, I don't think they have a sat phone.

"Then how did they know you were comin I asked.

"The neighboring village t them," he said. "With drums."

We reached Mbandaka, exactly 700 ki meters up the river from where we began, on t seventh day. There was no electricity in the to and already dozens of oil lamps flickered on sh in advance of the rapid darkness. As we pul into port, we saw what appeared to be a floati refugee camp with hundreds piled aboard, livi under tents made from humanitarian flour sac





es of smoke from charcoal stoves shrouded eel deck, and somewhere a radio blared a ly tune as its batteries slowly died. Men d drunk in the shadows and toddlers rolled l in the coal dust. She was called the *Ndobo*, ıer barges pointed upriver, toward Kisan- We immediately knew: *That's our boat*.

:cardo, Severin, and I leaned over the rail the *Ma'ungano* touched its barge against the o to tie up. And when the crowds of people ed below saw our white faces, they roared hanted, *"Mundele! Mundele! You've arrived!"* verin sighed. "These people are waiting for e said, his face pinched and worried. I asked what *Ndobo* meant in Lingala. "The hook," ıswered, and walked back into his room.

ıe boat would travel to Ndobo, its name- town located 550 kilometers upriver. It was ated by a Lebanese timber company that logging thousands of square kilometers of t between Ndobo and Kisangani. The o had come from Kinshasa with passengers ed on its three barges and, upon reaching lestination, would return to the capital ed with timber bound for Europe. A few lred more passengers were expected to d that day, and they'd already started arriv- The fare was ten dollars.

'e needed to stake out a prime location on arge, so the next morning we hurried down market road, looking for a vendor who spe- zed in the long wooden poles used for barge ters. Mbandaka is a river city, and every- g bought, sold, and traded in the market ehow caters to the ships that drift by. I'd d stories about Mbandaka, none of them good. It was grim, hopeless stuff: boat sink- mutinies, cholera. The city floats on the like some lost outpost severed from the ld and rendered completely insane by the ıce. Mbandaka is the last exit before things wild for good. Once you pass Mbandaka, have to go all the way.

Mbandaka straddles the equator at the junction he Congo and Ruki rivers, and was founded Stanley in 1883 as one of the colony's first stations. Formerly called Coquilhatville, the city was a thriving port during the days of rubber and ivory, with hundreds of Europeans living in white stone villas shaded by groves of coconut palms. The old steamers bound for Kisangani (then Stanleyville) would stop at the equator station, giving passengers time to visit the botanical gardens in Eala, which featured more than 4,000 species of local flora. But, like everything else, the city slowly collapsed when the Belgians pulled up stakes after independence.

When Rwandan-backed rebels invaded Congo in late 1996, their goal was to exterminate the Hutu extremists who'd orchestrated Rwanda's genocide and then escaped into the Congolese mountains. Thousands of innocent Hutu also feared retribution and mixed into the mass exodus across the border. Many headed west into the dense jungle as rebels pursued them. For seven months they were chased through the forest, many dying from malaria, cholera, and starvation, until they reached the Congo River near Mbandaka. The river was too swift and wide to cross over to neighboring Congo-Brazzaville, where they'd hoped to find asylum. Many tried to swim and disappeared in the current. The rest simply collapsed along the banks and awaited their fate. When rebels arrived soon after, missionaries working nearby stood helpless as hundreds were shot and hacked to death with machetes and bayonets. The bodies were flung into the river. Residents downstream in Kinshasa say the bloated corpses floated past for days.

"How did they know you were coming?" I asked the captain. "The neighboring village told them," he said. "With drums."

I found no memorials for the dead in Mbandaka, but their ghosts seemed to riot on the streets to agitate the living. As we walked in search of



materials for our shelter, crowds along the market road soon pressed all around. Several plump, red-cheeked women pushed their way to the front. They held smoked monkey carcasses, hog tied with bellies cut open and fangs exposed in a horrific death mask. A small crocodile was flung at our feet, its jaws bound with vines, its eyes like dark, smoky windows. Children ran forward to beat it with sticks; others taunted the beast with stones. "*Mundele! Mundele!*" they shouted. The croc thrashed wildly, beating its powerful tail against the mud in a final stand against the enemy. It was then snatched away and tossed into the grass, where a group of the reptiles were dying slowly in the sun.

A small crocodile was flung at our feet, its jaws bound with vines, its eyes like dark, smoky windows. Children ran forward to beat it with sticks

We found the long wooden poles we needed at the far end of the market and carried them back to the barge. We claimed a small empty space nearest the tug and set to work building our house. The wooden poles were lashed together with nylon rope to form a reinforced A-frame, which we secured to railway ties along the barge. Our roof was constructed from the orange tarp and woven grass mats we'd bought in the market. Inside, there was barely room for the three of us to sit, much less sleep. We celebrated that night with cold beer and steaks at the only good restaurant in town. The dim fluorescent lights of the Metropole drew swarms of insects so large they cast slow-moving shadows across the empty tables. A dance floor was situated in the middle of the outdoor patio, where a fat woman waltzed with a man too drunk to keep time. The slow *soukous* ballads played from an old cassette deck that ebbed and flowed with surges in the generator and sometimes blew sta-

tic so loud patrons shielded their heads as they were under attack.

The waitress sat drinking at a dark corner t with a large white man who spoke fluent gala a Belgian, I guessed dressed in a stare oxford shirt with several empty bottles in fro him. His skin was the color of ash, with liver spots creeping up his neck and cheeks. T was something already dead about him, the his face moved in and out of the shadow but er really took shape; watching him was like ing at a scarecrow from a fast-moving car. Like town, he seemed to float in some restless sp cut off long ago and unable to find his way b He put the chill on me. I ordered a beer shifted my chair, keeping my back to the colo ghost in the corner.

The next morning, around 400 people cro ed the barges of the *Ndobo* as we pulled out of and said goodbye to Mbandaka and the luxur the *Ma'ungano*. Our proud little shelter offere wide-open view of the left bank, but as the h slowly passed, the sunlight and precious sile disappeared, never to return. Plastic sheeting threadbare tarps were pulled from heaping b dles, poles materialized from nowhere, pots pans rattled on the deck, and radios thundere life. In a very short time, a small village had ri up around us. These were the river traders, men and women who move Congo's econo like a great army of ants. Every journey was a of the dice, a chance to double down or wash in the backwater. But they took the risk beca life in the city was far less forgiving. Traveling river was the good life.

"*Mundele*," my neighbor yelled. "Put away y notebook and come drink some wine!" It v 11:00 A.M., an hour after leaving port, and the p ty aboard the *Ndobo* was in full throttle. C neighbors to the right, Lucy and Toni, were po ing milky palm wine into plastic mugs. A n camp began every four feet, and every four fee different radio blasted its buoyant *rumba*. T sun radiated through the orange tarp like a h lamp, sucking at our energy. Small chores, su as filtering water or washing dishes, stole o



n and left us wilted. I finally put away my ook and just focused on not passing out.
e three barges were so crowded that corridors formed through the floating village. One vay barreled past our tent, and most people ed to stare at the two *mundele* who had come d. "*Bonjour*," we'd offer, like freaks in a cage, the people laughed and sauntered off.
e barges were like giant floating supermar- and one could buy almost anything in the bazaar that spread itself along the steel deck. ing through the narrow corridors you found tial items like lye soap in blue and pink s, Angola brand toothbrushes sold in packs , safety razors, plastic mirrors, lead spoons, e and thread, travel-sized bags of raw sugar, and necklaces, women's panties with LOVE oidered on the crotch, rubber sandals, nylon ıg nets, Betasol lotion, and Tiger Head bat- that lasted exactly four hours.
n the barge you could find quinine and oquine for malaria, hydration salts for hea, and pills for intestinal worms and There were nurses and midwives, witch ors and preachers, and a man for just about trade. Our neighbor Lucy sold the sec- and clothing worn by almost everyone on barge and along the river: the ubiquitous rican T-shirts donated to charities and ped on the African market. Everywhere looked was a strange remnant of home; the grandmother who advertised a strip club in tucky or the stoic fisherman whose shirt I'M THE BIG SISTER.
ucy was from Kinshasa, and she had pretty n eyes and short dreadlocks woven with dec- ive blue thread. She'd traded along the riv- or the past decade, through war and peace all the trouble in between. During the war, n the river was closed, she was forced to walk dreds of miles through the jungle north of shasa. Soldiers and rebels prowled the narrow s. Friends were raped by soldiers in front of r children, and everyone was taxed and robbed he "war effort." Lucy had already lost every- g twice to storms and thieves. "When you lose your stuff, there's nothing for you," she said. "They don't sell insurance on the river." With every trip, Lucy would sink her savings into merchandise in Kinshasa and hope to double her profits along the river. Everything else on the barge was also a hustle, including the plastic chairs she rented to us for a dollar a day and the small money she made each morning selling cups of coffee boiled with ginger root. Other traders supplemented their income by selling fried beignets smeared with homemade peanut butter or bowls of fresh catfish soup.

I could tell that the river traders made an impression on Severin, who had warmed up to our neighbors considerably. Their brassy resilience and resourcefulness impressed him, and he now counted many friends on the barge, joking and debating politics and religion. He later discovered that Lucy even lived on his street in Kinshasa and was friends with his mother.

"They are loud and uneducated, but the river people are teaching me many things," he said one night. "How to make money from nothing and survive. In many ways, their life is better than in Kinshasa. Notice they eat five meals a day! Only the rich can eat like this in the city."

I began spending time with an army lieutenant named Pierre Kitebo, who was traveling back to Kisangani. He had been lost in the great labyrinth of war and faraway deployment and had not seen his family in eight years. The army had finally granted him a leave, so he set out to find his family, carrying only an old photo of his wife to keep him warm and a vague idea of where they lived. He'd spent three weeks on another barge from Kisangani to Basankusu, where he finally found his family in a small hut deep in the jungle. When Pierre had left eight years before, his youngest daughter, Benedite, was still in her mother's womb. She didn't recognize the tall, beaming man in army fatigues when he walked out of the trees.

"They all ran out and hugged me," he said. "They were happy to see their daddy."

He now sat in a cramped, ragged lean-to, surrounded by his wife, two sons, and daughter, who



were finally going home to Kisangani, where he trained soldiers in an army camp. He pulled the little girl close to his chest and kissed her head. "They were naked when I found them," he said. "But there will be no more suffering now."

Here, I thought, I was beginning to see signs of recovery. I'd also found it in people like Lucy and Solange, another neighbor, who'd already doubled her $400 investment. I saw the recovery in men like Jean Kalokula, whose last river journey had been with a convoy of pirogues during the war. They'd traveled at night to avoid checkpoints and slept in the jungles during the day, until malaria finally killed most of his party. He'd buried their bodies on the lonely middle islands and limped back to Kinshasa to wait out the war. He was now traveling the river again for the first time since then, a man who was proud to be going back to work. In all of these people, a sense of dignity had been restored.

But after a few days on the barge, having found the story I thought I'd come for, something started to change. All the romance I'd imposed on the river and its people began to fade. Their all-night drinking now grated on my nerves, and the endless heat only fueled the slow crawl of madness. It would be days, maybe even weeks, before we reached Kisangani. The river owned me now.

Sometimes I'd sit in my tent for hours, stoned on the humidity, watching the molecules behind my eyes ignite like tiny starbursts, when an evil stench would smack me awake. One afternoon I swore someone's head was on fire. The heat made the smell stick in the back of my throat. I followed a pale cloud of smoke to where a woman sat flipping a giant dead monkey over a charcoal stove, scorching the fur and scraping the char with a broad machete. Its innards were still intact and boiling out of its mouth. The next morning, while rolling up my mattress, I discovered tiny pea-shaped objects writhing beneath my bed. *Maggots*, I thought, the word like a blinking banner across my mind. *Maggots on my pillow. Maggots on my pillow.* I kicked the maggots away with my boots and went in search of breakfast. That same afternoon, while eating a stick of beef jerky, I looked down to find a matted wad of pubic hair resting on my arm. I shrugged, blew it back into the wind, and finished my jerky.

The dirt and stench, the pigs and chickens that ran wild and defecated where people ate, the mountains of ripe bushmeat in every canoe—these annoyances we learned to handle. But as the days stretched on, the imposing isolation of the river fed tiny fears and anxieties until they festered into their own little nightmares. It finally peaked a few nights later as I sat on the tie post by the water's edge. I'd sat there watching the sun climb behind the jungle, illuminating the soft mist that crept along the water. And now in the dark hours I was enjoying the first cool breezes of the day, and for some reason the radios didn't seem so loud. For the first time in days, I was even feeling almost hopeful again. As I sat there, I actually wrote in my notebook, "Watching the river moving past, this is what keeps the spirit strong when you're low. This is when I love this place the most."

Suddenly the engines faded and I felt the barge veer to the bank, where it eventually stopped. Not only did we stop; I watched the tugboat *Ndobo* disengage from the barges, turn around, and disappear downriver, stranding us on the riverbank in jet-black darkness. The taillights vanishing, the night seemed to be sucking my breath after them. And when they were gone, I panicked.

Riccardo was standing nearby, aiming his flashlight into the black vacuum of the jungle's edge. He smiled. "What do you call it?" he said. "The white man's grave? Well, man, they've left us at the white man's grave." I walked back to our tent, where Severin had just returned from his nightly rounds. "It's the captain's son," he said. "He has burned very badly. They had to find a hospital."

"The nearest hospital is two days away," I said. I looked for panic in his eyes but found none, not even the slightest hint of irritation. He was maddeningly calm. "No one seems to care." He shrugged. "This is their life."

It was true. Instead of panicking, the Congolese only amped up the party. The saucy *rumba* now roared behind an arsenal of fresh batteries, and jugs of palm wine sloshed from cam-



Stranded on a remote stretch of river in the
e of the jungle, they reacted by dancing as
ere their last night on earth.
ined my light down the barge and saw sev-
nen pissing in the river. This was normal;
was only one toilet for all 400 people, so the
usually did their minor business over the
But now, near the bank, the current was
ant, and just a few feet downstream, half a
women were scooping up the same water
drinking it. "We've gotta get off this boat,"
ed. "We've gotta get off this boat or we'll all
f cholera."
ie year before, a barge had been hit with
ra on the same remote stretch east of Mban-
. By the time the passengers reached the
town, dozens were dead on the deck. Yes, I
ght, it would happen just like that, here and
I watched the cholera move like a phantom
s the barge, sliding its finger across the throats
tle children, before sliding into me. The
wall of jungle pulsed all around, and I could
t swallowing me like a dying star.
little later, Riccardo returned with a hand-
whiskey packets that were sold all over the
. And after a few of those, I began to feel bet-
still desperately wanted to get off, and I
d tell that Riccardo agreed, if only for the
of forward progress. We decided our only
er was flagging down a passing boat, but we
n't seen one in nearly two days. "What about
ine?" I said. "He can't be more than twelve
s behind." That was it, we decided, Buisine
ld save us! We began to fantasize about the
ungano rumbling past and sending its dugout
ie rescue. "So long, suckers!" we'd yell, using
boots to beat away the doomed crowds who
ld try to tag along, to weasel in on our air-
litioning and hot showers. All night I lay
ke listening for the sound of diesel engines
ing by.
he *Ndobo* finally returned the next afternoon.
ad traveled three kilometers downriver to
ikanza, where there was a small clinic. The
e-year-old son of the *Ndobo*'s captain had
ed a pot of boiling oil over his body, but the
doctor in Mankanza could do little for his burns. There was no medicine, so Riccardo and I treated the boy with ointment from our medical kits until we reached Ndobo three days later.

I was glad to leave the barge, and watched impassively as the traders picked apart our shelter down to the very last rope. They could have it. We hitched a ride with the timber company car to Bumba, where we were planning to cover the runoff election. And since the *Ndobo* was turning back around for Kinshasa, Bumba was where we hoped to find a motorized pirogue to Kisangani. We'd now traveled 1,337 kilometers in fifteen days.

Instead of panicking, the Congolese only amped up the party. Stranded on a remote stretch of river, they danced as if it were their last night on earth

Like Mbandaka, Bumba is an old Belgian trading port that crumbled long ago. Here the Congo stretches twelve miles across at its widest point, though this imperial view was blocked by chains of wooded islands that seemed to throttle the great river and suck the living air from the town. There were two bars for killing the time, and the beer was cool and plentiful, but no restaurants or cafés. We took our meals in the Hotel Mozulua, where the heat and mosquitoes kept us awake at night and pushed us to press forward.

The runoff election was the most significant step toward peace and stability in the country's history. But we'd become so impatient to keep moving that it became little more than a distraction. The vote was no mystery either. For much of the war, Bumba and the surrounding region had been occupied by Bemba's rebel force, who'd raped and murdered and lived by the gun. Yet despite these crimes, almost everyone sup-



ported Bemba for president. Bemba's tribe hailed from the forest, and it was said that President Joseph Kabila wasn't even Congolese, that his roots were in Tanzania. To them, it explained why the president had auctioned off much of the country's mineral wealth to foreigners. And with no reliable source of news in the jungle, rumor trumped all.

The morning polls went smoothly enough, and Riccardo and I toured the various stations and interviewed voters. I found myself having the same conversations I'd had during every other African election I'd covered.

"What kinds of changes will you demand from the winner?"

Silence. "Hmmm."

"So you're demanding peace, electricity, and better schools for your kids?"

"Oh, yes, yes . . . peace. Peace and schools."

We'd just hired bike taxis back to the hotel when everything went strange. The once crowded streets suddenly were empty, void of dogs and children and women ferrying to the market. Looking around, I saw people staring out windows and sheepishly standing in doorways—both bad signs. A government lorry rumbled past loaded with soldiers brandishing their readied guns. And when we turned a corner toward the hotel, my heart sank to my shoes.

A mob of about a hundred young men was rumbling down the dusty roadway carrying machetes, sticks, and rocks. Earlier that morning, a Kabila supporter had been caught stuffing a ballot box in one of the stations. The mob had burned the ballots and set fire to several buildings. They now rioted through the narrow streets, spewing venom against Kabila and thieving foreigners. When they saw us, it was like we'd stepped right into their trap. "Ay, *étranger!*" they shouted, and quickened their pace. Riccardo raced toward them with cameras held high. And whereas I would usually follow, this time I froze.

As a reporter in Congo, I'd endured my share of drunken soldiers and guns, but it was mobs that terrified me the most. All it took was one rock in the face to draw first blood and the ers would pounce like wolves. I'd been thr some bad times in Togo and Somalia an Kinshasa, but that morning in Bumba, I denly felt my luck had run its course. A v diamond-sharp in my mind, told me to back immediately. There were no lives left stayed, only bad things would happen.

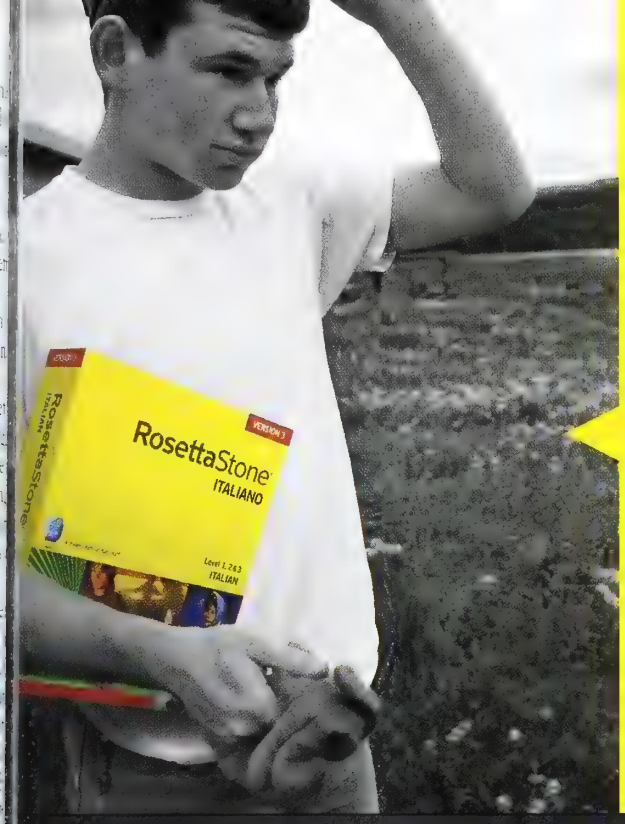
"*Allez! Allez!*" I screamed at my driver, a s boy whose body had gone rigid. "Severin, this kid to go!"

We turned onto a deserted backstreet moved parallel with the angry crowd, strug for speed on the sandy roads. Some of the caught up and held rocks to our heads, leering shouting threats. But we finally found our ir section and soon were safe within the high w of the Hotel Mozulua.

Later that afternoon, soldiers charged the with bullets and tear gas. Three people killed and dozens were beaten and arrested. of those killed was a fifteen-year-old boy, gun down in the street. His uncle found us at hotel that night. "He was only throwing roc the man said. "And they shot him in the h His brains aren't even there anymore." Of hundreds of towns and villages in Congo wh people voted that day, Bumba was the only to erupt in violence. Overall, the election hailed as a landmark success, a victory for p after a decade of blood. But standing in the courtyard of the Mozulua, listening to anot man plan another funeral, it sounded the s to me.

In the end, there were no boats to take u Kisangani, so we hired a convoy of bicycles continued east into the boiling sun. Our jo ney led us off the river and far into the jungle, yond any guidebook or map. The war had en but peaceful revival had done little for the cro of children who lined the forest track, their st achs bloated from hunger, their mothers begg us to save them, begging us to do somethi There was nothing I could do, nothing exc pedal faster, leaving behind the naive ideas clung to along the road.





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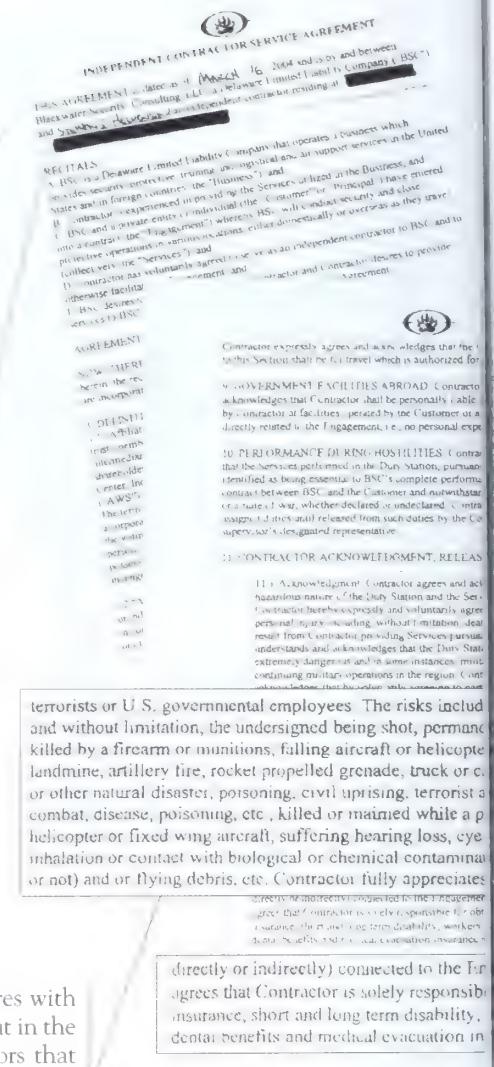
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CONTRACT

Hard terms for the the

Although fighting wars with mercenaries fell out of favor around the time of the Enlightenment, when nation-states came to rely instead on their citizens' sense of duty, the United States has managed to return this ancient military strategy to the battlefield. An estimated 180 "private military companies" now do everything in Iraq from securing U.S. bases and supply routes to guarding American officials and training Iraqi security forces. These private armies are not subject to government oversight, military authority, or Iraqi law, and their operations and the arrangements they maintain with the tens of thousands of armed men under their command are mostly secret; this confidential agreement surfaced only after Blackwater, one of the largest private military companies, was sued by the families of contractors who were killed in Fallujah in March 2004. By outsourcing critical components of the war effort to such unaccountable firms, our government has created a shadow army of private soldiers who can trust in neither country nor company.

A former Navy SEAL, Stephen "Scott" Helvenston was working intermittently as a fitness instructor (he had trained Demi Moore for the film *G.I. Jane*) and struggling to support his family when he signed up with Blackwater. One day after arriving in Iraq, Helvenston, along with three other former military men, was ordered to escort a shipment of kitchen supplies to a U.S. Army base west of Fallujah. As their convoy entered Fallujah's city center, Helvenston's car was hit by a grenade. Insurgents then descended on the vehicles, shooting into them, dousing them in gasoline, and setting them on fire. The four men were later pulled from the cars and dismembered; the torsos of Helvenston and one of his colleagues were hung from a bridge. So far at least twenty-six other Blackwater guards have lost their lives in Iraq. Overall, more than 1,000 contractors have been killed and some 13,000 wounded since the start of the war. The Pentagon insists that private contractors are part of the military's "Total Force" in Iraq, yet their casualties are never included in any official tallies. Recognizing the fatalities would instantly increase the American body count by 25 percent.



INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR SERVICE AGREEMENT

terrorists or U.S. governmental employees. The risks includ
and without limitation, the undersigned being shot, permanc
killed by a firearm or munitions, falling aircraft or helicopte
landmine, artillery fire, rocket propelled grenade, truck or c
or other natural disaster, poisoning, civil uprising, terrorist a
combat, disease, poisoning, etc., killed or maimed while a p
helicopter or fixed wing aircraft, suffering hearing loss, eye
inhalation or contact with biological or chemical contamina
or not) and or flying debris, etc. Contractor fully appreciates

directly or indirectly) connected to the Em
agrees that Contractor is solely responsib
insurance, short and long term disability,
dental benefits and medical evacuation in

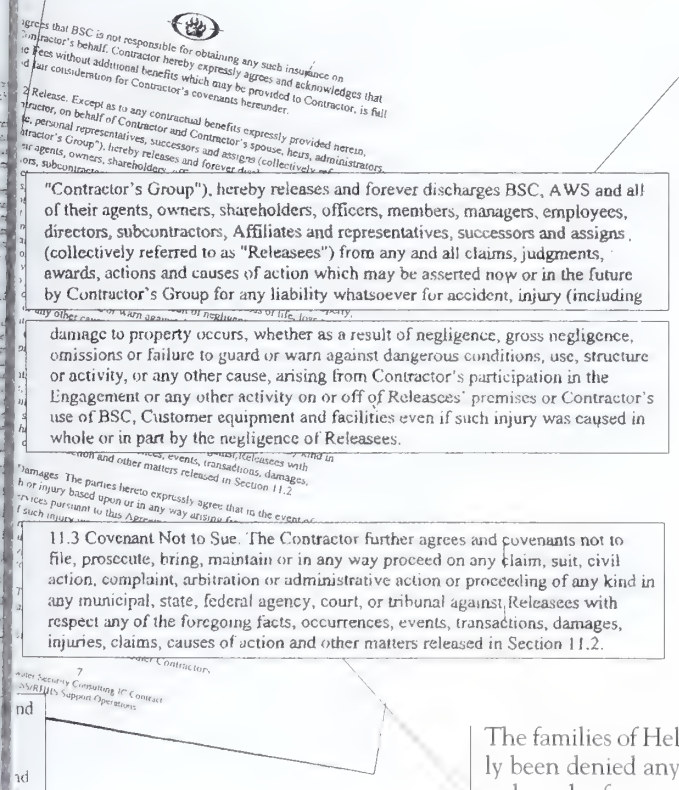
Like U.S. military recruiters, private military companies entice new hires with promises of adventure and the chance to bring democracy to the world. But in the fine print here, contractors must "acknowledge" a laundry list of horrors that might befall them in Iraq—"being shot, permanently maimed and/or killed by a firearm or munitions, falling aircraft or helicopters, sniper fire, landmine, artillery fire, rocket propelled grenade, truck or car bomb." In light of evidence that has emerged since the filing of the suit, Blackwater may believe such disclaimers excuse it from protecting its men from obvious dangers. Before the deaths in Fallujah, one of Blackwater's Baghdad-based managers warned executives in an email that his men lacked basic equipment and that they were "in harm's way." Another group of Blackwater troops sent on the same route just behind Helvenston's team seems to have realized the threat; at the last instant, their crew leader defied his superior's orders and took roads that went around rather than through Fallujah.

Daphne Eviatar is
and a senior rep
Americ

AMERICA

ıe, *by Daphne Eviatar*

For his work in Iraq, Helvenston was promised the considerable sum of $600 a day. (Private military firms pay men from Latin America and the Middle East a fraction of that amount, and locally hired Iraqis earn even less.) Yet Blackwater states here that its independent contractors will receive no benefits—no insurance, no health care, and no disability. U.S. soldiers, by contrast, are entitled to life insurance, free medical care, death benefits, subsidized higher education, a housing allowance, and a guaranteed savings plan. Some private security companies do offer life insurance as an incentive to new recruits, but there are no guarantees that beneficiaries will be able to collect it: the survivors of two military contractors who were killed while working for CTU Services Iraq in 2005 are still trying to sue the company for promised death benefits they say they never received.


"Contractor's Group"), hereby releases and forever discharges BSC, AWS and all of their agents, owners, shareholders, officers, members, managers, employees, directors, subcontractors, Affiliates and representatives, successors and assigns (collectively referred to as "Releasees") from any and all claims, judgments, awards, actions and causes of action which may be asserted now or in the future by Contractor's Group for any liability whatsoever for accident, injury (including

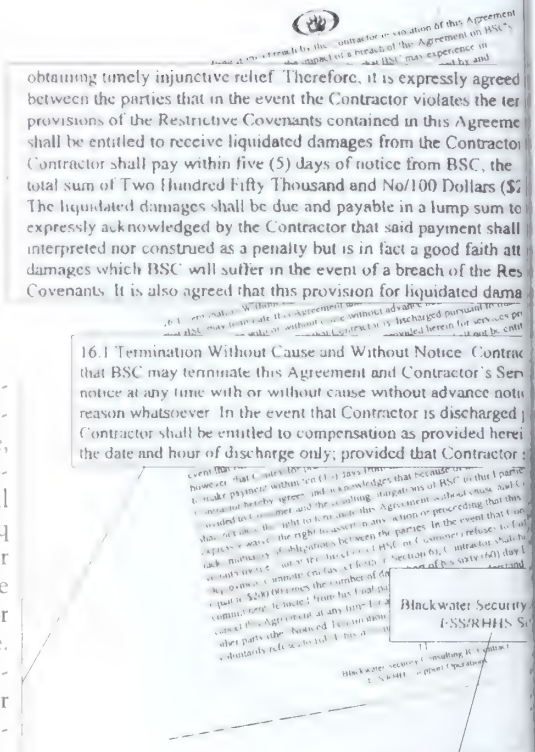
damage to property occurs, whether as a result of negligence, gross negligence, omissions or failure to guard or warn against dangerous conditions, use, structure or activity, or any other cause, arising from Contractor's participation in the Engagement or any other activity on or off of Releasees' premises or Contractor's use of BSC, Customer equipment and facilities even if such injury was caused in whole or in part by the negligence of Releasees.

11.3 Covenant Not to Sue. The Contractor further agrees and covenants not to file, prosecute, bring, maintain or in any way proceed on any claim, suit, civil action, complaint, arbitration or administrative action or proceeding of any kind in any municipal, state, federal agency, court, or tribunal against Releasees with respect any of the foregoing facts, occurrences, events, transactions, damages, injuries, claims, causes of action and other matters released in Section 11.2.

In signing this contract, Helvenston released Blackwater and all of its agents, officers, and shareholders from "any liability whatsoever"—even if his death, disease, or injury "was caused in whole or in part by the negligence" of the company. The families believe they have compelling reasons to think that Blackwater did cause their loved ones' deaths. They say the company failed to deliver on numerous promises it made to the men, including that all security missions would be performed by teams of at least six in armored vehicles; that there would always be a rear gunner with a heavy automatic weapon; and that they'd have time before each mission to review the route, gather intelligence, and conduct a pre-trip inspection. These are standard security measures in conflict zones. Helvenston's team wasn't even given a map. Such economy may have cost the lives of other Blackwater contractors nine weeks later when their two vehicles—one armored, one not—were fired upon by insurgents. The men in the armored truck survived; those in the "soft car" did not. According to Blackwater's CEO, Erik Prince, it is efficiency that wins the big government contract. "When they say, 'Ah, we need about one hundred guys to do that job,' we say, 'Actually, you only need about ten to do that job.'"

The families of Helvenston and the others say they've repeatedly been denied any information explaining why, and on whose orders, the four men entered Fallujah at a time when the U.S. Army deemed it too dangerous for its own troops. "When we insisted on seeing the report concerning the incident," Kathryn Helvenston, Scott's mother, said earlier this year, "Blackwater told us that we would have to sue them to get it." But explicit contract provisions like this "covenant not to sue" insulate private military companies from just this tack. Although regular soldiers and their families can't sue the military for wrongful death either, all military deaths must be investigated and the investigations disclosed to soldiers' families—a courtesy that the relatives of private contractors are not extended.

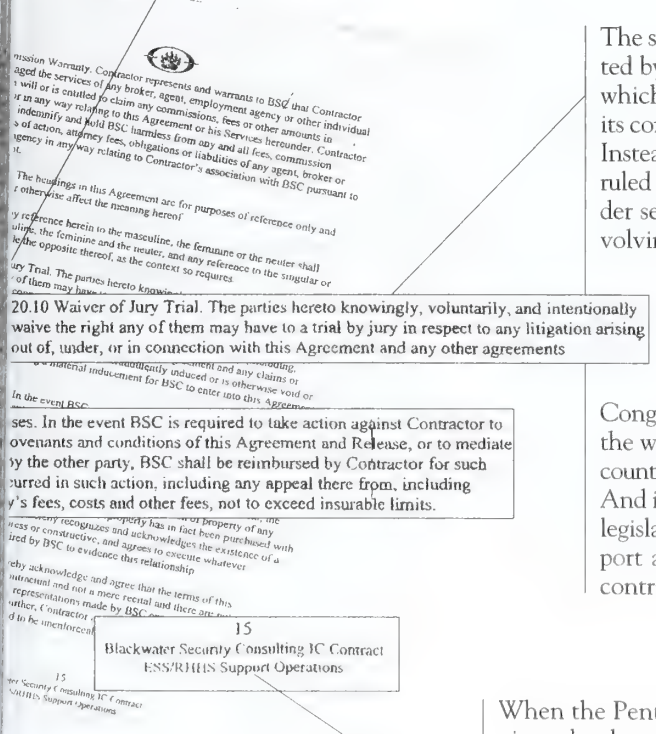
Despite the prohibition in the contract, the families of the four men killed in Fallujah filed their lawsuit against Blackwater in North Carolina state court, in January 2005. But filing any claim against Blackwater amounts to a breach of contract and, the agreement states here, entitles the company "to receive liquidated damages from the Contractor" in the amount of $250,000—payable in a lump sum within five days of notice. With such barriers to a lawsuit, most private soldiers are left without recourse. Unlike U.S. soldiers, they have no Veterans Administration, veterans' groups, or military-family organizations advocating on their behalf. Modern-day mercenaries can't take their grievances to superiors, to Congress, or to the media, as some U.S. troops did early in the war to pressure the government into providing them with adequate body armor and steel-plated Humvees.


obtaining timely injunctive relief. Therefore, it is expressly agreed
between the parties that in the event the Contractor violates the ter
provisions of the Restrictive Covenants contained in this Agreeme
shall be entitled to receive liquidated damages from the Contracto
Contractor shall pay within five (5) days of notice from BSC, the
total sum of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand and No/100 Dollars ($2
The liquidated damages shall be due and payable in a lump sum to
expressly acknowledged by the Contractor that said payment shall
interpreted nor construed as a penalty but is in fact a good faith att
damages which BSC will suffer in the event of a breach of the Res
Covenants. It is also agreed that this provision for liquidated dama
16.1 Termination Without Cause and Without Notice. Contrac
that BSC may terminate this Agreement and Contractor's Ser
notice at any time with or without cause without advance noti
reason whatsoever. In the event that Contractor is discharged
Contractor shall be entitled to compensation as provided herei
the date and hour of discharge only; provided that Contractor
Blackwater Security
ESS/RHHS S

Private military companies insist that their contractors, as participants in U.S. military operations, are forbidden to quit their jobs, regardless of their treatment or working conditions. At the same time, the contract asserts here that they can be fired without cause or notice. According to the lawsuit, Helvenston was told when he was still at a Blackwater facility in Kuwait that he would have to leave for Iraq ahead of schedule and without the team he had trained with. After Helvenston raised objections, his supervisor informed him that if he didn't go he'd be fired on the spot, have to reimburse Blackwater for money he'd been paid, and have to foot the bill for his trip home. (When contacted, Blackwater said that "Out of respect for the families," it would not comment on the particulars of the case.) In other instances, private security firms have used this power to dismiss contractors without cause to eliminate another channel of oversight: the internal whistleblower. A former Special Forces officer working in Iraq for the security company MVM Inc. claims that he was fired in 2005 for reporting that a guard on his team had shot indiscriminately into an Iraqi civilian neighborhood and then attempted to cover it up. And last year, two contractors said they were let go by Triple Canopy after informing supervisors that their shift leader took potshots at Iraqi civilians. A jury ruled this August that Triple Canopy acted within its right to dismiss the men but also issued a formal rebuke, saying the company displayed "poor conduct, lack of standard reporting procedures, bad investigation methods, and unfair double standards."

Unable to learn anything from Blackwater, the families and their lawyers eventually persuaded the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to investigate how private military contractors in Iraq are being looked after and managed. But the committee couldn't even determine whether the government had any contractual ties to the men killed in Fallujah. (For six months the Pentagon claimed that under its troop-support contract only the U.S. Army would have been permitted to provide this sort of "force protection" in Iraq.) In Helvenston's agreement, Blackwater was actually a subcontractor of a Kuwaiti outfit, Regency Hotel and Hospital Company (the RHHS shown here), which was a subcontractor of a Cyprus-based company (the ESS), which was, in turn, a subcontractor of an undisclosed American firm—likely Kellogg Brown & Root, though the company denies it—that held the primary military contract. The government itself further obfuscates these arrangements by paying for much of the work not through ordinary military channels but out of a State Department budget for "private security services."

Blackwater initially tried to have the lawsuit moved to federal court and dismissed, on the grounds that its private soldiers were not independent contractors—which they are explicitly identified as throughout this agreement—but employees of a government contractor. Under the federal Defense Base Act, such employees are entitled to limited benefits but are prohibited from filing any tort claims against their employers (though numerous employees of private military companies in Iraq have applied for benefits under this act and been denied them by their employers). After this dismissal gambit failed, Blackwater acted on its reserved right to sue its own contractors and, last December, filed a claim against the estates of the four dead men for $10 million. According to this clause, the families may now also have to pay Blackwater for any legal expenses the company incurs as it sues them. The countersuit is already a success, as the lawyers who took Helvenston's case say they can't take on any of the similar private-military-contractor cases they've been told about until they know whether this one will result in a costly judgment against their clients.



The secrecy of the modern-mercenary venture is further abetted by contractual agreements like this "waiver of jury trial," which mandates that any conflicts between the company and its contractors cannot be adjudicated in a public court of law. Instead, disputes are to be heard behind closed doors and then ruled on by a private arbitrator, whose decision can be filed under seal. Although Blackwater managed to have the suit involving Helvenston moved to confidential arbitration, an appellate judge ruled in August that arbitration would have to wait until a decision was made on whether the case could be heard in court. Blackwater is fighting hard against this appeal, and with good reason. Attention from the lawsuit has already compelled Congress, earlier this year, to hold public hearings, in which the wives and mothers of the four murdered men tearfully recounted the difficulty of obtaining information from Blackwater. And in June, Congressman David Price (D., N.C.) introduced legislation that would require private military companies to report all incidents involving the use of force and to subject contractors to the jurisdiction of U.S. courts.

When the Pentagon assessed its own future needs in a 2006 review, the department made clear that it intends to increase its reliance on private military companies and other outsourced support services, billing their use as an efficient and effective means of waging the wars of the post-9/11 world. Yet according to congressional estimates, the cost to the government of a contracted guard is between four and ten times greater than that of a U.S. soldier. As for their effectiveness in Iraq, private soldiers have proved mostly to be a powerful weapon in the Bush Administration's broader assault on accountability, since their use masks the actual numbers of lives and deaths needed to fight the war. The lack of transparency may help the government manage its unpopular war in the short term. But in the end, we get the war we pay for. ■

TOXIC INACTION

Why poisonous, unregulated chemicals end up in our blo

By Mark Schapiro

In the late 1990s, citizens of several European countries learned from newspaper reports that their infants were constantly being exposed to a host of toxic chemicals. Babies were sleeping in pajamas treated with cancer-causing flame retardants; they were sucking on bottles laced with plastic additives believed to alter hormones; their diapers were glued together with nerve-damaging toxins normally used to kill algae on the hulls of ships. When European health officials tried to look into the matter, they were confounded by how little they actually knew about these and other potentially hazardous chemicals. Regulators discovered that they had no way of assessing the dangers of long-term exposure to everyday products. Some manufacturers of baby goods did not even know what was in their own products, since chemical producers were under no obligation to tell them. Such data, if it existed at all, was secreted away in the vaults of chemical companies and had never been submitted to any government authority.

In the years since those news reports, the nascent science of bio-monitoring has provided further insight into how the industrial chemicals that are in clothes, food packaging, cosmetics, toys, electronics, and just about every modern convenience are actually lodging in the human body. Greenpeace U.K. released a study in 2005 that found numerous toxic chemicals in the umbilical-cord blood of European infants. That same year, World Wildlife Fund International test blood of three generations of women from t European countries. The largest number of icals—sixty-three—was found in the gr grandmothers. Given the number of years th had to accumulate exposure, this result wa haps not surprising. But the next-highest was among their grandchildren, aged twe twenty-eight, who in their short lifetime amassed fifty-nine different toxic chemicals blood of a nineteen-year-old Italian, who sent me her test results, included bromi flame retardants, which are potential liver, th and neurological toxins that are used to coat electronics; the pesticides DDT and lindan latter of which is suspected of contributi breast and other cancers; perfluorinated chem known carcinogens that are used as stain water-repellents on clothing, furniture, and stick cookware; and artificial musk aromas, in soaps and perfumes, that scientists claim c duce the body's ability to expel other toxin

Bio-monitoring tests in the United States revealed the same dangerous chemicals m their way into the blood of Americans. In the Centers for Disease Control and Preve completed screening for the presence of 148 ic chemicals in the blood of a broad cross se of Americans; it found that the vast major subjects harbored almost all the toxins. I same year, the CDC's National Survey on

Mark Schapiro is the editorial director of the Center for Investigative Reporting. His new book, Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power, *was published last month by Chelsea Green*

owth concluded that rates of infertility ising for women under the age of twenty- spike many scientists attribute, at least in o routine exposure to toxic chemicals. The onmental Working Group conducted tests e umbilical cords of ten newborns in 2006 iscovered that cancer-causing, endocrine- ting, and gene-mutating chemicals had l from the mothers to their fetuses through acenta.

until the 1970s, no country had imposed any ingful oversight of the tens of thousands of icals that had entered the marketplace since l War II. Then, in 1976, the U.S. Congress d the Toxic Substances Control Act A), which granted the government the au- y to track industrial chemicals and to place tions on any that proved harmful to hu- or the environment. Because the United s was the world's preeminent economic pow- her major chemical producers—Germany, e, and Britain—soon brought their nation- ulations into line with TSCA so as not to lose J.S. market. Shortly thereafter, Japan and countries hoping to conduct trade with the also had to adopt the central principles of w as their own. Thus, America set the rules emical regulation across the globe.

t TSCA came with an enormous loophole, eat leveraged into it by the powerful chem- ndustry: every chemical already on the mar- efore 1979 was exempted from the law's ary screening requirements. Three decades TSCA came into being, 95 percent of all icals in circulation have never undergone esting for toxicity or their impact on the en- nment. The extent to which TSCA has l to regulate hazardous substances is now nt in the bio-monitoring results in Europe America.

ropeans have recently decided to do some- g about all the untested chemicals that are ng up in their blood. "The assumption among ricans is, 'If it's on the market, it's okay,'" ex- ed Robert Donkers, an E.U. official who was l to review Europe's regulatory laws after the -product scare. "That fantasy is gone in Eu- " Donkers's efforts were the first steps in what me, seven years later, a new E.U. chemical lation called REACH—Registration, Evalu- and Authorisation of Chemicals. REACH unts to a revolution in how chemicals are aged, and in how production decisions around world will be made from now on. Regulations y the most powerful countries have quickly me, through trade, the international stan- . And the European Union, with a market of million people stretching across twenty- n countries, is now significantly larger than the ed States in both population and wealth; Eu- rope's gross national product surged past that of the United States in 2005, and the gap increased when two more countries joined the E.U. earlier this year. The E.U. is now the most significant trading partner for every continent except Australia. The ripple effects from this shift in economic power have been one of the great untold stories of the new century.



Indeed, Europe is now compelling other nations' manufacturers to conform to regulations that are far more protective of people's health than those in the United States. Europe has emerged not only as the world's leading economic power but also as one of its moral leaders. Those roles were once filled by the United States.

When TSCA took effect in the late 1970s, the United States was seen as a pioneer of health and environmental regulation. The Environmental Protection Agency had been established only a few years before, and the government had recently set standards for fuel economy, hazardous-waste disposal, and many other factors

graph from the Guest series by Christopher Bucklow.
esy the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York City

affecting the country's air and water quality. Currently, some 42 billion pounds of chemicals are produced in or brought to America each day, but because of TSCA exemptions, fewer than 200 of all the chemicals on the market have ever undergone any serious risk assessments. Among the 62,000 chemicals the act excused from testing or review were thousands of highly toxic substances, such as ethyl benzene, a widely used industrial solvent suspected of being a potent neurotoxin; whole families of synthetic plastics that are potential carcinogens and endocrine disrupters; and



numerous other chemicals for which there was little or no information.

The EPA is actually allowed to place restrictions on the chemicals grandfathered onto the market if the substances present an "unreasonable risk to human health." In order to demonstrate this risk, however, the agency must surmount tremendous legal and administrative obstacles. The EPA is required to weigh the "costs to industry" of any regulation, and it is obliged to impose restrictions that are the "least burdensome" to chemical manufacturers. According to ... Government Accountability Office analys... EPA relies too heavily on industry test data ... making safety assessments and allows comp... to keep critical data from the public throug... discriminate" claims that information is p... etary. Even for those few new chemicals br... to market after TSCA, the screening record ... reassuring. Ninety days before commercial ... production of a chemical begins, manufac... are required to provide the EPA with all ... sure and toxicity data. Theoretically, this ... mation enables the agency to determine wh... regulatory action is warranted before chem... hit the market. But according to the EPA' ... figures, 85 percent of the notifications subm... contain no health data.

One result of this industry-friendly scre... is that the EPA has banned only five chem... since its inception in 1970. For a brief tim... banned list included a sixth substance: asb... In 1989, the EPA prohibited nearly all uses ... bestos, which it classified as a "known car... gen." The chemical industry challenge... agency, however, and in 1990 a federal ... vacated the ban, asserting that the EPA ha... ther met TSCA's requirement that the co... sive dangers of the chemical should exce... perceived usefulness nor demonstrated tha... ban was the "least burdensome alternativ... eliminating the "unreasonable risk" of expo... The EPA has not acted to ban a chemical ... that decision, even though other countries ... outlawed asbestos and numerous toxins th... still in use in the United States. (Since 200... E.U. has banned entire categories of haza... chemicals from use in cosmetics, toys, elec... ics, and other consumer goods.) By maki... easier to hang on to old chemicals than t... velop new ones, TSCA provides no incenti... manufacturers to create less toxic alterna... The absence of even minimal toxicity dat... sulates the industry from the normal su... demand dynamic of the market; consume... other words, have no means of expressing ... potential preference for a less toxic substi...

Chemical companies have spent lavish... preserve these lax standards. Since 1996 ... industry has contributed $47 million to fe... election campaigns, and it pays about $30... lion each year to lobbyists in Washington. ... Goldman, who served as assistant administ... for toxic substances at the EPA from 19... 1998, told me that she and her colleagues ... TSCA was largely ineffectual. "There were ... sands of chemicals out there, and we d... know what they were. We weren't able to ge... data, weren't able to assess the risks, noth... Goldman recalls a party held in Washingt... commemorate TSCA's twentieth annive...

Photograph of the artist's daughter, Beatrix, age four, from the Guest s... © Christopher Bucklow. Courtesy the artist and Lord Kitsuin Gallery, New Y...

one from the chemical industry got up ıte TSCA and said, 'This is the perfect statute. I wish every law could be like TSCA.'"

e primary target of Europe's new chemical cion is the more than 60,000 compounds . allowed to stay on the market without g. Under REACH, these chemicals will o be registered, evaluated for toxicity, and ized before being permitted to remain in fteen hundred chemicals are expected to ced on a 2008 list of "substances of very oncern." These toxins, which are known se cancer, alter genes, and affect fertility, e the first to be removed from the market producers are able to prove that they can lequately controlled." In addition to as- g chemicals in their raw form, REACH xtends to the endless array of consumer that utilize these compounds; thus, tens of ands of "downstream users," from con- ion companies to tennis-shoe manufac- and fashion houses, will be forced to find d report what chemicals are in their prod- nd what effects they have on human health ıe environment.

the end of 2008, the first sets of risk data be submitted to the E.U. Manufacturers ıen have ten more years to complete what nts to a scientific cataloguing of the chem- ıakeup of the global economy. Whereas egulators are forced to find scientifically im- ble definitive evidence of toxic exposure e acting, REACH acts on the basis of pre- on. European authorities consider the in- t toxicity of a substance and, based on an ıulation of evidence, determine whether its tial to cause harm is great enough to re- it from circulation. Unlike TSCA, CH places the burden of proof on manu- ers, who must demonstrate that their chem- an be used safely. The law also proposes to cally limit the amount of health-related hat companies can claim as proprietary.

itics of stricter chemical regulations have ontended that the price of compliance would r too steep. But the E.U. estimated that CH would cost European chemical manu- ers about $4 billion over fourteen years—a that amounts to less than 1 percent of their ined yearly revenue. The E.U. further cal- d that these expenses would be repaid many over by the resulting health benefits. Ac- ng to their figures, REACH would prevent 4,500 occupational cancer cases each year and e European health-care costs from ailments d to chemical exposure by $69 billion over ext three decades. Moreover, by establishing will be the first open, actually free market in chemicals, in which informed consumers will be able to make decisions as to what risks they are willing to take, REACH promotes new research into the development of safer chemicals. Chemists have already come up with substitutes for some of the most problematic toxic chemicals on the market, and the E.U. estimates that its environmental initiatives have spawned billions of dollars in "green" industries and technologies.

U.S. companies could be put at a serious competitive disadvantage if they do not acknowledge the changes taking place across the Atlantic. Americans are already losing ground to Europeans in the chemical business, having slipped in the past decade from a trade surplus with European manufacturers to a more than $28 billion deficit. That deficit promises to increase as environmentally aware consumers are given the opportunity to choose between European goods with chemicals that have undergone toxicity screening and American goods with unscreened chemicals. Because American companies interested in exporting to the E.U. will also have to supply toxicity data to the European authorities, REACH does present opportunities for U.S. consumers. Not only will these chemicals be subject to their first-ever health- and environmental-impact review but the findings will then be available on the European Chemical Agency's website. At that point, U.S. consumers may no longer choose to use untested American goods.

REACH'S PRIMARY TARGET IS THE 62,000 CHEMICALS THE U.S. HAS ALLOWED TO STAY ON THE MARKET WITHOUT TESTING OR REVIEW

The American public, along with the American media, has so far been mostly oblivious to the new chemical regulations coming out of Europe. The Bush Administration and U.S. manufacturers, however, have been fixated on it for years. REACH is far more than just another foreign ban of a specific chemical with which U.S. industry will have to contend; it strikes at the fundamental belief that the United States decides what can and cannot be contained in the goods sold all over the world. So as REACH was being debated in the European Parliament from 2003 to 2006, the U.S. government and the nation's industries teamed up to undertake an unprecedented international lobbying effort to kill or radically weaken the proposal.

The assault came from an assortment of gov ernment and industry offices. A memo that circulated at the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs denounced REACH as too "costly, burdensome, and complex" for industry to follow. If chemicals were put through

the rigors of review, a Commerce Department brief warned, "hundreds of thousands of Americans could be thrown out of their jobs." U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick submitted a protest to the World Trade Organization asserting that REACH amounted to a "non-tariff" barrier to foreign exporters. A delegation of State Department officials joined two Dow Chemical executives in Athens to lobby the Greeks, who then held the presidency of the European Union. Colin Powell himself sent out a seven-page cable to U.S. embassies throughout the world claiming that REACH "could present obstacles to trade" and cost American chemical producers tens of billions of dollars in lost exports. At the same time, Washington sent emissaries to such new E.U. members as Hungary, Poland, Estonia, and the Czech Republic—formerly Communist countries where environmental consciousness was far less developed than in Western Europe—in an effort to peel off support within the E.U. by claiming that REACH would hurt European firms competing in foreign markets. The State Department also recruited a coalition of allies to oppose REACH from countries heavily reliant on exports; pleas went out to Brazil, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, and others to develop a "coordinated outreach" strategy among "E.U. trading partners." In E.U. parliamentary hearings on REACH that I attended, I was able to identify lobbyists not only for the U.S. and European chemical industries but also for such downstream chemical users as cement, automobile, textile, and pharmaceutical companies. The U.S. lobbying effort amounted to an historic intrusion into European affairs. Robert Donkers, who in 2003 was stationed in the United States to explain REACH to Americans, invited me to consider the reverse scenario: European officials descending on Washington to lobby against a bill being considered in Congress. "It wouldn't be tolerated," he said. "We wouldn't last ten minutes!"

OUR GOVERNMENT REVEALED ONCE AGAIN THAT IT PUTS BUSINESS INTERESTS AHEAD OF THE SAFETY OF ITS OWN CITIZENS

By early 2006, REACH had already undergone a rewrite by the European Commission and had passed its first reading in the parliament. Nearly a thousand amendments had been voted on and consolidated. Environmentalists in Europe felt the standards had already been weakened in significant ways. Priority had been put on "high-volume chemicals" produced in excess of a thousand tons a year, with diminishing data requirements as the volume declined; broad exemptions were issued for certain plastics. But REACH still retained its core principles: that thousands of existing chemicals would be reviewed for their toxicity, that the data from reviews would be made public, and that responsibility for demonstrating a chemical's would rest with the manufacturers.

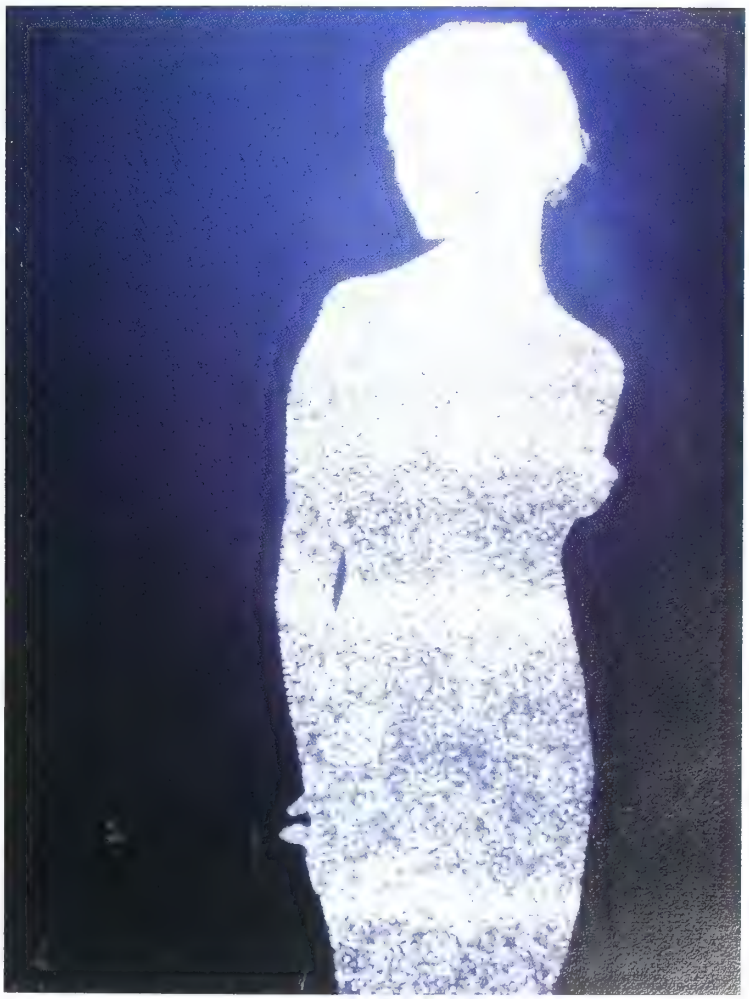
In Washington, however, President Bus naled that the struggle was far from over. H C. Boyden Gray to Brussels in February new U.S. ambassador to the E.U. A vetera publican operative and an heir to the Reynolds tobacco fortune, Gray had spent a in and out of government rewriting the rules vironmental oversight to reduce the burd business. As general counsel to the first Pre Bush, he helped transform how the EPA an er federal agencies were managed so that benefit analyses would be given precedence risk-based decisions. "This is the beast we confined and tamed," he told me, referring success in limiting U.S. regulatory laws.

One of Gray's first public undertakings a bassador began at AmCham E.U., an affiliate U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Brussels. Cham E.U. lobbies the E.U. on behalf of 140 companies, including Apple, Boeing, DuPont, General Motors, and McDonald's. ronmental policies are one of their top con In June 2006, Gray orchestrated a joint pre lease, from the United States and twelve countries, that objected to REACH's hazard- system for assessing risks and called for weak its registration requirements. That press rele turns out, was written at the offices of AmC E.U. and sent from the U.S. Mission in Bru One morning that June, I received a leaked of the original draft, which, thanks to Mic tracking software, included the editorial ch that were written into the document as it ma way through various readers. Where AmC E.U.'s address had once been now ran th primatur of the United States Mission to th ropean Union. This edit and others offered glimpse into the routine merging of the U.S. ernment with American corporations. W U.S. Representative Henry Waxman cond an investigation into the Bush Administrat efforts to undermine REACH, he unear dozens of pages of diplomatic cable traffic s ing how the government had coordinated i forts with those of industry. Talking points buying junkets, statistics (many of them pr inaccurate) had been shared. Instead of co ering these reforms on their merits, or revisi own failed regulations, our government de strated once again that it puts business int ahead of the safety of its own—an world's citizens.

The European Parliament finally voted t prove REACH on December 13, 2006. By ruary, the U.S. Department of Comm

had lobbied so vigorously against the
ed regulation, was hosting a seminar in
tte, North Carolina, to explain to com-
doing business in Europe how to comply
ıe law intended to protect Europeans. It
first of a series of sessions to be held with
can businesses across the country. In the
ıonth, representatives from the Pentagon,
e contractors, U.S. scientists, and Cali-
state officials met in Monterey to dis-
e effects REACH would have on military
are being used on U.S. bases in Europe.
l major American electronics and cos-
companies are already reformulating
roducts to meet the new E.U. standards.
uPont, Dow, and other large U.S. chem-
anufacturers are busy preparing toxicity
submit to the E.U. In many instances,
American chemical companies and most
tream manufacturers that utilize chemi-
ll have to purchase this data from the big
ations, which now stand to profit from the
H strictures.
ıy American states, tired of waiting for di-
ı from Washington, are now looking to
ls for ideas on environmental reform. Cal-
ı, Massachusetts, and New York have be-
xploring the possibility of implementing
nts of REACH in their state regulations;
e and Washington have cited Europe's
lent in their efforts to ban particular chem-
such as those poly-brominated flame re-
ıts found in children's sleepwear. Elsewhere
world, governments have worked to bring
own policies into line with REACH. The
ese Ministry of Commerce had REACH
ated into Mandarin within days of its pas-
European consultants also traveled to Chi-
show industry and government officials
what exporters will have to do to abide by
ıemical regulations. The Europeans were
g to aid their competitors in China, with
ı they have a significant trade deficit, be-
just about anything made in Chinese fac-
can end up in the hands of Europeans. To
ct its population, Europe is working back-
toward the potential sources of future
ical contamination. European consultants
anned out to Brazil, Mexico, South Africa,
ı Korea, Thailand, and other major players
e world economy. And in the upcoming
Robert Donkers, who had long tried to
arn American businesses of this tectonic
in environmental influence, is expected to
ansferred to India, where he will be advis-
ıat up-and-coming economic powerhouse.
ıe European Union is demanding that its
tries take responsibility for the collateral
h damages that its products may cause, and
oing so with innovations that are leading the

world. In the process, American consumers are being put in a position that would have been unimaginable as little as a decade ago. Shortly after the EPA was founded, the United States imposed domestic restrictions on some of the most dangerous pesticides and other chemicals, and U.S. companies responded by exporting millions of pounds of these toxins to Third World countries, where such regulations didn't exist. The irony is that our nation's steady retreat from environmental leadership means it may soon become a dumping ground for chemicals deemed too



hazardous by more progressive countries. Meanwhile, Americans may also be the incidental beneficiaries of protective standards created by the government of a foreign country in which they have no say. In recent years the United States has opposed a multitude of environmental and human-rights initiatives that have gained international legitimacy without its participation. Indeed, this country is no longer where it likes to imagine itself to be—at the axis of influence around which the rest of the world revolves. ■

raph from the Guest series by Christopher Bucklow.
sy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London

A CURIOUS ATTRACTION

On the quest for antigravity

By Jon Mooallem



1. SPOOKY ACTION AT A DISTANCE

Even Sir Isaac Newton recognized that the idea of gravity—that one object can instantaneously yank another through total nothingness and from extremely far away—was so counterintuitive, "so great an absurdity," that no intelligent person could be expected to stand for it. It lacked the elegant horse sense of the old ideas, such as the rock falling to the earth because it is made of earth. Newton was able to imagine this black magic moving the apple because, as one biographer admiringly writes, "he embraced invisible forces." And he did so more promiscuously than we choose to remember. The inventor of modern gravity was also a fanatical alchemist. It's just that, in the case of universal gravitation, the invisible force he embraced turned out to be real.

"Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensible to everyone," Albert Einstein once wrote. Yet in 1915, Einstein's theory of general relativity pulled gravity even further from the realm of common sense, entangling it in recondite mathematics and dreamlike geometry.[1] Initially, it didn't seem to matter whether Einstein was right; his masterpiece was att for not being *populist* en "A great and serious grade step," one Princ ian called it. "All pre physical theories been thus intelligib [to] the whole ra man." A flummoxe lumbia professor nounced that general tivity smacked of Bolsh and must be stopped.

In 1919 astronomers the first significant observ to support general relativity they watched starlight ben through space-time curved by the "It is not possible to put Einstein's ory into really intelligible words, *New York Times* noted in its cov of the event. One scientist tried, was as though he'd had a conve experience into a very small cult. this new observation showed, he the *Times*, was that parallel lines c eventually meet, that three angle triangle needn't add up to 180 deg and that "a circle is not really circ The editors headlined the story, in "Stars Not Where They Seeme Were Calculated to Be, but No Need Worry."

As in Newton's time, a seemi unbridgeable rift opened betw the everyman's visceral experie of gravity and the specialist's ex nation of it, and the laymen di always accept this estrangem

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[1] *The theory of general relativity conceived of empty space as actually being a fabric of space and time, with gravity caused by the imprints objects make in it. Imagine the depression a basketball would make if placed in the center of a taut sheet; when a less massive object, like a marble, travels close to the ball, it will be derailed off its course and begin circling in the curved depression made by the ball. In this way, the earth orbits the sun, and we are forever foundering in the deep space-time trench around the earth. Einstein's gravity is not so much a force as a circumstance: the very material of the cosmos has crumpled steeply around you until, almost conspiratorially, all of your possible paths have been narrowed to one.*

Space Travellers Will Have to Learn to Live in a Gravit Environment, 1933 © Mary Evans Picture L

the wry dispassion of the . Somehow it just didn't seem that this ubiquitous force af- g us all should be understood ly a select few. A man named ge Francis Gillette published *d Oxen of Science*, claiming Einstein's "self created fairy- of 4th dimensional space" was unniest mental belly ache in- l on science." It was also "utter yrot." Gillette offered a num- f ideas in place of Einstein's . Among them was "The All os Doughnut."[2]

spite the initial resistance, how- physics rapidly fell in love with al relativity. More observations orted it, and its predictions ed to operate on too astronomi- scale to check directly with any ologically feasible experiments. ein's gravity came to stand as a of untestable truth.

vertheless, as physics has ed to refine its understanding of y, a sanguine subculture of am- s and outsiders has continued eedle the accepted thinking eaknesses, setting out not to r define this invisible force o overcome it. Much of this re- ional research asks whether we t finally be able to *do* something this power and not simply suffer it. Today, the website Ameri- Antigravity serves as a clearing- e for this quasi-scientific upris- and the mere copiousness of its ngs has a way of making the in- ble feel almost inevitable. Sure- 'cure" for gravity will arise from thing here: the "Angelina VI" lightning generator, the Beifeld- vn Effect, the internal plasma nsion/contraction engine, the lse Gravity Generator based on arged Y Ba2Cu3O7-y supercon- or with composite-crystal struc- or the Quantum Vacuum Path- Theory, which "describes a

lette envisioned the universe as being posed of little masses that zipped d and collided. "In all the Cosmos e is naught but straight flying, ping, caroming and again straight g. . . . A mass unit's career is but ing, jumping, bumping, rejumping, mping, and finally unlumping. . . . *vitation," he concluded, "and screwing are synonymous."*

plausible mechanism" for "spooky action at a distance."[3]

We are suspenders of disbelief, easily enchanted by possibility, addicted to wonder. So whatever measure of faith we harbor in the fallibility of gravity may, like our faith in so many things, be sustained not by facts or lack of facts as much as by the sheer strength of our longing for it to be so. After all, what clearer vision of joyousness and freedom is there than a band of jumpsuited astronauts in zero gravity tumbling upward and over themselves like giddy pinwheels? "Of all the natural forces," wrote futurist Arthur C. Clarke, "gravity is the most mysterious and the most implacable." Yet Clarke also assumes that the high Himalayan peaks will one day be as saturated with tourists as the beaches of Cannes, once personal gravity control is perfected. "The Sherpas and Alpine guides will, of course, be indignant," he writes. "But progress is inexorable."

After a century of science fiction on the subject, a life unfettered by gravity may feel strangely like an entitlement. Indeed, there is mounting suspicion even in the most respectable spheres of physics that the force we call "law"—this fact evidenced by every dropped paper clip and sunset, as frank as a falling anvil—may not actually be settled at all.

2. GRAVITY RADIO

In 2002, at a Princeton physics symposium titled "Science and Ultimate Reality," Raymond Chiao announced his plans to turn gravity into both electricity and light and electricity and light into gravity. For more than twenty years, Chiao had been laboring over a revolutionary communications apparatus that would work by linking these disparate forces. He'd originally called the device a "gravitational radiation antenna," but his son-in-law eventually came up with a better name: gravity radio.

Chiao is sixty-six, an MIT alumnus, and a fellow of both the Optical Society of America and the American Physical Society. At the time of the Princeton symposium, he was still a celebrated professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley. As Chiao spoke, he described his contraption in the drab and equation-encumbered language of physics. Yet the rattling wondrousness of gravity radio and the world into which it could deliver us was impossible to miss. What could gravity radio do? Gravity radio could beam unstoppable, information-rich gravity waves straight through the soil, crust, and core of the earth to be received—unattenuated and unscathed—by gravity radios on opposite ends of the planet. Relaying a flimsy signal between satellites might be a serviceable way to dial China, but here was a phone call of unwavering directness. Point gravity radio up, and gravity radio could send emails to Venus, or farther, at the speed of light. Gravity radio could broadcast *Fresh Air* to Alpha Centauri. Gravity radio could pick up gravity waves still emanating from the big bang; which is to say, gravity radio could be a baby monitor tuned to the infancy of time.

"It is hard to know whether the assembly was more astonished by the idea that this might be possible," one observer in attendance noted, "or by Chiao's lack of concern for his own reputation." No one has ever even seen a gravity wave. Einstein predicted that these ripples in space-time are sent coursing through the cosmos any time an object moves. Yet Einstein himself had trouble believing this at first; then, conveniently, he decided that if gravity waves did exist (we now know they almost certainly do), they would be such slight disturbances that we'd never be able to detect them. For half a century, in fact, no one bothered to try.

As it happens, while Chiao delivered his paper, science's best hope of pinning down gravity waves was being readied to switch on after thirty years of development. The experiment is called LIGO, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, and involves multimillion-dollar arrays of

[3] *Stray too far into the site's labyrinth of links and you could end up, as I did, listening to an interview with "a man who saw somebody dear to him suddenly transform into a strange, reptilian creature." But with gravity most of us are ill equipped to distinguish between the hokum and the shreds of austere physics on which it is imaginatively based; "spooky action at a distance," for instance, is Einstein's phrase and describes a genuine conundrum of quantum physics.*

lasers streaking through sets of two-and-a-half-mile-long stainless-steel tubes in Washington State and the Louisiana woods. Still, even with these massive antennae, LIGO might barely be able to detect the universe's most robust gravity waves, such as those emitted from violent supernovas. Gravity radio would practically fit on a tabletop.

"This is the too-good-to-be-true argument," a colleague of Chiao's told me. "It threatens everyone else's intuition." When a reporter for the magazine *New Scientist* visited Chiao at Berkeley in 2003, he found gravity radio on the floor. It was a slab of superconducting ceramic, a couple of empty paint cans for insulation, some polystyrene cups, and bits of wood, all disassembled and piled into a cardboard box. It looked like trash. Chiao was funding gravity radio himself, ordering materials from high school suppliers. A peer-reviewed journal, he said, had rejected one of his gravity-radio papers without explanation.

When I called Chiao two years later, he seemed understandably ambivalent about explaining the promise and controversies of gravity radio to a novice. He still hadn't performed any experiments; he was refining his theories. "Let me put it this way," he said. "It's a long shot. But I think it's worth continued research."

Several weeks later, seeming more confident about gravity radio than ever, Chiao suddenly left his job at Berkeley to build it. I was welcome to visit his new lab, he said, if I was willing to make the drive.

3. OUR ENEMY NUMBER ONE

I'd first learned about gravity radio while tracing the loose ends of a figure whose life I was coming to see as both a cautionary tale and a catalyst for just this kind of questioning. Roger Babson was an obdurate entrepreneur so giddy with the possibilities of the twentieth century that he saw even in gravity's downward tug an opportunity waiting to be leveraged. Born in 1875 in Gloucester, Massachusetts, Babson rejected the values of the town's "codfish aristocracy," instead holding fast the good Protestant value of self-reliance. He turned his small investment newsletter into a trusted empire called Babson's Reports; founded Babson College near Wellesley, Massachusetts; and became both wealthy and famous when, it is said, he predicted the Great Crash of 1929 with his signature "Babsonchart."

Babson went barking into the post–World War II years with a beautiful idea: namely, that gravity, the most immutable law of the Enlightenment, was unacceptable and should be changed. "It seems as if there must be discovered some partial insulator of Gravity which could be used to save millions of lives and prevent accidents," he reasoned in his treatise "Gravity—Our Enemy Number One." His antipathy was steeped in grief. In the summer of 1893, Babson's three-year-old sister, Edith, drowned in the Annisquam River near their house. "Yes they say she was 'drowned,'" Babson wrote, but Edith was a fine swimmer. He blamed "Gravity which came up and seized her like a dragon and brought her to the bottom." In 1947 his teenage grandson also drowned, after diving off a motorboat to rescue a friend. Less than eighteen months later, Babson had formed the Gravity Research Foundation.

The foundation's underlying imperative was to learn all it could about gravity and defeat it. It rose to meet the gravity problem with seemingly unlimited funds and a fervor that suggests a near-total unawareness of its Sisyphean nature. Frozen-food magnate Clarence Birdseye, a Gravity Research Foundation trustee, suspected that a gravity insulator might be discovered by accident, through unrelated research. So twenty-five hundred labs were contacted and asked to keep their eyes peeled. Three men were kept on permanent watch at the patent office. Thomas Edison once wondered aloud to Babson how it was that birds could fly—maybe there was something there. Thus, a lavish collection of stuffed birds, from five thousand different species, was amassed to be studied, just in case.

George Rideout—foundation president and Babson's longtime right-hand man—devised an annual essay contest with a thousand-dollar purse to inspire research on "the possibilities of discovering some partial insulator, reflector or absorber" of gravity. Babson and Rideout purchased a tw
five-year run of *Time* magazine
as an almanac, searching for co
tions between international inci
and the phases of the moon.
wondered if gravity's pull on the
affected temperament, and mail
exploratory survey to subscrib
Babson's investment bulletin. A
straitlaced industrialists were ask
fill in their weight and to agree
agree with such statements as "I
physical comfort," "I am an unim
sive talker," and "Ladies like me

"Gravity Aids for Weak Hearts
of many pamphlets the foundation
lished, recommends lessening gra
strain on the body by moving i
bungalow-style house or using a
"Gravity and Posture" states, "I
hooves us therefore to give the bo
possible aid in maintaining the p
gravity pull by wearing the right co
Digging through what's left of the
dation's early affairs in the Babson
lege archives, I found an entire f
of these instructional guides, with
titles as "Gravity and the Wea
and "Gravity and Your Feet."
linked gravity to the common
house fires, insomnia, poor crop
ditions, tilted uteruses, the firi
General Douglas MacArthur
shrinking of the elderly, tubercu
"worries," varicose veins, and he
rhoids—which, one article asserts
merely varicose veins of the rect

"It was a time when amat
could still hope and dream abou
ing contributors," David Kais
professor of physics and the hi
of science at MIT, told me. K
has been fascinated with the Gr
Research Foundation since he w
part of his doctoral thesis about
Harvard. Babson's men were no
perts, Kaiser explained, but t
hearts were in the right place. "
son thought, 'I'll just get all my
dies together and we'll fix it.'"

In some ways, undoing gra
seemed to be just another entre
neurial project Babson felt compe
to get off the ground. (It was not
cidentally, his oddest venture
also envisaged chocolate-covered
to bail out Gloucester's econo
asbestos-lined pants pockets, to
vent men from igniting their crot
when putting away their pipes;

t America's moral compass, the
n of a federal "Department of
ter Training," to be headed by
ecretary of Character.") As a
ted businessman, he couldn't
gravity to go on wasting itself,
things in the same old direc-
r its own purposes and not ours.
city, light, magnetism—if all
things could be insulated and
lled, he argued, surely gravity
It seemed only reasonable.
orld peace will come only as the
of Jesus grows in the hearts of
nd as the principles of birth con-
e taught to overcrowded nations
e latent power of gravity is used
ly as air, water and sunlight,"
n wrote in his autobiography,
s *and Reactions*. He didn't know
aused gravity, and he didn't care.
knew was that the damn stuff
erywhere, and only a sap would
accepting its reprimand.

'LATION

ow did you get onto it?" Rainer
, professor emeritus at MIT, want-
know when I brought up the
y Research Foundation. "You got
Mr. Chiao, so that's a bad sign," he
"And now you got onto this—
is an even worse sign!"
iss, a short, charismatic man of
ty-three, had returned from
ana late the previous night after
g LIGO—the grand experiment
dreamed up thirty years earlier.
ervatory" is the key concept of
aser Interferometer Gravitation-
ave Observatory. Ultimately,
) aims to diagram the universe
arting gravity waves emitted by
ng bodies, just as we now see
s by the light they emit. Map-
the "gravity sky" will open a
field of astronomy, Weiss said—
heoretically capable of assem-
a picture of the big bang.
hoped to find out more about
) in order to gauge just how far-
ed Chiao's gravity-radio scheme
ally is. Weiss resented my even
paring the two endeavors. He was
league of Chiao's at MIT for a
and still periodically writes Chiao
int out what he considers gravity
's many unsolvable problems. "He
'Yeah, yeah. I'll get to it.'" Weiss
said of Chiao. "I like him. He's a fine man. But he's not a doer. He likes to think about things."

On the phone, Weiss had urged me to stop writing about gravity waves altogether and cover "the real revolution" in physics—something called "Inflation," which, he said, "is probably the most shocking discovery in my lifetime." Now that I'd flown across the country to meet Weiss, my first question was about Roger Babson. He squinted at me from behind his desk. "I'm worried about you," he said. Babson was a businessman, Weiss went on, who went loopy over gravity because his relative got killed in an airplane. I corrected him, relaying the fates of Babson's grandson and poor Edith. "And so gravity did the job on her too, eh?" Weiss said. He sounded sympathetic. Then his voice rose. "Well, there wouldn't have been any water there for her to swim around in if there was no gravity!"

I pointed to his office door in my defense. Weiss had taped up a flyer announcing the Gravity Research Foundation's 2006 Awards for Essays on Gravitation, the fifty-seventh annual competition. The foundation has endured, its mission having matured from conquering gravity to understanding it. The essay contest, David Kaiser told me, is where graduate students now "look to see the coolest, hottest stuff." In his doctoral thesis, Kaiser argues that the contest helped return physicists to the study of gravity. Generations of graduate students had been told that there was no more work to do in the field after Einstein; one could merely plug numbers into his equations and futz around in the abstract. Rainer Weiss said that when he attended MIT in the Fifties, general relativity was taught only in the math department. Gravity, in short, had lost its place in the physical world.

At that time, when a physics professor might earn only five thousand dollars a year, Babson's foundation was offering one thousand dollars for a brief theoretical essay on gravity. In 1953 a brilliant but down-on-his-luck postdoc named Bryce DeWitt submitted a paper and won. (DeWitt, with the backing of a southern financier Babson had introduced him to, went on to



n esteemed gravity-research in-
t University of North Car
, Chapel Hill.) Two Princetoni-
e the prize in 1954, and
in 1957 it was a team from Cornell
. As the contest rules soft-
ened over time—it now solicits papers "on the subject of gravitation"—icons like Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking won, too. In 1981 a young Berkeley professor named Raymond Chiao took second place for an essay on "Gravitational Radiation Antenna." It was among Chiao's first staggering steps toward gravity radio—an idea, Chiao later told me, that initially leaped out at him from one of Bryce DeWitt's equations.

"Despite himself," Kaiser says, "Babson and his foundation—this band of misfits and amateurs—actually played a role in bringing great minds back to gravity. Fifty years ago no one was doing this work. Now it's what gets government funding. There are fancy conferences and big expensive equipment. It's what you make NOVA specials about."

The day before my meeting with Rainer Weiss, I tracked down a monument on the campus of Tufts University. I found the four-foot block of granite beside a chapel overlooking the Boston skyline.

THIS MONUMENT HAS BEEN
ERECTED BY THE
GRAVITY RESEARCH FOUNDATION
ROGER W. BABSON FOUNDER
IT IS TO REMIND STUDENTS OF
THE BLESSINGS FORTHCOMING
WHEN A SEMI-INSULATOR IS
DISCOVERED IN ORDER TO HARNESS
GRAVITY AS A FREE POWER
AND REDUCE AIRPLANE ACCIDENTS

Babson issued at least thirteen such monuments to various colleges, accompanying them in most cases with sizable gifts of stock. The endowments were to be held for a certain number of years and then dedicated to research in the fight against gravity. By the time the Tufts stock was freed up in 1989, it had appreciated to roughly half a million dollars. Absolved by the foundation's lawyers from its original antigravitational obligations, Tufts used this windfall to found its Institute of Cosmology, which is now a prestigious training ground for theoretical physicists. The institute's director, Alex Vilenkin, told me that new graduates are led to the monument and ordered to kneel so that an apple may be ceremoniously dropped on their heads.

I was beginning to see Babson's misdirected burst of energy as having loosed a ripple effect not unlike a gravity wave itself—nearly imperceptible but warping the fabric of legitimate physics ever so slightly wherever it reached. Still, I was unprepared for the epilogue to Vilenkin's story. "The funny thing is," he said, "we actually do work on antigravity."

He was referring to the theory of inflationary cosmology, the theoretical-physics revolution Weiss had urged me toward. The theory seeks to explain why the universe's expansion, once thought to be powered by momentum from the big bang, is, in fact, speeding up. Its answer is "dark energy," a power aggressively pushing everything in the cosmos away from everything else. It is, by definition, antigravity. Cosmologists now suspect that dark energy accounts for as much as 75 percent of the energy in existence; that is, our universe is mostly this thing we only just discovered. As Weiss put it, "It turns out there is no vacuum. The vacuum is full of stuff!"

Perhaps not since general relativity has a theory produced such maddeningly counterintuitive corollaries, calling into question fundamental presumptions of physics, even relativity itself. "A dark mystery is burbling up," Weiss told me, "and it says: We don't have a working knowledge of the universe."

Inflation happens to be David Kaiser's field. He was surprised but pleased that a scientist of Vilenkin's stature would refer to dark energy as "antigravity." "Repulsive gravity," instead, has emerged as the term of art. Nothing about dark energy suggests it can be harnessed, generated, or, say, spread on the bottom of your shoe to facilitate expeditious slam-dunking. But physicists may worry that borrowing a shibboleth like "antigravity" would open them up to discussions with the wrong crowd.

I asked Kaiser how he'd respond to some earnest, pseudo-scientific hobbyist pointing to the relatively l
covery of dark energy to argue th
more fantastical antigravitatio
pirations of laymen—of us all—
never be deemed impossible.

"I would grant that," he
Though, he added, he wouldn
this same equanimity if he had
come so enamored of "our wacky
Babson." When Kaiser does g
like this, he chooses to be hearte
it. "Usually my reaction is, 'I
great that people are interested i
we do all day?'" Besides, he to
"crazy ideas are sometimes righ

5. UNWANTED DEGREES OF FRE

A low charcoal-colored storm
ied to break as I drove toward Yo
to meet Raymond Chiao. In
Chiao abandoned the flagship
of the University of Californ
tem—Berkeley—for its fledglin
up, the University of Calif
Merced. The college was exactly
months old. It had eight hundr
dents. For the low-profile ventur
hours' drive southeast of San Fr
co, Chiao's appointment was "a
recruiting triumph." Merced's pr
lease touted his research in gr
tional radiation and listed hi
from the Gravity Research Fo
tion first among his many hono

Chiao's laboratory is several
from the unfinished campus, se
from Highway 99—past severa
yards, some sheep, and acres o
soming almond orchards. The u
sity had erected a lone building
on the decommissioned Castl
Force Base. Nearby, mid-centur
fighters and transporters were set
make an air museum. They cr
together on the flat, featureless l
reliquary of ancient propeller p
in khaki and chrome.

Chiao had just finished lunch
I arrived. I asked after the gr
radio prototype I'd read about
paint cans, the wood. It was box
in a closet and forgotten, he sai
tering his hands in front of h
though to exonerate himself. H
now arrived at a "much cleare
much simpler" concept. "I have re
a point of conclusion that is, I thi
controvertible," he announced. "U
I've made a mistake."

vity radio is essentially a trans- Chiao explained. He would waves of electromagnetism—ıose broadcast by a radio sta- into two drops of helium, and ould bounce off the helium as waves. The gravity waves would e sent, however far and through ver obstacles, to a second grav- io, a receiver. There they would ıer drops of helium and be con- l back to usable radio waves. 's calculations led him to be- hat nothing would be lost in onversions. He could, in physics ce, "freeze out" all the helium's nted degrees of freedom." That e cooled the helium, it would re- ne form of incoming energy by ing it back as the other, and not sorganized array of other forms, s sound or heat.

iao was trying to pick up ex- ngly weak gravity waves through sturbances they made in two ex- ngly small drops of helium—as ed to picking up very powerful , like those from exploding stars, gh the disturbances they made GO's two-and-a-half-mile lasers. Chiao explained, looks impossi- ven much of the field's thinking Einstein. But to compensate for tenna's infinitesimal size, Chiao anking on triggering an elusive omenon of quantum mechanics. elium, he believed, would act as erfluid": every atom would shud- ıder the gravity wave as one co- t object, amplifying the effect.[4] lon't care what people say," Chiao ne. "I really don't care. I think people like Rai Weiss will say I'm kpot. But I know that I'm not—ially after writing this paper." o had recently delivered a new pa- ı gravity radio to a colloquium in bird, Utah, where he was award- e prestigious Lamb Medal for un-

related work in optics. To celebrate, some former students had organized a series of laudatory panels called Chiaofest.

He was eager to walk me through the paper and printed off an even more recent version than the one he'd previously emailed. In this latest refinement, he'd linked his hypothesis to an ironclad constant in physics called Planck's mass. Although this maneuver did little to convince two other physicists I spoke to, it clearly put gravity radio on inviolable ground as far as Chiao was concerned. He underlined the paragraph in red, read it aloud slowly, then flipped the paper across his desk to me as if it were an unbeatable poker hand.

At Merced I'd expected to find a bitter man in exile. But Chiao seemed disarmingly content—relieved, even—to be there. He'd already put his start-up funds toward the sophisticated low-temperature lab that gravity radio would require, having ordered two European-built dilution refrigerators at a cost of half a million dollars. He was building from the ground up and would be ready to perform his experiment in five years. Maybe it wouldn't work. But the most important thing was to build his device and, through gravity radio, let the universe speak for itself. "In the end," Chiao said, "the truth will prevail. Especially in physics."

I'd heard, from more than one physicist, the real-life allegory of Joseph Weber, another accomplished Gravity Research Foundation honoree. In the late Sixties, Weber announced he'd made the world's first successful detection of a gravity wave using a stubby pair of aluminum bars in his University of Maryland lab. "It was a very unfortunate event for him," Rainer Weiss had explained, "because up to that time he'd been perfectly dispassionate about this." Physicists around the country, spurred to think seriously about gravity-wave experiments for the first time, eagerly built their own "Weber bars," trying to confirm his work and push it further. No one saw anything. But Weber clung to his story, stubbornly, for years. He traveled the country, announcing his findings at conferences. Another physicist shadowed and heckled him to safeguard the integrity of the field. The two men had to be separated on-

nearly a century, physics has lived ı kind of acute schizophrenia: general ity and quantum mechanics, both use- edictors of the way things work in and mselves, can't be made to fit together a single "Theory of Everything." tum mechanics is used to understand mena on the atomic level and smaller, lativity applies to those on much larger . The real significance of gravity radio, orks, is that Chiao will have teased out erface between the two.

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Our Head-Up Display projects vital information as a virtual im onto the windshield. This allows you to check your curre navigation, all while keeping your eyes focused on the road ahead. It's another illuminating idea from BMW. Learn m

stage at MIT after raising their fists. Demoralized but still adamant, Weber kept bars running until he died in 2000.

When I asked Chiao how he knew he wasn't turning into another Joseph Weber, he characterized Weber's work as wishful thinking. "Allowing wishful thinking to dominate your assessment of reality is a sin," he said.

6. A BASEMENT IN WELLESLEY HILLS

The Gravity Research Foundation is currently headquartered a mile from Babson College, in the suburb of Wellesley Hills. George Rideout Jr., the son of Babson's right-hand man, inherited the Gravity Research Foundation in 1988, six years before his father's death, and now administers its sole remaining activity—the essay contest—from a cluttered back room of his basement. Rideout, a subdued man with a long patrician chin, explained that the job is largely administrative. He xeroxes contest submissions and mails them to an anonymous panel of judges every winter. Rideout minored in physics in college, he said, but cannot read the essays with any great understanding.

In preparation for our meeting, Rideout had set up a card table in the center of the basement headquarters, with glasses of water on coasters resting in front of each of our seats. His setting also included a yellow legal pad, on top of which was written my name, followed by the date and a list of points he intended to cover. A battery of filing cabinets holding the complete archive of essay submissions lined one wall; nearby, hung among some crayon-drawn birthday cards, was a handwritten note from Abraham Lincoln to his surgeon general. Something Mr. Babson had collected, Rideout told me when I happened to notice it.

I had spent the previous day rifling through the Gravity Research Foundation's scant archives at Babson College, watching in those pages a man toil earnestly toward his own hamfisted theory of everything—a [illegible] imagining a universe in which gra[illegible] was the greatest asset and the most pervasive menace. But I also detected in those papers the foundation's rising prestige as the years wore on. Then, following the minutes from Gravity Day 1958, the paper trail ran out.

Babson had sponsored Gravity Day every summer as part of a conference on "Investments and Gravity" at the foundation's headquarters in New Hampshire. Attendees were largely from the business world. Thus, a presentation on "Eliminating Weight" might dovetail with a talk like "Who Should Buy Mutual Funds?" Conventioneers were invited to see Isaac Newton's bed, view the stuffed-bird collection, or sit in special Japanese-made "Gravity Chairs"—undulating wooden recliners that alleviated gravity's strain on the legs. "Remember," exclaimed the brochures, "that gravity is Enemy Number One for middle aged and older people."

Eventually some airline executives began attending, as did Igor Sikorsky, the inventor of the first successful helicopter. By 1958, the minutes depict a serious-minded crowd of 278 discussing general relativity and joking about various quack entrants in that year's essay contest. According to one attendee, many of the essayists had devised their arguments simply by reinventing gravity "from scratch, with a mind uncluttered by knowledge." None of the conventioneers pointed out that they were gathered there because, ten years earlier, Roger Babson had done precisely that.

Babson, then an eighty-three-year-old man, was relegated to a brief paragraph at the end of the minutes. "Before the close of the session," the record concludes, "Mr. Babson reported on the question of the physical reality of the examples of levitation mentioned in the Bible." He'd polled Christian Scientists, Roman Catholics, and Protestant clergy and asked that the foundation convene every Easter to discuss the matter further.

George Rideout Jr. wasn't sure he had ever attended a Gravity Day. Much of what Rideout knew about Babson, he admitted, came from his father and the autobiography, *Actions and Reactions*. But he had enjoyed romping around the New Hampshire compound as a child. He liked the Japanese Gravity Chairs; they were comfortable. "It's too bad," Rideout said from across the card table. "They sold that place, and I don't think they kept any of the chairs." He then[illegible] ed to what remained of the f[illegible] tion's stuffed-bird collection. A [illegible] necked specimen sat upright [illegible] filing cabinets to my left, and a [illegible] squatter bird perched by the op[illegible] wall. "It's some kind of duck up[illegible]" Rideout said, noting the webbe[illegible]

When I relayed what I'd lear[illegible] the Cosmology Institute at Tufts[illegible] out reached behind him for a pl[illegible] the gravity monument. But h[illegible] swept into his still-full glass of [illegible] The glass –having no choice—t[illegible] over. Ice cubes skirted across th[illegible] table. There was suddenly a p[illegible] "Let me go get a towel," Rideou[illegible]

A photocopy of "Black Holes [illegible] Black," an essay by Stephen Ha[illegible] had gotten the worst of the spill. [illegible] not have noticed Rideout slid[illegible] into position on the table as we [illegible] He'd been bringing out variou[illegible] vant artifacts as he steered our c[illegible] sation down the talking points [illegible] pad. Much of his presentation d[illegible] on the stature of the foundation [illegible] I assumed he was saving the Ha[illegible] paper as a robust finale. It inc[illegible] hand-drawn diagrams, and I t[illegible] brusquely paradigm-shattering ti[illegible] sign of its significance in the his[illegible] physics. The Gravity Research [illegible] dation awarded it third place in [illegible]

Soon Rideout returned with a [illegible] hand towel that he spread ca[illegible] across a dry section of the flo[illegible] brought over the first few pages [illegible] Hawking paper and arranged th[illegible] the towel. Then, with a kind o[illegible] but patient dignity, he knelt [illegible] them dry.

7. THE MYSTERY SPOT

After returning home from Ne[illegible] land, my wife and I took a drive [illegible] California redwood forest one S[illegible] afternoon. Our destination was th[illegible] tery Spot, a small plot of land [illegible] "the laws of physics do not a[illegible] "Within the Mystery Spot," a b[illegible] yellow brochure claims, "it appe[illegible] though every law of gravitatio[illegible] gone haywire, turned topsy-turv[illegible] just doesn't make sense." Grainy [illegible] tos show a ball rolling uphill, son[illegible] leaning so far back he seems to h[illegible] and an old man standing on a wa[illegible] cording to the promotional mate[illegible]

r of theories have been worked
y to explain this aberration: an
of carbon dioxide or radiation, a
a vortex," underground metal
mplanted by aliens.

uide in a ranger-style uniform led
of us up a hillside into a cabin
cribed as "the grandfather of all
can funhouses." The wooden
oped in one direction and the
ewed off in others. The guide an-
ed that we were in an epicenter
tery, where unknowable forces
l and the power of gravity frays.
he began, slowly, to bend back-
om the waist. He kept on bend-
nore, further, *Matrix*-like—until
ds touched down on the floor be-
im. Emboldened, a boy there
is mother and older brother dove
kind of handstand, corkscrew-
s pubescent torso like a marlin
d on an invisible line. It was stun-
'd read about a psychology pro-
at UC Santa Cruz who brings his
here to demonstrate how optical
ns operate. But I found myself ig-
any rational explanations of the
ry Spot's mysteriousness, instead
myself in a kind of simple glee.
my wife, who had threatened to
the car, now seemed delighted
strange push and mild nausea
r of us could deny feeling.

1940 a certain Mr. Prather first
ed to have discovered "puzzling
ions in gravity" on this land and
tly opened the Mystery Spot as
hy "mind-boggling" amusement.
an era of amusements and, not
nnectedly, of war. Science was
g in its one perfunctory direc-
forward. Physics would build the
that gravity lowered on Japan
quiet and characteristic indiffer-
thirty-two feet per second, per
d. Who then could fault Roger
n for believing, with a faint and
r measure of desperation, that
trajectories were possible? "The
ssing of Gravity today is at the
where the harnessing of elec-
was when Ben Franklin flew his
luring a thunderstorm," Babson
in 1950. Free power from grav-
the next thing on the scientists'
da. It has been delayed by the
's atomic craze to kill people; but
oming," he insisted. "Be patient."
hen I called Rainer Weiss a few weeks later to tell him about Chiao's move to Merced, he became suddenly optimistic. "I bet you something good will come of it," he said. Although he had no hope for gravity radio, he felt that a physicist of Chiao's caliber, given this new opportunity to do well-funded experiments, would end up making some important contribution to the field. Ideas are nice, Weiss explained, but they need to be checked and honed through actual experiments. In science, progress means industriously refining one's vision of the world until it reflects reality. This is to say that in science, progress means the exact opposite of what it meant for Roger Babson.

Babson assumed he could will the universe's most elemental mechanism into a more agreeable shape, that he could keep hammering away at it until it gave. In the closing chapter of *Actions and Reactions*, he wrote, "Perhaps the foremost lesson I have learned is that emotions rule the world, rather than statistics, information, or anything else." This may be his stoic confession, a recognition of the blinding force of his own impracticable idealism. He concedes that the longing for what should be possible does not easily give way in the implacable face of what actually is.

In the redwoods that afternoon, as gravity suddenly seemed to slacken its grip, I realized we'd been lured to the Mystery Spot by the promise of finding longing and reality finally, if only fleetingly, aligned. It felt like a celebration, a homecoming into our own imaginations. We were chattering, pointing, laughing. Suddenly a woman climbed onto a table, leaned startlingly far over the edge, and balanced there for a friend's camera. "This should be in a commercial," someone else yelled, overtaken by wonder.

I watched a little girl dressed entirely in pink—with pink sandals, pink fur trim on her coat, and pink-sequined fringe on her skirt—stretch out her arms and start to twirl on a curious axis. Then the tour guide cupped a hand to his mouth and hollered, "If anyone wants to walk up the walls, come with me!" And we followed him into the adjoining room, drifting uphill. ■



ADMIRAL

By T. C. Boyle

She knew in her heart it was a mistake, but she'd been laid off and needed the cash, and her memories of the Strikers were mostly on the favorable side, so when Mrs. Striker called—*Gretchen, this is Gretchen' Mrs. Striker?*—she'd said yes, she'd love to come over and hear what they had to say. First, though, she had to listen to her car cough as she drove across town (fuel pump, that was her father's opinion, offered in a flat voice that said it wasn't his problem, not anymore, not now that she was grown and living back at home after a failed attempt at life), and she nearly stalled the thing turning into the Strikers' block. And then did stall it as she tried, against any reasonable expectation of success, to parallel park in front of their great rear- [illegible]tress of a house. It [illegible]ge punching in the code at [illegible]te and seeing how things were [illegible]t and the same, how the trees [illegible]n while the flowerbeds re- [illegible]tate of suspended ani- [illegible]thing in perpetual bloom



and clipped to within a millimeter of perfection. The gardeners saw to that. A whole battalion of them that swarmed over the place twice a week with their blowers and edgers and trimmers, at war with the weeds, the insects, the gophers and ground squirrels, and the very tendency of the display plants to want to grow outside the box. At least that was how she remembered it. The gardeners. And how Admiral would rage at the windows, showing his teeth and scrabbling with his claws—and if he could [illegible] chewed through glass he would done it. "That's right, boy," she [illegible] "that's right—don those bad men ste your dead leaves an You go, boy. Yo That's right."

She rang the bell front door and it Mrs. Striker who ans it but another vers herself in a white apron and a little maid's cap perched her head, and she surprised she ha double-clutch to from dropping her *A woman of color do clean house*, that was her mother always her, and it had becc kind of mantra whe was growing up, a w reinforcing core valu promoting educatio the life of the mind she couldn't help dering how much hig dog-sitter was on the socioecon scale than a maid. Or a sous-chef, ress, aerobics instructor, ticket pu er, and tortilla maker, all of which been at one time or another. A the only thing she hadn't tried leech-gathering. There was a poe the subject in her college te William Wordsworth, the poet o fodils and leeches, and she could

[illegible] cent novel is [illegible]lk, and [illegible] cted a new [illegible] he Women [illegible] d late next y

[illegible] HARPER'S [illegible] OCTOBER

Illustration by Stephane Humbert

up whenever she needed a good
She developed a quick picture of
ong-nosed white man rolling up
t legs and wading into the murk,
queezed out a miniature smile
d, "Hi, I'm Nisha? I came to see
riker? And Mr. Striker?"
maid—she wasn't much older
lisha herself, with a placid ex-
n that might have been de-
as self-satisfied or just plain va-
held open the door. "I'll tell
ou're here," she said.
a murmured a thank-you and
d into the tiled foyer, thinking
snake brain and the olfactory
ies that lay coiled there. She
d dog—smelled Admiral—with
erlay of old sock and furniture
The great room rose up before
e something transposed from a
ral. It was a cold room, echoing
llow, and she'd never liked it.
mind if I wait in the family
" she asked.
maid—or rather the girl, the
woman, the young woman in
meaning and stereotypical maid's
ne—had already started off in
rection of the kitchen, but she
round now to give Nisha a look
prise and irritation. For a mo-
it seemed as if she might snap
r, but then, finally, she just
ed and said, "Whatever."
hing had changed in the pan-
om that gave onto the garden,
s far as Nisha could see. There
the immense old high-backed
er armchairs and the antique
ey sofa rescued from the law of-
f Striker and Striker, the ma-
y bar with the wine rack and the
t shrine Mr. Striker had created
nage to the spirits of single-malt
whisky, and overseeing it all,
l portrait of Admiral with its dark
hues and golden patina of var-
She remembered the day the
er had come to the house and
the dog for the preliminary snap-
. Admiral uncooperative, Mrs.
r strung tight as a wire, and the
able squirrel bounding across the
at the crucial moment. The
er had labored mightily in his stu-
o make his subject look noble,
elevated, eyes fixed on some dis-
presumably worthy, object, but
isha's mind an Afghan—any Afghan—looked inherently ridiculous, like some escapee from *Sesame Street*, and Admiral seemed a kind of concentrate of the absurd. He looked goofy, just that.

When she turned round, both the Strikers were there, as if they'd floated in out of the ether. As far as she could see, they hadn't aged at all. Their skin was flawless, they held themselves as stiff and erect as the Ituri carvings they'd picked up on their trip to Africa, and they tried hard to make small talk and avoid any appearance of briskness. In Mrs. Striker's arms—*Call me Gretchen, please*—was an Afghan pup, and after the initial exchange of pleasantries, Nisha, her hand extended to rub the silk of the ears and feel the wet probe of the tiny snout on her wrist, began to get the idea. She restrained herself from asking after Admiral. "Is this his pup?" she asked instead. "Is this little Admiral?" The Strikers exchanged a glance. The husband hadn't said, *Call me Cliff*, hadn't said much of anything, but now his lips compressed. "Didn't you read about it in the papers?"

There was an awkward pause. The pup began to squirm. "Admiral passed," Gretchen breathed. "It was an accident. We had him—well, we were in the park, the dog park . . . you know, the one where the dogs run free? You used to take him there, you remember, up off Sycamore? Well, you know how exuberant he was . . ."

"You really didn't read about it?" There was incredulity in the husband's voice.

"Well, I—I was away at college and then I took the first job I could find. Back here, I mean. Because of my mother. She's been sick."

Neither of them commented on this, not even to be polite.

"It was all over the press," the husband said, and he sounded offended now. He adjusted his oversized glasses and cocked his head to look down at her in a way that brought the past rushing back. "*Newsweek* did a story, *USA Today*—we were on *Good Morning America*, both of us."

She was at a loss, the three of them standing there, the dog taking its spiked dentition to the underside of her wrist now, just the way Admiral used to when he was a pup. "For what?" she was about to say, when Gretchen came to the rescue.

"This *is* little Admiral. Admiral II, actually," she said, ruffling the blond shag over the pup's eyes.

The husband looked past her, out the window and into the yard, an ironic grin pressed to his lips. "Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars," he said, "and it's too bad he wasn't a cat."

Gretchen gave him a sharp look. "You make a joke of it," she said, her eyes suddenly filling, "but it was worth every penny and you know it." She mustered a long-suffering smile for Nisha. "Cats are simpler—their eggs are more mature at ovulation than dogs' are."

"I can get you a cat for thirty-two thou."

"Oh, Cliff, stop. Stop it."

He moved into his wife and put an arm round her shoulders. "But we didn't want to clone a cat, did we, honey?" He bent his face to the dog's, touched noses with him, and let his voice rise to a falsetto: "Did we now, Admiral. Did we?"

At seven-thirty the next morning, Nisha pulled up in front of the Strikers' house and let her car wheeze and shudder a moment before killing the engine. She flicked the radio back on to catch the last fading chorus of a tune she liked, singing along with the sexy low rasp of the lead vocalist, feeling good about things—or better, anyway. The Strikers were giving her twenty-five dollars an hour, plus the same dental and health-care package they offered the staff at their law firm, which was a whole solid towering brick wall of improvement over what she'd been making as a waitress at Johnny's Rib Shack, sans health care, sans dental, and sans any tip she could remember above 10 percent of the pretax total because the people who came out to gnaw ribs were just plain cheap and no two ways about it. When she stepped out of the car, there was Gretchen coming down the front steps of the house with the pup in her arms, just as she had nine years ago when Nisha was a high school freshman taking on what she assumed was going to be a breeze of a summer job.

Nisha took the initiative of punching in the code herself and slipping

through the gate to hustle up the walk and save Gretchen the trouble, because Gretchen was in a hurry, always in a hurry. She was dressed for a power blue suit with a double string of pearls and an antique silver pin in the shape of a bounding borzoi that seemed eerily familiar—[illegible] the exact ensemble she'd been wearing when Nisha had [illegible] *Striker, and I've really enjoyed the opportunity* [illegible] *Striker*, she'd said, hardly able to contain the swell of her heart, *but I'm going to college. On a scholarship.* She'd had the [illegible] her mother hand to show her, thinking how proud of her Mrs. Striker would be, how she'd take her in her arms for a hug and congratulate her, but the first thing she'd said was, *What about Admiral?*

As Gretchen closed on her now, the pup wriggling in her arms, Nisha could see her smile flutter and die. No doubt she was already envisioning the cream-leather interior of her BMW (a 750i in Don't-Even-Think-About-It Black) and the commute to the office and whatever was going down there, court sessions, the piles of documents, contention at every turn. Mr. Striker—Nisha would never be able to call him Cliff, even if she lived to be eighty, but then he'd have to be a hundred and ten and probably wouldn't hear her anyway—was already gone, in his matching Beemer, his and hers. Gretchen didn't say *Good morning* or *Hi* or *How are you?* or *Thanks for coming*, but just enfolded her in the umbrella of her perfume and handed her the dog. Which went immediately heavy in Nisha's arms, fighting for the ground with four flailing paws and the little white ghoul's teeth that fastened on the top button of her jacket. Nisha held on. Gave Gretchen a big grateful-for-the-job-and-the-health-care smile, no worries, no worries at all.

"Those jeans," Gretchen said, narrowing her eyes. "Are they new?"

The dog squirming, squirming. "I, well—I'm going to set him down a minute, okay?"

"Of course, of course. Do what you do, what you normally do." An impatient wave. "Or what you used to do, I mean."

They both watched as the pup fell back on its haunches, rolled briefly in the grass, and sprang up to clutch Nisha's right leg in a clumsy embrace. "I just couldn't find any of my old jeans—my mother probably threw them all out long ago. Plus"—a laugh—"I don't think I could fit into them anymore." She gave Gretchen a moment to ruminate on the deeper implications here—time passing, adolescents grown into womanhood, flesh expanding, that sort of thing—then gently pushed the dog down and murmured, "But I *am* wearing—right here, under the jacket?—this T-shirt I know I used to wear back then."

Nothing. Gretchen just stood there, looking distracted.

"It's been washed, of course, and sitting in the back of the top drawer of my dresser where my mother left it, so I don't know if there'll be any scent or anything, but I'm sure I used to wear it because Tupac really used to drive my engine back then, if you know what I mean." She gave it a beat. "But hey, we were all fourteen once, huh?" Gretchen made no sign that she'd heard her—either that or she denied the proposition outright. "You're going to be all right with this, aren't you?" she said, looking her in the eye. "Is there anything we didn't cover?"

The afternoon before, during her interview—but it wasn't really an interview because the Strikers had already made up their minds, and if she'd refused them they would have kept raising the hourly till she capitulated—the two of them, Gretchen and Cliff, had positioned themselves on either side of her and leaned into the bar over caramel-colored scotches and a platter of ebi and maguro sushi to explain the situation.

Just so that she was clear on it. "You know what cloning is, right?" Gretchen said. "Or what it involves? You remember Dolly?"

Nisha was holding fast to her drink, her left elbow pressed to the brass rail of the bar in the family room. She'd just reached out her twinned chopsticks for a second piece of the shrimp but withdrew her hand. "You mean the country singer?"

"The sheep," the husband said.

"The first cloned mammal," Gretchen put in. "Or larger mammal."

"Yeah," she said, nodding. "Sure. I guess."

What followed was a short co[illegible] genetics and the method of s[illegible] cell nuclear transplant that ha[illegible] the world Dolly, various repl[illegible] cattle, pigs, and hamsters, an[illegible] Admiral II, the first cloned do[illegible] available commercially throug[illegible] vaPet, Inc., the genetic-engin[illegible] firm with offices in Seoul, San[illegible] and Cleveland. Gretchen's voic[illegible] stricted as she described how [illegible] taken a cell from the lining of [illegible] ral's ear just after the accident a[illegible] serted it into a donor egg that ha[illegible] its nucleus removed, stimulate[illegible] cell to divide through the appli[illegible] of an electric current, and the[illegible] serted the developing embryo in[illegible] uterus of a host mother—"The [illegible] est golden retriever you ever[illegible] What was her name, Cliff? [illegible] flower, wasn't it?"

"Peony."

"Peony? Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure."

"I thought it was—oh, I don't k[illegible] You sure it wasn't Iris?"

"The point is," he said, settin[illegible] glass down and leveling his g[illegible] Nisha, "you can get a genetic c[illegible] the animal, a kind of three-di[illegible] sional Xerox, but that doesn't gu[illegible] tee it'll be like the one you, wel[illegible] one you lost."

"It was so sad," Gretchen said[illegible]

"It's nurture that counts. You'v[illegible] to reproduce the animal's experie[illegible] as nearly as possible." He gave a s[illegible] reached for the bottle. "You wan[illegible] other?" he asked, and she held ou[illegible] glass. "Of course we're both [illegible] now—and so are you, we realize th[illegible] but we want to come as close as p[illegible] ble to replicating the exact condi[illegible] that made Admiral what he was, [illegible] down to the toys we gave him[illegible] food, the schedule of walks and [illegible] and all the rest. Which is where[illegible] come in—"

"We need a commitment h[illegible] Nisha," Gretchen breathed, lea[illegible] in so close Nisha could smell [illegible] scotch coming back at her. "Four y[illegible] That's how long you were with [illegible] last time. Or with Admiral, I m[illegible] The original Admiral."

The focus of all this delibera[illegible] had fallen asleep in Gretchen's la[illegible] single probing finger of sunli[illegible] stabbed through the window to

the pale fluff over the dog's
t that moment, in that light,
Admiral looked like some
conjunction of ostrich and
sha couldn't help thinking of
ind of Dr. Moreau, the cheesy
with Marlon Brando looking
d been genetically manipulated
, and she would have grinned a
grin, fueled by the scotch and
ndering absurdity of the mo-
out she had to hide everything
ought or felt behind a mask of
vity. She wasn't committing to
g for four years—four years? If
s still living here in this crap-
a town four years from now she
d herself she'd go out and buy
and eliminate all her problems
single, very personal squeeze of
ger.

t was what she was thinking
Gretchen said, "We'll pay you
dollars an hour," and the hus-
aid, "With health care—and
," and they both stared at her
ely she had to look down into
ss before she found her voice.
ty-five," she said.

And oh, how they loved that dog, because they never hesitated. "Twenty-five it is," the husband said, and Gretchen, a closer's smile blooming on her face, produced a contract from the folder at her elbow. "Just sign here," she said.

After Gretchen had climbed into her car and the car had slid through the gate and vanished down the street, Nisha sprawled out on the grass and lifted her face to the sun. She was feeling the bliss of déjà vu—or no, not déjà vu, but a virtual return to the past, when life was just a construct and there was nothing she couldn't have done or been and nothing beyond the thought of clothes and boys and the occasional term paper to hamper her. Here she was, gone back in time, lying on the grass at quarter of eight in the morning on a sunstruck June day, playing with a puppy while everybody else was going to work—it was hilarious, that's what it was. Like something you'd read about in the paper—a behest from some crazed millionaire. Or in this case, two crazed millionaires. She felt so good she let out a laugh, even as the pup came charging across the lawn to slam headfirst into her, all feet and pink panting tongue, and he was Admiral all right.

Admiral in the flesh, born and made and resurrected for the mere little pittance of a quarter million dollars. For a long while she wrestled with him, flipping him over on his back each time he charged, scratching his belly and baby-talking him, enjoying the novelty of it, but by quarter past eight she was bored and she pushed herself up to go on into the house and find something to eat. *Do what you used to do,* Gretchen had told her, but what she used to do, summers especially, was nap and read and watch TV and sneak her friends in to tip a bottle of the husband's forty-year-old scotch to their adolescent lips and make faces at one another before descending into giggles. Twice a day she'd take the dog to the doggy park and watch him squat and crap and run wild with the other mutts till his muzzle was streaked with drool and he dodged at her feet to snatch up mouthfuls of the Evian the Strikers insisted he drink. Now, though, she just wanted to



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feel the weight of the past a bit, and she went in the back door, the dog at her heels, thinking to make herself a sandwich—the Strikers always had cold cuts in the fridge, mounds of pastrami, capicolla, smoked turkey, and Swiss, individual slices of which went to Admiral each time he did his business outside where he was supposed to or barked in the right cadence or just stuck his goofy head in the door. She could already see the sandwich she was going to make—a whole stiff wad of meat and cheese piled up on Jewish rye; they always had Jewish rye—and she was halfway to the refrigerator before she remembered the maid.

There she was, in her maid's outfit, sitting at the kitchen table with her feet up and the newspaper spread out before her, spooning something out of a cup. "Don't you bring that filthy animal in here," she said, glancing up sharply.

Nisha was startled. There didn't used to be a maid. There was no one in the house, in fact, till Mrs. Yamashita, the cook, came in around four, and that was part of the beauty of it. "Oh, hi," she said, "hi, I didn't know you were going to be—I just . . . I was going to make a sandwich, I guess." There was a silence. The dog slunk around the kitchen, looking wary. "What was your name again?"

"Frankie," the maid said, swallowing the syllables as if she weren't ready to give them up, "and I'm the one has to clean up all these paw marks off the floor—and did you see what he did to that throw pillow in the guest room?"

"No," Nisha said, "I didn't," and she was at the refrigerator now, sliding back the tray of the meat compartment. This would go easier if they were friends, no doubt about it, and she was willing, more than willing. "You want anything?" she said. "A sandwich or, or something?"

Frankie just stared at her. "I don't know what they're paying you," she said, "but to me? This is the craziest shit I ever heard of in my life. You think I couldn't let the dog out the door a couple times a day? Or what, take him to the park—that's what you do, right, take him to the doggy park over on Sycamore?"

The refrigerator door swung shut, the little light blinking out, the heft of the meat satisfying in her hand. "It's insane. I admit it—hey, I'm with you. You think I wanted to grow up to be a dog-sitter?"

"I don't know. I don't know anything about you. Except you got your degree—you need a degree for that, dog-sitting, I mean?" She hadn't moved, not a muscle, her feet propped up, the cup in one hand, spoon in the other.

"No," Nisha said, feeling the blood rise to her face, "no, you don't. But what about you—you need a degree to be a maid?"

That hit home. For a moment, Frankie said nothing, just looked from her to the dog—which was begging now, clawing at Nisha's leg with his forepaws—and back again. "This is just temporary," she said finally.

"Yeah, me too." Nisha gave her a smile, no harm done, just establishing a little turf, that was all. "Totally."

For the first time, Frankie's expression changed: she almost looked as if she were going to laugh. "Yeah, that's right," she said, "temporary help, that's all we are. We're the temps. And Mr. and Mrs. Striker—dog-crazy, plain crazy, two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar-crazy—they're permanent."

And now Nisha laughed, and so did Frankie—a low rumble of amusement that made the dog turn its head. The meat was on the counter now, the cellophane wrapper pulled back. Nisha selected a slice of Black Forest ham and held it out to him. "Sit!" she said. "Go ahead, sit!" And the dog, just like his father or progenitor or donor or whatever he was, looked at her stupidly till she dropped the meat on the tile and the wet plop of its arrival made him understand that here was something to eat.

"You're going to spoil that dog," Frankie said.

Nisha went unerringly to the cabinet where the bread was kept, and there it was, Jewish rye, a fresh loaf, springy to the touch. She gave Frankie a glance over her shoulder. "Yeah," she said. "I think that's the idea."

A month drifted by, as serene a month as Nisha could remember. She was making good money, putting in ten-hour days during the week and half days on the weekends, reading th all the books she hadn't had time college, exhausting the Strikers collection and opening her ov count at the local video store, ing, lazing, napping the time awa gained five pounds and vowed t swimming regularly in the St pool, but hadn't got round to Some days she'd help Frankie wi cleaning and the laundry so the them could sit out on the back with their feet up, sharing a bo sweet wine or a joint. As for th she tried to be conscientious abo whole business of imprinting it the past—or a past—though sh ridiculous. Four years of college fo Wars were being fought, people starving, there were diseases to quer, children to educate, good to the world, and here she was rel her adolescence in the company inbred semi-retarded clown of a c Afghan hound because two chi rich people decreed it should be s right. She knew she'd have to t on. Knew it was temporary. Swore she'd work up a new résumé and sending it out—but then the fa her mother, sick from vomiting with her scalp as smooth and slick eggplant, would rise up to shame She threw the ball to the dog. him to the park. Let the days fall r her like leaves from a dying tree.

And then one afternoon, on way back from the dog park, Adr jerking at the leash beside her an sky opening up to a dazzle of sun pure white tufts of cloud that m her feel as if she were floating unt ered through the universe along them, she noticed a figure stati outside the gate of the Strikers' h As she got closer, she saw that it a young man dressed in baggy j and a T-shirt, his hair fanning o rusty blond dreads and a goatee of same color clinging to his chin. was peering over the fence. Her thought was that he'd come to rob place, but she dismissed it—he harmless; you could see that a h dred yards off. Then she saw the p smears on his jeans and wondered i was a painting contractor come to in a bid on the house, but that wa it either. He looked more like an a ateur artist—and here she had to la

f—the kind who specializes
ortraits. But she was nearly on
, thinking to brush by him
through the gate before he
ost her, whatever he wanted,
turned suddenly and his face
re. "Wow!" he said. "Wow, I
ieve it! You're her, aren't you,
us dog-sitter? And this"—he
wn on one knee and made a
sound deep in his throat—
Admiral. Right? Am I right?"
iral went straight to him,
against the leash, and in the
ant was flopping himself down
ot pavement, submitting to
's caresses. The rope of a tail
d and thrashed, the paws gy-
e puppy teeth came into play.
boy," the man crooned,
ads riding a wave across
v. "He likes that, doesn't he?
he, boy?"

a didn't say anything. She just
d, the smallest hole dug out of
yon of her boredom, till the
se to his feet and held out his
ven as Admiral sprang up to
is leg with fresh enthusiasm.
hard," he said, grinning wide.
ou're Nisha, right?"

" she said, taking his hand de-
erself. She was on the verge of
how he knew her name, but
was no point: she already un-
d. He was from the press. In
t month there must have been
reporters on the property, the
s stroking their vanity and pos-
pictures and answering the same
questions over and over—*A
-million dollars: that's a lot for a
't it?*—and she herself had been
ewed twice already. Her moth-
even found a fuzzy color photo
and Admiral (couchant, lap)
Web under the semi-hilarious
CLONE SITTER. So this guy was a
er—a foreign reporter, judging
he faint trace of an accent and
ue-eyed rearing height of him,
n, she supposed. Or Austrian.
e wanted some of her time.

s," he said, as if reading her
nts. "I am from *Die Weltwoche*,
wanted to ask of you—prevail
ou, beg you—for a few moments?
possible? For me? Just now?"
gave him a long slow appraisal,
with him, yes, definitely flirting.

"I've got nothing but time," she said. And then, watching his grin widen: "You want a sandwich?"

They ate on the patio overlooking the pool. She was dressed casually in shorts and flip-flops and her old Tupac tee, and that wasn't necessarily a bad thing because the shirt—too small by half—lifted away from her hips when she leaned back in the chair, showing off her navel and the onyx ring she wore there. He was watching her, chattering on about the dog, lifting the sandwich to his lips and putting it down again, fooling with the lens on the battered old Hasselblad he extracted from the backpack at his feet. The sun made sequins on the surface of the pool. Admiral lounged beneath the table, worrying a rawhide bone. She was feeling good, better than good, sipping a beer and watching him back.

They had a little conversation about the beer. "Sorry to offer you Miller, but that's all we have—or the Strikers have, I mean."

"Miller High Life," he said, lifting the bottle to his mouth. "Great name. What person would not want to live the high life? Even a dog. Even Admiral. He lives the high life, no?"

"I thought you'd want a German beer, something like Beck's or something."

He set down the bottle, picked up the camera, and let the lens wander down the length of her legs. "I'm Swiss, actually," he said. "But I live here now. And I like American beer. I like everything American."

There was no mistaking the implication, and she wanted to return the sentiment, but she didn't know the first thing about Switzerland, so she just smiled and tipped her beer to him.

"So," he said, cradling the camera in his lap and referring to the notepad he'd laid on the table when she'd served him the sandwich, "this is the most interesting for me, this idea that Mr. and Mrs. Striker would hire you for the dog? This is very strange, no?"

She agreed that it was.

He gave her a smile she could have fallen into. "Do you mind if I should ask what are they paying you?"

"Yes," she said. "I do."

Another smile. "But it is good – worth your while, as they say."

"I thought this was about Admiral," she said, and then, because she wanted to try it out on her tongue, she added, "Erhard."

"Oh, it is, it is—but I find you interesting too. More interesting, really, than the dog." As if on cue, Admiral backed out from under the table and squatted on the concrete to deposit a glistening yellow turd, which he examined briefly and then promptly ate.

"Bad dog," she said reflexively.

Erhard studied the dog a moment, then shifted his eyes back to her. "But how do you feel about the situation, this concept of cloning a pet? Do you know anything about this process, the cruelty involved?"

"You know, frankly, Erhard, I haven't thought much about it. I don't know really what it involves. I don't really care. The Strikers love their dog, that's all, and if they want to, I don't know, bring him back—"

"Cheat death, you mean."

She shrugged. "It's their money."

He leaned across the table now, his eyes locked on hers. "Yes, but they must artificially stimulate so many bitches to come into heat, and then they must take the eggs from the tubes of these bitches, what they call 'surgically harvesting,' if you can make a guess as to what that implies for the poor animals"—she began to object but he held up a peremptory finger—"and that is nothing when you think of the numbers involved. Do you know about Snuppy?"

She thought she hadn't heard him right. "Snuppy? What's that?"

"The dog, the first one ever cloned—it was two years ago, in Korea? Well, this dog, this one dog—an Afghan, like your dog here—was the result of over a thousand embryos created in the laboratory from donor skin cells. And they put these embryos into one hundred and twenty-three bitches and only three clones resulted—and [illegible] So: all that torture of the animals, all that money—and for what?" He glanced down at Admiral, [illegible] fur, the blunted eyes. "For th[illegible]

A sudden thought [illegible] "You're not really a [illegible]

He slowly shook [illegible] couldn't hear the [illegible]

"[illegible]

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ever they are. Isn't that right? Isn't that what you are?" She felt frightened suddenly, for herself, for Admiral, for the Strikers and Frankie and the whole carefully constructed edifice of getting and wanting, of supply and demand and all that it implied.

"And do you know why they clone the Afghan hound," he went on, ignoring her, "the very stupidest of all the dogs on this earth? You don't? Breeding, that is why. This is what they call an uncomplicated genetic line, a pure line all the way back to the wolf ancestor. Breeding," he said, and he'd raised his voice so that Admiral looked up at the vehemence of it, "so that we can have this purity, this stupid hound, this *replica* of nature."

Nisha tugged down her T-shirt, drew up her legs. The sun glared up off the water so that she had to squint to see him. "You haven't answered my question," she said. "Erhard. If that's even your name."

Again, the slow rolling of the head on his shoulders, back and forth in rhythmic contrition. "Yes," he said finally, drawing in a breath, "I am one of 'these animal people.'" His eyes went distant a moment and then came back to her. "But I am also a journalist, a journalist first. And I want you to help me."

That night, when the Strikers came home—in convoy, her car following his through the gate, Admiral lurching across the lawn to bark furiously at the shimmering irresistible discs of the wheels of first one car, then the other—Nisha was feeling conflicted. Her loyalties were with the Strikers, of course. And with Admiral too, because no matter how brainless and ungainly the dog was, no matter how many times he wet the rug or ravaged the flowerbed or scrambled up onto the kitchen table to choke down anything anyone had been foolish enough to leave untended even for thirty seconds, she'd bonded with him—she would have been pretty cold if she hadn't. And she wasn't cold. She was as susceptible as anyone else. She loved animals, loved dogs, loved the way Admiral sprang to life when he saw her walk through the door, loved the dance of his fur, his joyous full-throated bark, the feel of his wet whiskered snout in the cupped palm of her hand. But Erhard ha her feel something else altog What was it? A sexual stirrir absolutely—after the third bee found herself leaning into him first of a series of deep, languid sive kisses—but it was more tha There was something transgres what he wanted her to do, son that appealed to her sense of rel of anarchy, of applying the pin swollen balloon . . . but here w Strikers, emerging separately fro cars as Admiral bounced he them, yapping out his ecstasy now Gretchen was addressing h ing to shout over the dog's sh calizations, but without success. next moment, she was coming the lawn, her face set.

"Don't let him chase the c that," she called, even as Admi round her like a dust devil, nip her ankles and dodging away "It's a bad habit."

"But Admiral—I mean, the h miral—used to chase cars a time, remember?"

Gretchen had pinned her hai that all the contours of her face out in sharp relief. There wer everywhere suddenly, creas gouges, frown marks, little emb ments round her eyes, and how Nisha have missed them? Gre was old—fifty, at least—and th ization came home to Nisha no der the harsh sun, with the taste beer and of Erhard still tingling lips. "I don't care," Gretchen w ing, and she was standing beside now, like a figurine the garden set down amid that perfect lan

"But I thought we were go go for everything, the comple havior, good or bad, right? B otherwise—"

"That was how the acciden pened. At the dog park. He got t the gate before Cliff or I coul him and just ran out into the st ter some idiot on a motorcycle looked past Nisha a moment, to Admiral was bent over the pool, ing up water as if his pinched tr lar head worked on a piston. "S she said, "no, we're going to h modify some behavior. I don't him drinking that pool water, f thing. Too many chemicals."

ıy, sure," Nisha said, shrug-
'll try." She raised her voice
ıg out, "Bad dog, bad dog,"
was halfhearted and Admiral
her.
cool green eyes shifted to meet
ain. "And I don't want him eat-
own"—she paused to search
proper word for the context,
g through various euphemisms
giving it up—"shit."
ther shrug.
serious on this. Are you with

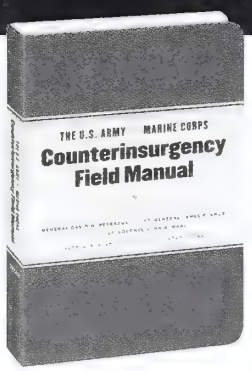
ıa couldn't help herself, and so
she was pushing it? So what?
niral did," she said. "Maybe you
know that."
chen just waved her hand in
sal. "But *this* Admiral," she
said. "He's not going to do
it. Is he?"

ver the course of the next two
as summer settled in with a
sion of cloudless, high-arching
nd Admiral steadily grew into
omise of his limbs, Erhard be-
a fixture at the house. Every
ng, when Nisha came through
te with the dog on his leash, he
nere waiting for her, shining
ll and beautiful, with a joke on
s and always some little treat
miral secreted in one pocket or
er. The dog worshipped him.
crazy for him. Pranced on the
spun in circles, nosed at his
s and pockets till he got his
then rolled over on his back in
l submission. And then it was
og park, and instead of sitting
wrapped up in the cocoon of
f, she had Erhard to sustain her,
n into her so that she could feel
at of him through the thin cot-
his shirt, to kiss her, and later,
unch and the rising tide of the
to make love to her on the di-
n the cool shadows of the pool
e. They swam in the after-
s—he didn't mind the five
ls she'd put on; he praised her
nem—and sometimes Frankie
join them, shedding the maid's
for a white two-piece and ca-
ıg through a slashing backstroke
a bottle of beer her reward, be-
she was part of the family too.
a and Papa and Aunt Frankie,

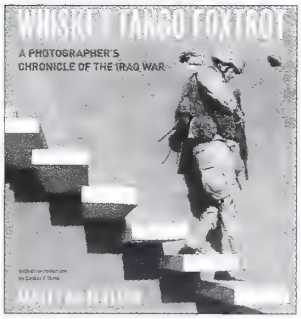
all there to nurture little Admiral under the beneficent gaze of the sun. Of course, Nisha was no fool. She knew there was a quid pro quo involved here, knew that Erhard had his agenda, but she was in no hurry, she'd committed to nothing, and as she lay there on the divan smoothing her hands over his back, tasting him, enjoying him, taking him inside her, she felt hope, real hope, for the first time since she'd come back home. It got so that she looked forward to each day, even the mornings that had been so hard on her, having to take a tray up to the ghost of her mother while her father trudged off to work, the whole house like a turned grave, because now she had Admiral, now she had Erhard, and she could shrug off anything. Yes. Sure. That was the way it was. Until the day he called her on it.

Cloudless sky, steady sun, every flower at its peak. She came down the walk with Admiral on his leash at the appointed hour, pulled back the gate, and there he was—but this

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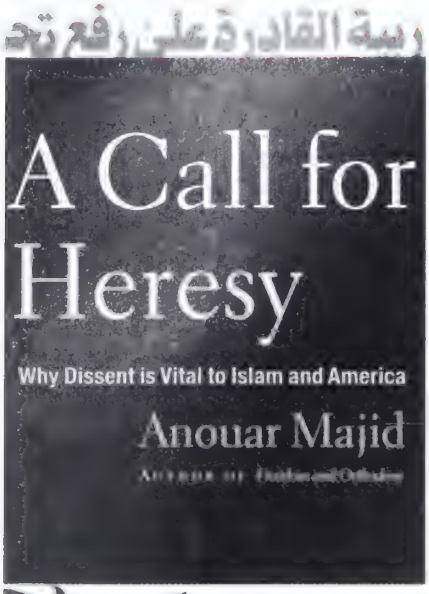
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time he wasn't alone. Beside him, already straining at the leash, was a gangling overgrown Afghan pup that could have been the twin of Admiral, and though she'd known it was coming, known the plan since the very first day, she was awestruck.

"Jesus," she said, even as Admiral jerked her forward and the two dogs began to romp round her legs in a tangle of limbs and leashes, "how did you—? I mean, he's the exact, he's totally—"

"That's the idea, isn't it?"

"But where did you find him?"

Erhard gave her a look of appraisal, then his eyes jumped past her to sweep the street. "Let's go inside, no? I don't want that they should see us here, anyone—not right in the front of the house."

He hadn't talked her into it, not yet, not exactly, but now that the moment had come she numbly punched in the code and held the gate open for him. What he wanted to do, what he was in the process of doing with her unspoken complicity, was to switch the dogs—just for a day, two at the most—by way of experiment. His contention was that the Strikers would never know the difference, that they were arrogant exemplars of bourgeois excess, even to the point of violating the laws of nature—and God, God too—simply to satisfy their own solipsistic desires. Admiral wouldn't be harmed—he'd enjoy himself, the change of scenery, all that. And certainly she knew how much the dog had come to mean to him. "But these people will not recognize their own animal," he'd insisted, his voice gone hard with conviction, "and so I will have my story and the world will know it."

Once inside the gate, they let the dogs off their leashes and went round back of the house where they'd be out of sight. They walked hand in hand, his fingers entwined with hers, and for a long while, as the sun rode high overhead and a breeze slipped in off the ocean to stir the trees, they watched as the two dogs streaked back and forth, leaping and nipping and tumbling in doggy rhapsody. Admiral's great combed-out spill of fur whipped round him in a frenzy of motion, and the new dog, Erhard's dog—the impostor—matched step for step, hair for glorio "You took him to the groome you?" she said.

Erhard gave a stiff nod sure. What do you think? I be exact."

She watched, bemused, for er minute, her misgivings deep under the pressure of gers, bone, sinew, the wedde and why shouldn't she go alo him? What was the harm? H cle, or exposé, or whatever would appear in Switzerla German, and the Strikers never know the difference. O if they did, even if it was tra into English and grabbed he all over the country, they coming to them. Erhard was She knew it. She'd known along. "So what's his name asked, the dogs shooting past a moil of fur and flashing feet. he have a name?"

"Fred."

"Fred? What kind of name i for a pedigree dog?"

"What kind of name is Admi

She was about to tell him th ry of the original Admiral, how earned his sobriquet because enthusiasm for the Strikers' and how they were planning on ing Admiral II out on the wat soon as they could, when the f iar rumble of the driveway drawing back on its runners sta her. In the next moment, she w motion, making for the near c of the house where she could down the long macadam strip o drive. Her heart skipped a bea was Gretchen. Gretchen home e some crisis compelling her, mis papers, her blouse stained, the Gretchen in her black Beemer, w ing for the gate to slide back so could roll up the drive and exert minion over her house and prope her piss-stained carpets, and her superable dog. "Quick!" Ni shouted, whirling round. "G them. Grab the dogs!"

She saw Erhard plunge forw and snatch at them, the grass ris up to meet him and both dogs t ing free. "Admiral!" he call scrambling to his knees. "Here, b

The moment thundered in
's. The dogs hesitated, the
ous sea of fur smoothing and
momentarily, and then one
—it was Admiral, it had to
me to him, and he got hold of
as the other pricked up its
the sound of the car and bolt-
d the corner of the house.
stall her," she called.
rd, all six feet five inches of
as already humping across the
the direction of the pool house,
writhing in his arms.
the other dog—it was Fred, it
be—was chasing the car up the
ow, nipping at the wheels, and
a came round the corner she
ead the look on her employer's
A moment and she was there,
ng for the dog as the car rolled
top and the engine died.
en stepped out of the car, heels
g down squarely on the pave-
her shoulders thrust back tight-
inst the grip of her jacket. "I
t I told you..." she began, her
high and querulous, but then
altered and her expression
ed. "But where's Admiral?"
she said. "And whose dog
is *that*?"

the course of her life, short
h it had been, she'd known
are of embittered people—her
, for one; her mother, for an-
—and she'd promised herself
never go there, never descend
at hopeless state of despair and
that ground you down till you
nothing but raw animus, but
asingly now everything she
ht or felt or tasted was bitter
e root. Erhard was gone. The
ers were inflexible. Her mother
red. Admiral reigned supreme.
n the car had come up the
and Gretchen had stood there
ronting her, she'd never felt
in her life. Until Admiral be-
howling in the distance and
broke free of Erhard to come
ning round the corner of the
e and launch himself in one
ly coordinated and mighty leap
into the arms of his protector.
then Erhard appeared, head
d and shoulders slumped, look-
bashed.

"I don't think I've had the pleasure," Gretchen said, setting down the dog (which sprang right up again, this time at Erhard) and at the same time shooting Nisha a look before stepping forward and extending her hand.

"Oh, this is, uh, Erhard," she heard herself say. "He's from Switzerland, and I, well, I just met him in the dog park, and since he had an Afghan too—"

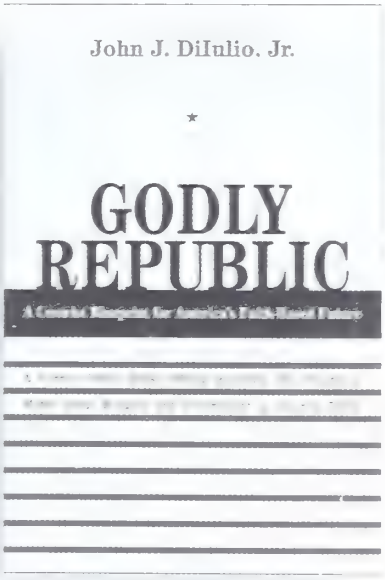
Erhard was miserable, as miserable as she'd ever seen him, but he mustered a counterfeit of his smile and said, "Nice to meet you," even as Gretchen dropped his hand and turned to Nisha.

"Well, it's a nice idea," she said, looking down at the dogs, comparing them. "Good for you for taking the initiative, Nisha . . . but really, you have to know that Admiral didn't have any—*playmates*—here on the property, Afghans or no, and I'm sure he wasn't exposed to anybody from *Switzerland*, if you catch my drift."

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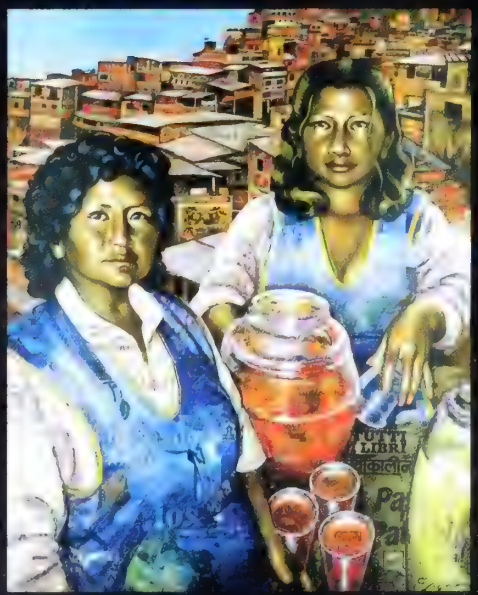
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There was nothing Nisha c
but nod her acquiescence.

"So," Gretchen said, squar
shoulders and turning back to
"Nice to meet you," she said, "
going to have to ask that you ta
dog—what's his name?"

Erhard ducked his head. "Fr

"Fred? What an odd name
dog, I mean. He does have
doesn't he?"

"Oh, yes, he's of the highes
very well-bred."

Gretchen glanced dubiously
at the dog, then back at E
"Yes, well, he looks it," sh
"and they do make great
Afghans—we ought to know.
know if Nisha told you, but A
is very special, very, very speci
we can't have any other dogs
property. And I don't mean
abrupt"—a sharp look for N
"but strangers of any sort, or s
just cannot be part of this, th
She trailed off, fighting, at th
to recover the cold impress
smile. "Nice meeting you," s
peated, and there was nowhere
from there.

It had taken Nisha a while
it all behind her. She kept thi
Erhard was lying low, that h
back, that there had been some
between them after all, but b
end of the second week sh
longer looked for him at the g
at the dog park or anywhere
And very slowly, as the days
on, she began to understand
her role was, her true role. Ad
chased his tail and she encou
him. When he did his busi
along the street, she nudged
hard little bolus with the tip o
shoe till he stooped to take it
his mouth. Yes, she was living i
past and her mother was dying
she'd gone to college for nothing
she was determined to create a
future—for herself and Admir
and when she took him to the
park she lingered outside the
to let him run free where he r
wanted to be, out there on the s
where the cars shunted by and
wheels spun and stalled and ca
the light till there was nothing
in the world. "Good boy," she'd
"Good boy."

EW BOOKS

ohn Leonard



previous geologic era, review- *Confessions of a Conservative*, I ote that "books fall from Garry ike leaves from a maple tree in of permanent October." That most thirty years ago, when he eady published radiant texts on ldering variety of subjects, from Chesterton, Thomas Jefferson, rd Nixon, and Jack Ruby to Power, ancient Rome, and the ruined choirs" of the Catholic h. He has since produced equal- inous and idiosyncratic volumes ugustine and Shakespeare; on e Washington, James Madison, Lincoln, John Kennedy, and ld Reagan; on Henry Adams, Wayne, and Jesus Christ. The st thing about the prolific pro- of history at Northwestern is e's now emeritus, with more time te more astonishments.

AD AND HEART: AMERICAN ISTIANITIES (Penguin Press, 5) would not have been possible ut all the other Wills has written. caravan—of ani- spices, ideas, and ions—across coun- nd through time, a "ghoul-haunted" an New England, e they hanged Quakers, to a born- Bush-league Washington, D.C., e a faith-based White House has d over social-services policymak- n creationism, AIDS, abstinence, to the religious right, just as it has d over economic policymaking to eet lobbyists for the oil, pharma- al, and insurance industries. Only one who has made Wills's own intellectual and moral journey the Jesuit seminary and *National w* magazine in the Cold War 1950s e civil-rights and antiwar move- s in the radical 1960s, to the flab-



bergasting spectacle of the reign of King Babar and Queen Celeste during the Reagan gerontocracy and the millennial fevers of hate radio and Fox News, whose politics owe more to Jeremiah and Telemachus than to Marx or Mill, would have come to appreciate American history as a grand oscillation, maybe even a dialectic, between Enlightenment (head) and Evangelism (heart).

Fortunately, such Enlightened deists as Madison, Washington, and Jefferson happened to be in charge when we made a Revolution and wrote our Bill of Rights. Oddly, the firm separation of church from state insisted upon by those Enlightened—the disestablishment codified in the First Amendment—has made possible the growth, vigor, and diversity of American religion ever since. Obviously, Evangelicals have been in the driver's seat at least since 9/11, although faith-based science (abortion causes breast cancer!) and the Terri Schiavo hysteria may prove as self-sabotaging as Prohibition and the Scopes trial did in previous euphoric frenzies. But as Wills conveys us from Salem witches to transcendentalism to Civil War, a Gilded Age, a Great Depression, a New Deal, a "rights revolution" and backlash all the way to Karl Rove, he insists that we are at our best when Evangelicals are rational and the Enlightened pious; when the two "crosspollinate" as they did in such heroic troublemakers as Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and Dorothy Day.

It is typical of his broad sympathies and exacting scholarship that he should celebrate, along with Lincoln and Dr. King, the Quaker educator Anthony Benezet (1713–84), a champion of Indian rights and the poor, an antiwar and anti-slavery activist, "the one unquestionably authentic American saint," to whom *Head and Heart* is dedicated. Those of us less faithful than Wills will harbor our secular doubts, but he is somehow more American, as enthusiastic as he is liturgical, equally at home in the Great Awakening and the small print of the Federalist Papers.

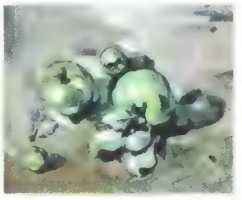
Until their own Great Awakening in 1789, according to Graham Robb's scintillating and resourceful THE DISCOVERY OF FRANCE: A HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR (Norton, $27.95), not only were most French nasty, brutish, and short but they didn't even speak French. Unmapped and largely unseen outside Paris except by passing stagecoach, most of France didn't realize it was a nation. A surprising number of people spent the long winters underground "in caves and chalk pits like prehistoric tribes," smoking or playing cards when they weren't

ophet Jeremiah from the Sistine Chapel ceiling (detail), by Michelangelo Buonarroti © Scala/Art Resource, New York City;
-fifth century mosaic in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, Italy © The Granger Collection, New York City

in hibernation, and practically everybody hated everybody else in the next squat over, in "island states cut off from the outside world," for reasons hard to remember because nothing ever got written down. France came to know itself as France only from the activities of outsiders—of mapmakers, scientists, soldiers, pilgrims, tourists, migrants, and Napoleon. After which came railroads, newspapers, and Impressionist painters. Whereas Paris seems to have thought of the provinces as "the great domain of the unconscious mind—*la France profonde*, a source of fairy tales, natural wonders and threats to civilization."

Robb, whose biographies of Balzac, Rimbaud, and Victor Hugo educate as much as they delight, has had a rollicking time among peasants who imagined they were Romans, if not Cathar heretics or Druids; in the company of "cagots," an untouchable caste of carpenters and ropemakers forbidden to walk barefoot in public and rumored to bleed from their navels on Good Friday; in *lieux-dits* shantytowns "founded by paupers, foreigners, misanthropes or outcasts who tried to scratch a living on the edge of a wood or a swamp"; speaking not merely Catalan, Basque, Breton, Provençal, and Alsatian but "a little Babel" of patois, of regional accents and dialects—Limousin, Poitevin, Comtois, Shuadit, Zarphatic—not to forget the whistlespeak of the Pyrenees by means of whose hundred decibels lonely shepherds made themselves heard at a distance of up to two miles. On our behalf, he hunts marmots, follows the lethal shipments of babies in baskets, on the backs of donkeys, from the boondocks to Parisian foundling hospitals, and eats songbird stew. Along the way, Robb pauses to chat about anything he finds instructive or amusing. Did you know that the skulls of primitive Basques were "worryingly larger" than the skulls of bourgeois Parisians? So much for the wishful thinking of the French surgeon and anthropologist Pierre Broca (1824–80), according to whom brain size mattered and bigger was better.

Besides reminding us how difficult it is for the present to imagine the past—another country, and they're dead—is there a larger point? Yes. Robb on his very last page mentions the recent riots in Paris, in the dense, ugly slumburbs of Aubervilliers, Saint-Quen, and Saint-Denis, by the children and grandchildren of immigrants, whom a minister of the interior called "scum"—yet another France awaiting discovery, as troglodytic in its marble halls as it is savage in its *banlieues*.



Speaking of savage, it is the thesis of Eric D. Weitz in WEIMAR GERMANY: PROMISE AND TRAGEDY (Princeton, $29.95) that even before the Nazi coup of 1933, Weimar democracy, however brilliant its cultural particulars, never had much of a chance. The new Social Democracy was forever compromising with an intransigent right. Entrenched elites resented a welfare state. An all-or-nothing Communist Party took to the streets instead of the polls. A punitive reparations treaty threatened the fledgling state with bankruptcy. Inflation and depression battered a fragile economy. Mass politics and anti-Semitism seemed to be Siamese twins. According to Weitz, a professor of history at the University of Minnesota who might just as well be writing about his own country and his own time:

> A democratic political system cannot long endure a situation in which virtually every issue becomes magnified to an ideological contest over ultimate meanings. But it especially cannot endure when its elites seek to undermine the democracy from within, when they whine incessantly about a system in which they still exercise privileges and still dispose of immense resources.

And yet, as *Weimar Germany* makes elegantly clear, what a vibrant kinetic moment it was, with such artists as Käthe Kollwitz and George Grosz, such architects as Erich Mendelsohn and Walter Gropius, such novelists as Alfred Doblin, Thomas Mann, and Joseph Roth, the theater of Bertolt Brecht and Kurl Weill, the photography of August Sander and László Moholy-Nagy, the cinema of Robert Wiene and Fritz Lang ... We will go on reading these cultural histories and never know why certain periods explode with enough c genius to burn down the h fifth-century B.C. Athens, Eliza England, Vienna before World and Weimar as the night came and the women who hadn't g war were dismembered on stag screen, and canvas. For the fir but not the last, fascism and mod show up hand in hand, in th shadowy place, as if conjoine corresponding like letters from th camp, with its chimney smoke man cinder.

Nor will the novelist Fra Goldman cheer us up w first book of nonfictio ART OF POLITICAL MURDER: KILLED THE BISHOP (Grove $25) follows the sometimes f always fraught investigation i 1998 murder of Guatemalan Juan Gerardi, who was bludge death in his parish house just tw after releasing his human-right implicating the Guatemalan m in the disappearance and/or ass tion of 200,000 civilians. Alt more than one prosecutor bowe fear of his life, an investigative young seculars in the Guate Catholic Church, calling then "the Untouchables," never let u did Goldman himself, reporti for *The New Yorker* and now rest of the world. And by repo mean the long haul, the deep c grueling gritty, and the gumsho novelist is obviously attracted bizarre components of the cas lovers, a girl gangster, a kille doped cheese sandwiches, a c monopoly, a parachute corps, man, necrophilia, satanism, "black snowfall" of volcanic ash the Citizen of Virtue keeps his the habitual liars. Amazing how wear uniforms. After a trial which 115 witnesses testify, so will be convicted, but not th plicit higher-ups who ordered t Still, Goldman and his brave touchables" have done their which is more than can be s Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvia elist writing for a Madrid new who bought the government's li safe distance, disgracing hims his profession.

Orchard Apples by Paul Cezanne © Erich Lessing Art Resource, New Y

URIED A NOVELIST

ip Roth and the end of Zuckerman

Vyatt Mason

d in this essay:

ost, by Philip Roth. Houghton Mifflin. 304 pages. $26.
ıan Bound: A Trilogy and Epilogue, 1979–1985, by Philip Roth. The Li- of America. 645 pages. $35.



Considering how common illness is," wrote Virginia Woolf in 1925, "how tremendous itual change that it brings . . . it es strange indeed that illness has en its place with love and batd jealousy among the prime s of literature." Although *ath of Ivan Ilyich*, *Death in Venice*, *I Lay Dying* all appeared during 's lifetime, these are the exceptions that, in her era, nonetheless proved the rule. How, then, in her view, had so fundamental a feature of human life—what Woolf calls the "great wars which the body wages with the mind a slave to it"—evaded the novelist's passion for amplification? She ascribed the lack to a poverty of resources, a failure as often of language as of will. "To look these things squarely in the face," Woolf writes, "would need the courage of a lion tamer."

In contemporary letters, the lion tamers have lately been tending to themselves. Memoir, historically a forum for the recollection of robust adventuring—whether by Rousseau, Chateaubriand, or Saint-Exupéry—has been rezoned as a clinic for the treatment of physical and metaphysical distress. Lucy Grealy's *Autobiography of a Face*, William Styron's *Darkness Visible*, Harold Brodkey's *This Wild Darkness*—surely Woolf would see courage in these ventures, their authors as willing "to look these things squarely in the face" as they are able to reflect what they see back onto their pages. Any memoirist's account of bodily vicissitude, though, is a survivor's story: yea, its author will walk through the valley of the shadow of death but, axiomatically, emerge from that darkness to illuminate it—to write about it. "These pages are not about suffering," we learn from one reporter ravaged by illness who nonetheless insists that his story is not about pain at all; rather, it's about "surviving and flourishing, rising above fear and self-doubt."

Whereas memoirs of illness are not infrequently about "surviving"—about learning, as one memoirist puts it, "to cope and to hope," and, therefore, ultimately about salvaging a win in Woolf's "great wars"—novels of illness of the kind she might have wished for are about losing those same wars. "Ivan Ilyich saw that he was dying," Tolstoy tells us, "and he was in continual despair." The memoir of illness points to a possible lessening of despair, to the dignified deal that may be struck with one's woe, but the novel of illness for which Woolf pines is not nearly so dignified. "He screamed unceasingly," we read of Ilyich, "not for minutes but for hours. For the last three days he screamed incessantly. It was unendurable." Free from the memoirist's noble wish to "rise above," the novelist may thus sink below—into the ignoble, into the desperate, into the unendurable.

In contemporary novels, although illness remains a far less frequently considered theme than in memoir, some of our finest imaginative writers have nonetheless been drawn, now and again, to grapple with such desperation. Among Richard Powers's nine novels, for example, is *Gain*, which documents a woman's death from ovarian cancer, as well as *The Echo Maker*, which explores a man's recovery from brain trauma. Mary Gaitskill's *Veronica* is narrated by a woman suffering from hepatitis C who relates the death of a friend from AIDS. And J. M. Coetzee, among his many novels, devotes *Age of Iron* to a woman's illness with cancer and *Slow Man* to an account of an amputation's aftermath.

Beyond these particular instances of novelistic attention paid to illness, of one contemporary novelist it may be said that illness has become a preoccupation: Philip Roth. At least since *Patrimony* (1991), the memoir of his father's affliction with, and eventual death from, a brain tumor, Roth has

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by Anna Schuleit

been circling the theme hungrily, less Woolf's courageous lion tamer than, it would seem, the lion itself. In *Operation Shylock* (1993), for example, a fictional Philip Roth recovers from Halcion poisoning that left him in a quasi-psychotic state, while "Philip Roth," a con man passing himself off as Roth, is himself beset by cancer. In *Sabbath's Theater* (1995), the eponymous, scabrous Mickey once pulled puppets' strings but now wants to pull the plug—sick of life, ill with life, he wants only to die, but the illness, his life, won't lie down. In *The Dying Animal* (2001), David Kepesh, a man metaphorically sick with desire, confronts the very literal mortality of his young once-consort Consuela, a woman of thirty-two who, to Kepesh, is lusciously alive but, all the same, riddled with cancer. And, most recently, in *Everyman* (2006), the anonymous hero, feeling far from felled, falls into oblivion, wanting more life but getting none.

With enormous variety and consistent gravity, these late books of Roth's take illness as a prime theme. So often, in fact, that one could well suppose Roth might have said his last word on the subject last year, were it not for his proven capacity to reprise—and through reprisal fruitfully amplify—his themes. *Operation Shylock*, say, a novel the themes of which—Jewishness, Israel, the burden of fiction, the burden of self—were unpromisingly repetitive of those of *The Counterlife* (1986), was no less powerful or original than its seeming precursor, thanks, in large measure, to Roth's flair for formal innovation. Similarly, Roth's latest book, *Exit Ghost*, might seem falsely unpromising. For although this twenty-fourth novel—which marks the final chapter in the annals of Nathan Zuckerman—is as preoccupied with illness as any book of Roth's in the past two decades, he does more than simply revisit a subject. Rather, he has built a novel that not merely takes illness as theme but, unusually, makes it its form.

Nathan Zuckerman—the Newark-bred Jewish writer at the center of nine Roth novels (and a presence in the wings of three more books)—has, throughout his fictional life, shown extraordinary vitality, both of body and of mind. In the quadripartite *Zuckerman Bound*—published sequentially between 1979 and 1985 and comprising *The Ghost Writer*, *Zuckerman Unbound*, *The Anatomy Lesson*, and *The Prague Orgy*—readers were introduced to a character whose view of the world, of letters as of life, was characterized by an unusually sanguinary vigor:

> [W]hen I came upon Babel's description of the Jewish writer as a man with autumn in his heart and spectacles on his nose, I had been inspired to add, "and blood in his penis," and had then recorded the words like a challenge—a flaming Dedalian formula to ignite *my* soul's smithy.

Zuckerman's fiery soul, not to mention his penis, is a central feature in this quartet of novels that—as the insistence on literary allusion above (explicitly to Babel and almost as explicitly to Joyce) could not more conspicuously suggest—form a portrait of the artist and the demands of his art. Although Zuckerman masturbates in the study of his literary idol, E. I. Lonoff, beds Fidel Castro's movie-star girlfriend, is serviced by a round-robin of willing women on the floor of his own study, and fields pornographic advances from a woman with the best legs in Prague, his sexual vigor is always matched by his cerebral intensity. Young Nathan is desperate to learn, at twenty-three, in *The Ghost Writer*, what living a literary life entails; desperate to discover, at thirty-six, in *Zuckerman Unbound*, how to escape the fame in which his work has suddenly jailed him, as well as sidestep the contempt of his family, which his work has slowly earned him; desperate to change, at forty, in *The Anatomy Lesson*, his life, to free himself from an inexplicable chronic pain and to unchain himself from a rocky future as an artist, as a man apart; and desperate, at forty-three, in *The Prague Orgy*, to embrace the wider responsibilities of authorship by assuming, at last, the mantle of stewardship, traveling to Czechoslovakia to save the unknown work of a possible past master from oblivion.

In each of these books, man's hidden life—physi metaphysical—was match mode of storytelling suited to elation. *The Ghost Writer* is s a memoir by Zuckerman at packaged in the precise p clear-eyed reminiscence, a st reflects a mastery of the medi his younger self so loudly h attain. *Zuckerman Unbound* *Anatomy Lesson* are presente books by Zuckerman but a about him. Unfolding chron ly after the events of *The Writer*, the novels are told portraitist's third person, th rising to hysterical heights (eration, of repetition, of e tion) that equal the increasi noia (and, later, hysteria) object. And *The Prague Orgy* in the guise of Zuckerman notebooks of his travels, t worktable of an artist who h peace with his purpose and a method, however mad it that will allow him, eventuall ted by his "feverish notes," t pose *The Ghost Writer*.

The fraught nature of that " ally"—not to mention the dou bedevil that mockingly serer "compose"—were central to structurally daring next book, a Zuckerman novel, *The Counterl* novelist, now forty-five, tells of l Jersey dentist brother, Hen younger man's struggles with tence, his affair with a woman Maria, and his premature dea heart failure . . . only, in the next chapter, to tell us that He *not* die at all but fled his wife a dren in New Jersey to begin a vi life in an Israeli settlement . later still, to tell us that *neither* events came to pass at all—rath it was Zuckerman himself who impotence problem, a Maria, ailing heart. Narrating here in person and there in the thirc presented the multiplicity of that a novelist might confron drawing from his lived life to fiction—the doubts of directi denouement latent in the no enterprise. And whereas Italo no's book of unresolved beginn *on a winter's night a traveler*, wa

eeably, about the compulsive
s of narrative, Roth's novel
l, at each turn in the telling,
ase detailed engagements with
cters' inner lives but, bafflingly,
ɔe them—through reversals in
ɔubly and triply uncertain
ıore deeply still. As Zucker-
ıks to himself in *The Anatomy*
"doubt is half a writer's life.
rds. Nine-tenths. Another day,
doubt. The only thing I nev-
ed was the doubt."
e writer's vocation is the heart
early Zuckerman books—its
more often than its method—
books have been the more cer-
it of that calling. In *American*
(1997), *I Married a Communist*
and *The Human Stain* (2000),
nan no longer stars as a latter-
metheus writhing on his rock;
now he is Vergil, standing to
as he takes us on a tour of re-
nerican infernos. "Our doubt is
ion and our passion is our task,"
ıuch younger Nathan in Hen-
s's story "The Middle Years,"
novelist reaching the height of
vers. In these late books, re-
ɔ as Roth's "American Trilogy,"
nan is that very novelist who
iciently banished his doubts to
his truths. Like *The Ghost*
presented as a book by Zuck-
this trio of novels presents him
g novelistic presentations.
ily torn apart by its bomb-
g daughter; a man ruined by his
ring the Red Scare; a professor
by political correctness—
man explicitly tells us that from
stories based in fact he has
ıed a realistic chronicle," tak-
at facts he has gathered while
g and amplifying what he—
any of us—cannot know.
rican Pastoral, for example, is
story of what happened to Sey-
'The Swede" Levov. It is not
ɔry of the causal chain that
this golden boy who would mar-
New Jersey to a future that in-
a daughter who would become
ɔrist. Rather, it is Zuckerman's
of that invisible chain, an at-
to confront the opacity of one
fate with hundreds of pages of
ate clarities: a thinking-through
t life might have been like, in its
least detail, for one particular man who lost everything of real value. It is a novel that, in the face of doubt, becomes a form of certainty.

If the recent trio of Zuckerman books kept their writer/narrator at the fringes of the telling, *Exit Ghost* sets him at the center of the story. Zuckerman is now seventy-one. The year is 2004, the season appropriately autumn. Since 1993, the once desperate author has been living peacefully in the woods, in "a small house in rural western Massachusetts, located on a dirt road atop a mountain and across from a large marshy swamp that was a bird and wildlife refuge." His routine is dedicatedly solitary, defined less by what he does than by what he refuses to do: "I don't go to dinner parties, I don't go to movies, I don't watch television, I don't own a cell phone or a VCR or DVD player or a computer. I continue to live in the Age of the Typewriter and have no idea what the World Wide Web is. I no longer bother to vote. I write for most of the day and often into the night."

Zuckerman's late-life monasticism mirrors that of his early literary hero, E. I. Lonoff ("the region's most original storyteller since Melville and Hawthorne"), whose home in rural Massachusetts the young Nathan visited, in 1956, in *The Ghost Writer*. Then, there, Nathan, "bewildered by the strength of a feeling," fell in love with everything, so in awe of Lonoff and his "ministerial black shoes" and his "kissable, expressive underlip" that he had to restrain an impulse to embrace the old man. It was a day so bright it seemed to Nathan as though "two suns had risen that morning," their light shining, most memorably, on Lonoff's research assistant, a young woman Nathan's age named Amy Bellette. Her "high prominent oval forehead . . . looked," to the book-drunk boy, "like Shakespeare's," and, during the course of that visit, Nathan came to realize Amy was, in fact, Anne Frank: Alive! And well! And still in hiding—where else?—in the Berkshires! Intensely idealistic Nathan, wildly imaginative Nathan, all agog in that magical, peaceful, civilized living room, filed away in his soul's smithy the image of those beatific environs



much as one might tear a page from a realtor's catalogue: "Purity. Serenity. Simplicity. Seclusion. All one's concentration and flamboyance and originality reserved for the grueling, exalted, transcendent calling. I looked around and I thought, This is how I will live."

And, for over a decade, this is how Zuckerman has lived, submitting to the demands of his calling, writing the desperate chronicles in which he barely figures. *Exit Ghost*, however, expands on the motives that moved him there, as well as the ultimate costs. Whereas in *The Human Stain*, Zuckerman claimed he had moved "voluntarily" to his woods—just ten minutes from Lenox's own—to absent himself for good from the sexual rat race that had already consumed too much of his energy ("I couldn't meet the costs of its clamoring anymore"), Zuckerman now tells a fuller, and fouler, story. "I had received communications as vile and ominous in the past," Zuckerman says of the postcards that began arriving by mail during his final months in Manhattan eleven years earlier, "but never more than a couple a year, and most years none at all." Arriving weekly, these latest ("Dear Jew Bastard. . . . This notice marks the beginning") promised to deliver him in "AK-47 fire." Soon after the FBI determined that the death threats were originating from a single source, the novelist got spooked. "I rented a car and drove to western Massachusetts, and within forty-eight hours I'd bought my cabin." A cabin that, when the death threats finally stopped arriving, Zuckerman decided not to forsake. "The habit of solitude—of solitude without anguish—had taken hold of me," he writes. "I shed the tyranny of my intensity—or, perhaps, by living apart for over a decade, merely reveled in its sternest mode."

The tyranny of Zuckerman's intensity—of the kind that drove him, in *The Anatomy Lesson*, to the brink of abandoning writing for medical school, so literally sick had he become of the serial self-scrutiny required to write his novels ("all I've got to go on, really, is my inner life—and I can't take any more of my inner life")—was, in seclusion, refocused on the inner lives of others. The one hitch, however, in this productive habit of solitude and freedom from self was that just after fear had driven him to his duty, Zuckerman was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Treated and cured, he was left to endure that cure, impotent, incontinent. These brute bodily facts, first mentioned in passing in *American Pastoral*, went unelaborated until *The Human Stain* revealed Zuckerman's grim little ritual of monitoring and maintaining the padded undergarments and adult diapers without which he wets his pants like a child. "I do suffer at least a pang of distress," he explained, "...and I still despair to think that the contingency that virtually defines the infant state will never be alleviated."

In *Exit Ghost*, we see that Zuckerman's "pang" has become more of a paroxysm, that his "distress" is more agonizing than he lets on, that his "despair" affects more than merely what he thinks. For it has come to Zuckerman's attention that alleviation might be in reach. A urologist at Mount Sinai Hospital, in Manhattan, lately specializes in a procedure to help men made incontinent by prostate surgery. "By going in through a catheter inserted in the urethra to inject a gelatinous form of collagen where the neck of the bladder meets the urethra, he was getting significant improvement in about fifty percent of his patients." Hardly a miracle cure, and one that would do nothing to address the impotence, for which nothing can be done. And so, in the impeccable fastness of the Massachusetts woods, Zuckerman asks, not unreasonably: "isn't the work all I need, the work and the working? What does it matter any longer if I'm incontinent and impotent?"

Well, it would seem, after all, to matter quite a bit. For Zuckerman does go to Manhattan, does listen to the doctor's caveat-riddled spiel, "and instead of reaching a decision only after I'd had a chance to think everything over back home, I surprised myself by seizing at the opening in his schedule." Not "reaching"; "seizing": Zuckerman cannot help himself, now, from trying to help himself. "Without waiting,"

Zuckerman says of a dinner al
restaurant after the procedure
precipitously as I had gone ahe
the collagen injection...I wer
the stairway alongside the kit
where I remembered a pay ph
Quickly I dialed and told the m
answered that I was respondin
ad." The ad? From a *New York*
of Books Zuckerman brought
a dinner companion and in wh
the back, he found a listing th
as well have read, "You Must C
Your Life": a young couple loc
swap, for a year, their West Sid
ment for a house in the count

Minutes later, with "batty
Zuckerman finds himself hea
West 71st Street, a fresh ab
pad in his plastic briefs. "I w
the dirty pad in toilet paper...
and dried my hands...fighting
gloom"—"dirty" because the c
injection has not worked; "glo
cause he knows it will not work
ing off" that gloom because he
way to see the apartment. W
reasonably asks, "court an
shocks or surprises?"

> Yet I continued up Broadway—
> crowds at Lincoln Center that
> wish to join, the theater co
> whose movies I had no inclin
> see, the leather goods shops
> gourmet food shops whose merc
> I didn't care to buy—unwilling t
> the power of the crazed hope o
> nation that was affecting all my
> the crazed hope of the proced
> versing the strongest side of my
> and aware of the mistake I was
> a revenant, a man who'd cut hi
> from sustained human contact
> possibilities yielding to the ill
> starting again.

The 105 words of this rhythm
tence cast Zuckerman as so mu
sam propelled onto land, onto
way, by wave after clausal wav
he does not want ("I did not w
had no inclination...I didn't
buy"). But for all he does no
upon entering the apartment,
covers that he does indee
something, urgently. For the
consists of Billy Davidoff, "a
young man with a soft, ag
manner," and his wife, Jamie
whom Zuckerman describes n
the economical phrasing th

er husband but, instead, in a
of lines. "Her long, narrow
curtained by straight, fine
ir that fell to her shoulders
tle below, the cut seemingly
to conceal some disfiguring
though by no means one that
ical—she had an impeccable,
soft surface, whatever else
ht be hiding." That creamy
f Jamie's: a pool of milk into
uckerman, itching to be re-
would dive. And if, when
Babel's description of the Jew-
r as "a man with autumn in
t," Nathan, *jeune*, had been
to add, "and blood in his pe-
can see, all too clearly in the
ouple's apartment, that a spark
rman's smithy has once more
ck. Alas, the wadding is now,
bly, wet: "my heart pounded
th lunatic eagerness, as if the
procedure to remedy inconti-
ad something to do with re-
impotence . . . as though . . . the
cited by meeting Jamie had
easserted itself as the animat-
."

force leads Zuckerman not to
ate assignation but to irra-
ffirmation. *Yes* he will say to
w possibility: to the swap of
nts; to social invitations of
he'd been skirting for over a
; to urological snake oil; to
er presents itself. And when
t walks back into his life in
inished form of *The Ghost*
Amy Bellette, now old and ill
—Zuckerman will say yes to
vell. But there will be no force
these yeses: the revenant can
or life but not grasp it. "I left
it daring to touch her," he
of his lust for Jamie, Zucker-
ho once dared everything.
ut daring to touch her face.
hout daring to place my hand
r waist. Without daring.
hout daring . . ." With autumn
heart, Zuckerman's will will be
ut will won't be enough.

Were this the only story being told in *Exit Ghost*, that of "the bitter helplessness
unted old man dying to be
again," the novel would al-
e notable for its unsentimental evocations of such bitterness. But just as in previous Zuckerman books the novelist's inner life was matched to a mode of storytelling suited to its revelation, so too is this true of *Exit Ghost*. Like *The Ghost Writer*, the book is presented as an ostensible memoir of a visit, written for the most part in the deliberate, reflective cadences of masterly reminiscence. And yet the Zuckerman who is writing the book we are reading, we come to understand as we read further, has begun to suffer a "failure of function" that isn't "restricted to the bladder's sphincter." Rather, as he tells us, "in recent years I had been having a problem remembering any number of small things":

> To address the difficulty, I had begun to keep, along with my daily calendar, a lined school composition book . . . in which to list each day's chores and, in more abbreviated form, to note my phone calls, their content, and the letters I wrote and received. Without the chore book, I could . . . easily forget whom I had spoken to about what as recently as yesterday. . . . I came to understand that the process of my forgetting things was ongoing and that if my memory continued to deteriorate at the pace at which it had advanced in these first few years, my ability to write could be gravely impaired.

The level of Zuckerman's impairment of mind is charted, in one way, explicitly, in the events of his "memoir": time and again, Zuckerman confesses to his having forgotten what it was he said, where it was he should have gone, what it was he meant to bring, who it was he'd thought to see. As the reader catches on, we begin to notice lapses that Zuckerman, well aware of the general problem, isn't aware of in the particular. (Zuckerman's first encounter with Amy Bellette, say, initially occurring on a Wednesday, is later recalled by Zuckerman as having happened on a Thursday.) Such instances of narrative self-deception are grouped, in literature, under the broad banner of "unreliable narration," yet in *Exit Ghost* the location of Zuckerman's unreliability is notably different. Zuckerman himself is, actually, highly reliable: he knows, without question, that his powers of recall and rationale have become, in the present moment, dubious. What is unreliable is his capacity to collect, chore book or no, his experiences into a coherent narrative whole.

"I'm working here as rapidly as I can while I can," he tells us while composing the book in our hands upon his safe return to his woods, "though unable to proceed anywhere near as rapidly as I should because of the very mental impediment that I'm struggling to outflank." A struggle, Zuckerman explains, that overtook the book he had completed just prior to his trip to New York City: "what was I to do with a book that I had worked on for close to three years and considered at once unsatisfactory yet finished?" He had seen only two possible answers. To do as Hemingway did at the end; or, less catastrophically, perhaps, as Faulkner decided: "doggedly submit the completed manuscript for publication, permitting the book that he'd labored over unstintingly, and that he could take no further, to reach the public as it was and to yield whatever satisfactions it could."

Much like in *The Counterlife*, the unusual satisfactions *Exit Ghost* offers a reader are those associated with how novels, through formal means, convince us of their reality. But whereas some readers faulted *The Counterlife* for being a bravura show of modern novelistic architecture, a Centre Pompidou of a novel that wore its skeleton too showily as skin, *Exit Ghost*'s engagement with the way novels work or don't is more humbly homespun. Zuckerman of *Exit Ghost* is still the Nathan of *The Ghost Writer*, who, no less than Richardson's Pamela, would "make my feverish notes" the minute anyone left the room. Thus we read, in Zuckerman's account of his dreary New York misstep, his transcripts of conversations with the young biographer, with the old Amy Bellette, and with the alluring Jamie. These accounts, however, are interspersed, and at great length and regularity, with the conversations Zuckerman did not dare to have with Jamie, written late into the night on hotel stationery: ribald, frank, and frankly

sentimental dialogues that dream a trajectory long foreclosed. These imagined dialogues are, in the main, masturbatory—Zuckerman, unable to gratify himself tangibly, now trying to do so in proxy prose. Reading them is like looking at von Aschenbach's dyed hair and rouged skin in *Death in Venice* hard to mistake for anything vital.

Where, in *The Ghost Writer*, Zuckerman's imagination transformed Amy Bellette into the living ghost of Anne Frank, in *Exit Ghost* there is no dazzle to these Zuckermanic flights. We watch, and listen, and wait for a transformation of the real into the remarkable that never arrives. What we see before us, instead, in Zuckerman's dialogues, is limitation, not liberation. "But once one's writing, it's *all* limits," Zuckerman complained in *The Anatomy Lesson*:

> Bound to a subject. Bound to make sense of it. Bound to make a book of it. If you want to be reminded of your limitations virtually every minute, there's no better occupation to choose. Your memory, your diction, your intelligence, your sympathies, your observations, your sensations, your understanding—never enough. You find out more about what's missing in you than you really ought to know.

The Zuckerman whom Roth freed to imagine counterlives has been bound up, once again, now by his own life, its lessening. *Exit Ghost* is the manifestation of that diminishment of powers. Roth has left Zuckerman to write his own exit lines, those of a novelist who, once again, is striving to give shape to a life but falling short. As Zuckerman said of his last book, the "at once unsatisfactory yet finished" novel: "When I had finished—when, after four drafts, that is, I could go no further—I couldn't tell whether it was the reading of the completed manuscript that was itself marred by a disordered mind or whether my reading was accurate and the disordered mind was what was itself mirrored in the writing." *Exit Ghost* is a mirror of that disorder, a tangible recording, by Roth, of the death of a novelist, a creature who expires not in the world but on the page. ■

A RAWNESS OF SEEING

Denis Johnson writes the Big Novel

By John Jeremiah Sullivan

Discussed in this essay:

Tree of Smoke, by Denis Johnson. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 614 pages. $



Was anyone actually waiting for Denis Johnson to give us his Big Novel? We've been told we all were, or will be told, by his publisher and profilers and the writers of the annual awards citations, and it's pettiness to begrudge any serious book a decent marketing tag, but just because we're invested in the ahistorical idea that a prose-fiction writer's literary destiny is unfinished until he or she brings forth the long, dense, multi-plotted, socially relevant novel set in the recent past, that doesn't mean people want to *read* those books.

John Jeremiah Sullivan is a Contributing Editor of Harper's Magazine *and a correspondent for* GQ.

("The cond
production
the Spirit in
image," said
Gombrowic
literature, ir
Why shoul
Johnson h
spend years
cutting thi
ster's food w
best fiction-
ning with
including h
book, the no
gels, publis
most twen
years ago—h
smallish and
rendered a
could even s
erfully lack
sweep? The
it is low an
rooms and th
seats of cars
worlds, mostly ones that observ
ready to leave. Johnson's not
imalist—he doesn't do lack-
as a substitute for style; he's wri
but the sensibility he brings
scenes of semi-transient lose
criminals and other sad cases is
achieved containment. Expans
inwardly. Even the wounded,
mental drug epiphany, at whi
unsurpassable, gets sealed off
voice with a kind of formal s
ness, as in an early paragrap
the 1992 collection *Jesus' So*
scribing a moment in a waiting
after a car crash:

> Down the hall came the wife. S
> glorious, burning. She didn't kn
> that her husband was dead. We

Illustration by Scott I

what gave her such power over us.
octor took her into a room with a
t the end of the hall, and from
he closed door a slab of brilliance
ed as if, by some stupendous
s, diamonds were being incinerer
there. What a pair of lungs! She
ed as I imagined an eagle would
It felt wonderful to be alive to
! I've gone looking for that feelerywhere.

eauty of those sentences draws
nearness to poetic compresl doesn't seem especially easpread out or inhabit wide
In fact, so many of Johnson's
hs work plausibly or even niceinzas, after you split them up,
e to wonder if some didn't beat that way (he also writes pol plays):

the hall came the wife. She was
ous, burning. She didn't know yet
her husband was dead. We knew.
what gave her such power over us.
octor took her into a room
a desk at the end of the hall,
rom under the closed door a slab
lliance radiated,
by some stupendous process,
onds were being incinerated
ere. What a pair of lungs!
hrieked as I imagined
agle would shriek.
wonderful to be alive
ear it!
one looking for that
ng everywhere.

Valéry said he couldn't write
because he could never bring
to write, "The Marquise went
five." In the thought we see a
whose whole allegiance was to
al of the syntactically purified
t of expression—the aesthetic
—to be pursued in language at
nts, where only the poetic forms
; the endless little compromisolved in sustaining something
aguely linear over pages and
the transitions and explanaare death by slivers to such a
But in fiction like what Denis
n has written, the Marquise
doesn't go out at all. In fact,
n's one Big Book before now, a
scribed "California Gothic"
Already Dead, read, for all its
fects, like a short story that kept
g longer out of stubbornness.
Round about page 400, I began to find the milieu of small-scale pot farming among whatever they call rednecks in the Northwest a trifle *limited*, and that's generally considered his worst book.

This new novel, *Tree of Smoke*, a 614-page multigenerational, transnational, braided morality saga about Westerners in Southeast Asia and the Southeast Asians who have to figure out how to stay alive around them, is something else entirely. It's a book that needs every bit of its space to do what it wants to do. Johnson has made himself into a different kind of writer in order to do this book—that's the first thing that needs to be said. The second thing is that he's made himself into a better writer. He didn't owe anyone a long, complex, conventionally satisfying but formally daring masterpiece of an American novel, but he produced one anyway. A Vietnam novel, at that. A Vietnam novel that somehow contrives to forget for long stretches that a Vietnam novel written in 2007 is an Iraq novel, and one consequently all the more discomfiting when the overtones emerge. You have to be thinking about Vietnam not as a typological symbol but as an occasion to notice, for instance, how Nixon "talked about keeping commitments, preserving our honor—not about winning.... You can see it in his eyes: he's played the whole game out in his mind ... and we lose."

It takes a while to get into *Tree of Smoke*. Not because it's slow going but because it's too tempting to stop and read over again the opening scene of a young Navy crewman half-accidentally shooting to death a small monkey in the Philippine jungle. Almost as if Johnson wants to assure us, before he settles down to the job, that he can still do whatever he feels like in the way of intensely focused description—a surrealism that comes not through playfulness or dreaming but strictly through purity of attention—the writer gives us the monkey, which "presented itself as something to be looked at ... digging at the thin rind with an air of tiny, exasperated haste." Here, immediately, is a characteristic Johnson move, the metaphor that somehow overextends its way into greater, not lesser, precision. There's nothing tiny about the monkey's haste, even poetically speaking, is there? *Tiny haste*: that's nonsense. Why is it, then, that you can *see* a monkey doing something with "an air of tiny, exasperated haste" so clearly, like something you've looked at every day of your life, whereas a "tiny animal" doing something with "exasperated haste" leaves a much less meaningful impression? It's the paws you see better Johnson's way. Notice how he doesn't mention them—he doesn't want to clutter his sentence with a word that de-emphasizes the animal's almost-humanness. When he's pressured to do it a second time, later in the passage, he escapes through the side door of "hands":

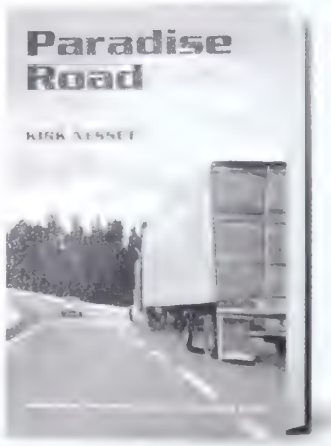
> The monkey flattened itself out against the tree, spreading its arms and legs enthusiastically, and then, reaching around with both hands as if trying to scratch its back, it tumbled down to the ground. Seaman Houston was terrified to witness its convulsions there. It hoisted itself, pushing off the ground with one arm, and sat back against the tree trunk with its legs spread out before it, like somebody resting from a difficult job of labor.

Again, "job of labor"? Is that even good idiom? I've looked some and failed to turn up even so much as a localism in East Anglia. I've heard "job of work," which is quaint and pleonastic enough. But as so often, it's the tinge of self-conscious, controlled *manner* in Johnson's writing that elevates all of its energy and noticing into something elegiac. It goes on, with the monkey

> regarding its surroundings carefully, moving its head and black eyes from side to side like someone following the progress of some kind of conversation ... tears welled out of its eyes when it blinked. It looked here and there, appearing no more interested in him than in anything else it might be seeing "Hey," Houston said, but the monkey didn't seem to hear.

There's a scene in *Tree of Smoke* in which an American sits and considers a backyard bug-zapper and imagines how it might appear to a Buddhist—like a small portable engine for generating bad karma, is how—and this killing of the monkey

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will not do William Houston Jr., seaman apprentice, much good that way. Readers of Johnson's earlier books know this already. William Houston Jr. is the Bill Houston of *Angels*, the drifter and ex-con who dies in the gas chamber after killing a bank guard. He's not the only character whose future we know from a previous Johnson novel. Presumably, given time, an Internet person will put up a sort of genealogy, tracking all the little cameos. I caught one: Jimmy Storm, a mystical-minded trickster figure who runs ranting throughout *Tree of Smoke* and reemerges (pre-emerges?) as a fried drug runner in the 2001 novel *Resuscitation of a Hanged Man*. But then I suppose it's no achievement to remember Storm's outburst from that earlier book, in which he asks the main character, whom he suspects of being gay and who's taking too long to answer a question, "Have you been butt-fucked so many million times your brain fell out your anus?" I realized I knew this voice from somewhere when, in *Tree of Smoke*, Jimmy comes across a field laboratory in the jungle and has this exchange with the person inside:

> "Where do you get these jars, man?"
> "I am a scientist. An entomologist."
> "So you shit bug jars out your ass?"

Denis Johnson was born in Munich in 1949, when it was still largely a ruin. He grew up in Tokyo, Manila, and Washington, D.C. His parents were U.S. Information Service—not spies, that would probably mean, but having spies over for dinner. This helps to explain why he can do drunken midnight table-talk among worried CIA field officers the way most of our writers can do tense moments in the TV room. In *Tree of Smoke* we're introduced to William "Skip" Sands, a young operative in 1965, eager but inexperienced. Not naive—we can't call him that. He suspects duplicity on all sides from the start but doesn't yet have the information to predict its movements. His uncle, Francis X. Sands (always called "the Colonel"), is also a spy, and a war hero looked on as a god by many inside the agency, as a rogue by oth[ers]. Colonel has been a mentor [to] who grew up fatherless, a co[n] that's done nothing to har[m] latter's intelligence career. [We] lowed to wonder how much [of] time with his nephew the [C.I.A.] spent cultivating not just a [spy] but a collaborator.

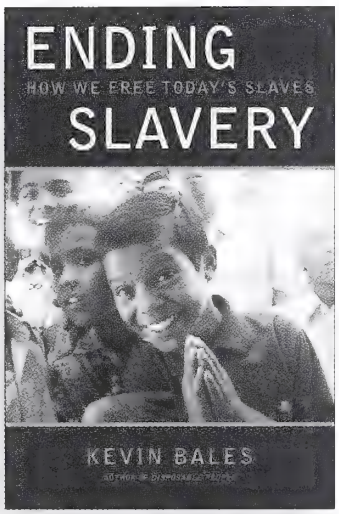
The two are brought toget[her] in the book, at a "safe house" Philippines, for an endless [and] soaked dinner under colonia[l] conditions with yawning na[tive] vants who in a grand wee-ho[ur] ture on the Colonel's part a[t] leave to eat up the ice cream [be]fore power goes out. The power [is] back on: "Eat that ice cream a[nd] (The Colonel's style.) Prese[nt] are a Brit named Anders Pitc[h] a gentleman fading away wh[o] gave the Colonel a boiled eg[g] they were both soldiers st[ill] together in a Japanese [POW] camp—and a Philippine mil[i]aison everybody calls Eddie[,] where on the grounds, br[ing] about the edges, is a bearde[d] man assassin. Mornings Skip [Sands] es him practice with a blow[gun] the garden. It actually inspir[es] talgia in the reviewer, havin[g] sion to re-read the first, unas[sum] appearance of these people [who] can be the transformative qu[ality] the paths one ends up takin[g] them. The German, Dietrich[,] is only color at this point bu[t] dreds of pages on becomes th[e] ter of Johnson's interest and [the] exit the book before he's ma[de] own unshakable impression.

Everybody at this table go[es] back, except for Skip, who still[s] of Langley and whose place he[re] an audience to the old "Asia h[and] They're talking of Burma and M[ore] past glories. All of them get m[ore] cently drunk. Skip wants t[o] about Vietnam, where he hope[s] stationed, but he keeps his peac[e] ting across from his uncle, he [can] avoid seeing how practical[ly] whole being—his career, his pre[sence] in Asia, his sense of destiny and [even] of his own personality—has bee[n] termined by this massive-seemin[g] monically charismatic man, wi[th] silver crewcut and air of effortle[ss]

The Colonel draws "on his his fat face bloomed orange larkness." Later, when Skip's eater cause to doubt the soundness of his uncle's all- g faith in their mission, the e will rise "before him like a d moon." (Even Johnson's nations work for him when ting his best prose.) We hear peaking inwardly" to himself ty thoughts of young ambi- nk out of its depth: "Wher- s journey takes us, I will fol- he journey he means is, of , the one implied by the l's sheer aura of purpose. It's a should reconsider.

a new, rare pleasure to read ohnson doing drunk in *Tree of* It's no secret he has resort to an ply of empirical research in that m earlier phases of his life, but writers in America can say the /hat's phenomenal about John- ow much and what instanta- convincing *information* he can from the remembered experi- altered states—thoughts, im- s, even qualities of language cur only at levels where you're posed to be able to observe your- elligibly anymore, much less our fingers to make notes. "Neg- pability" goes very far, but we're ent species when we're truly al- When he needs it, Johnson in- y reaches down and recovers agment of bent perception that s a little start of unfrozen recog- in the reader. The moment I *ree of Smoke* would be good was ment it became apparent that he ired out a way to bring this gift om his shorter work, in which oments tend to steal the show ld understand how a drowning ight suddenly feel a great thirst ed. Or how the slave might be- a friend to his master"), and e more gradual agenda of the where things mustn't fall either er or completely apart too soon. rroom, "whole eras passed before ion like scarves"; at a party, "he through an hour like a physical a hallway. His lips turned to ." Hangovers are no less per- . A man waking from a tawdry p, unable to move, wonders,

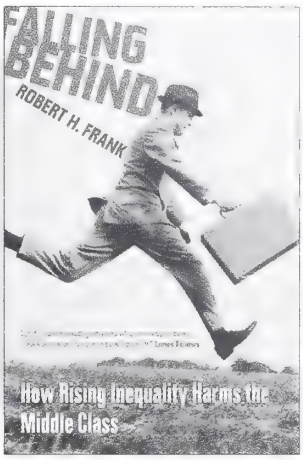
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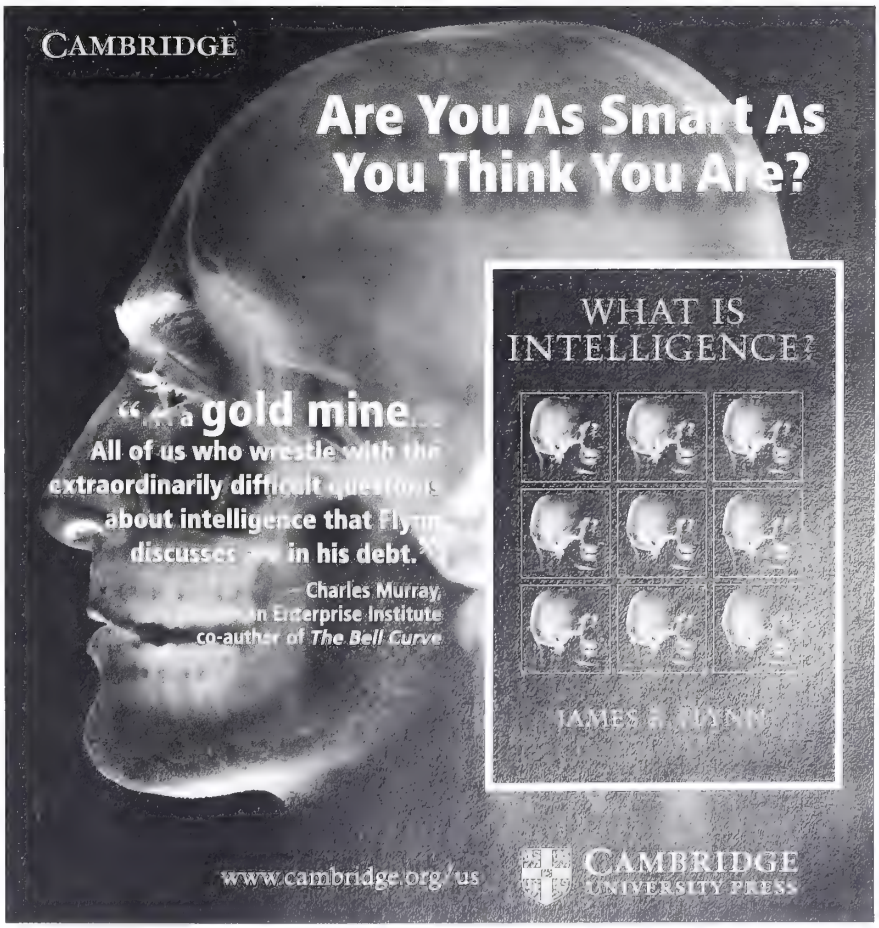
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"When would I be receive the gift of desperation?"

One hesitates to say something in general about the structure of *Tree of Smoke*. Johnson patterns his different plotlines very clearly and drivingly over the course of 600-some pages, and things are bound to sound convoluted here, in the 4,000–5,000-word arena. (That would be a particular disservice to this book, which may be that rarity among recent "literary thrillers" insofar as it is in fact both literary and thrilling.) *Tree of Smoke* is two novels in one. The first is the CIA story, Skip and the Colonel running agents, doing "psy-ops," waiting around in billeted villas: we're with the people who plan but will probably not die in this war. Around as well is a Canadian relief worker named Kathy Jones, a missionary's widow with whom Skip is having a melancholy, distant affair—years of not seeing her, ignoring her letters, punctuated by nights together in one or another Asian locale, nights that even as they're happening Skip understands are what will pass for love in his life. He does love her. She's "hidden-wounded, phony-cynical, overpassionate." She's also real in her flashes of warmth, undeniably good, a person who's observing the war, like Skip, but whose ideology has evidently a surer center than the belief that Communism should be wiped from the planet. Among dealers of death she's a dealer in life, scrounging antibiotics, assisting at amputations, though never without her own complications. Indeed, when we meet her she's clumsily flirting in a rural Philippine café with the first American she's seen in months. Nonetheless, the consistency of self she displays in her periodic reemergences in the novel shows up the deterioration, from inside out, of Skip's idealism and hold on some kind of livable politics. Johnson makes us feel the creeping dilemma of the spy's existence: once you've committed yourself to duplicity as a daily mode, your soul can't allow anything to be quite real again, else you'll shatter. On the one hand, you know more than most about how things work; on the other, you don't exist except as an instrument of state power, "lending your efforts to the cruel mad devastation," as Kathy says, by way of unheeded warning. A ghost life ensues, a kind of performance even in the smallest things, the moral will of a spy being like the memory of a past life.

The other book-within-a-book in *Tree of Smoke* concerns the Houston brothers, Bill and James. They're from somewhere awful in Arizona. They join the armed forces, each in turn, each "enchanted above all by the power to create his destiny just by signing his name." Bill, the one who shoots the monkey, cycles through the Navy and washes up back in the States, to a life of soup kitchens and motel rooms by the week, jobs that "demanded his soul and in return had given him poverty." His life is an ever-unfolding disaster redeemed only by the fact that he notices the fact. Meanwhile James, the younger brother, keeps "re-upping" for more tours in Vietnam (this is in the days when you had a choice, needless to say); as he comes to prefer Army life to civilian life, death to boredom, frightened whores to girlfriends, etc., his assignments grow darker. Eventually he becomes one of the soldiers we sent down into the Vietcong tunnels to hunt. So here are the men who will not be consulted in planning the war but are likely to die there, which both brothers do, in their way, though not physically. "They might as well bring back my bones," Bill says at one point. "I'm all different." Prior to *Tree of Smoke*, one could have said there's nobody better than Denis Johnson at doing the existential terror of American poverty and social invisibility—of always having to walk by the feast in the window while feeling as lost as a doomed Arctic mission—and now that the novel's been published, one can say he's never done it better himself. One is made to feel great respect for the power of the social traps that keep an American underclass enlisting in disproportionate numbers, and to feel the loneliness of James's finding himself in Asia, in "streets full of people who didn't know how strange they looked," then the even greater isolation that follows, when they finally make him come home, and we see him all hollowed out, starting unwinnable fights in a Phoenix bar because he craves the "righteous lethargy" of letting someone kick him in the head.

To say that these are "two [illegible] to make it sound like they [illegible] come one; they do. It's just th[illegible] son doesn't go the easy way [illegible] them connect in cutely coin[illegible] moments. He lets the two pl[illegible] like harmonics, explicitly held [illegible] only by the unfeeling marc[illegible] dateline chapter headings: 19[illegible] These years are the one ex[illegible] everyone in the novel sha[illegible] everyone is undone by it, ju[illegible] the spies and the soldiers alik[illegible] with all manner of less famili[illegible] less memorable characters. A[illegible] be perverse not to mention. [illegible] Hao, a South Vietnamese [illegible] who's become loyal to the Co[illegible] ter years of driving him arou[illegible] agrees to help recruit to the[illegible] can side an old friend who we[illegible] but now has lost his faith. T[illegible] unapproved operation, it tu[illegible] When the Colonel vanishes a[illegible] protect him anymore, Hao r[illegible] every bit of his survivor's art tc[illegible] family without condemning hi[illegible] It's fairly ingenious what he c[illegible] with. You'll be glad to hear, t[illegible] when Johnson draws Viet[illegible] people, he draws them as peo[illegible] happen to live in Vietnam. [illegible] hardly a gratuitous mention c[illegible] otic-food name. Hao watches [illegible] Kim, walk into the room,

> middle-aged, splay-footed, a st[illegible] with fat daubed onto it, wiry [illegible] bowed legs with a jutting paun[illegible] face had become somewhat like [illegible] the stone frogs in the gardens, a [illegible] what like that of the Buddha's [illegible] pop-eyed. She sat catching he[illegible] and said, "I'm fine today."
>
> "It's a miracle," he said, be[illegible] knew she liked to use such ter[illegible]

There's plenty of thinking, [illegible] or otherwise, about Buddhism [illegible] *of Smoke*, but it's skeptical, i[illegible] cratic, never straining toward th[illegible] resentative." The talk about [illegible] tianity is the same, though it[illegible] be said that nothing ever quite [illegible] mines our awareness of this as [illegible] Christian novel. It boasts th[illegible] ambiguously decent character[illegible] missionary and the other two [illegible] This is also among the two o[illegible] best American novels of th[illegible] ten years, which was equally [illegible]

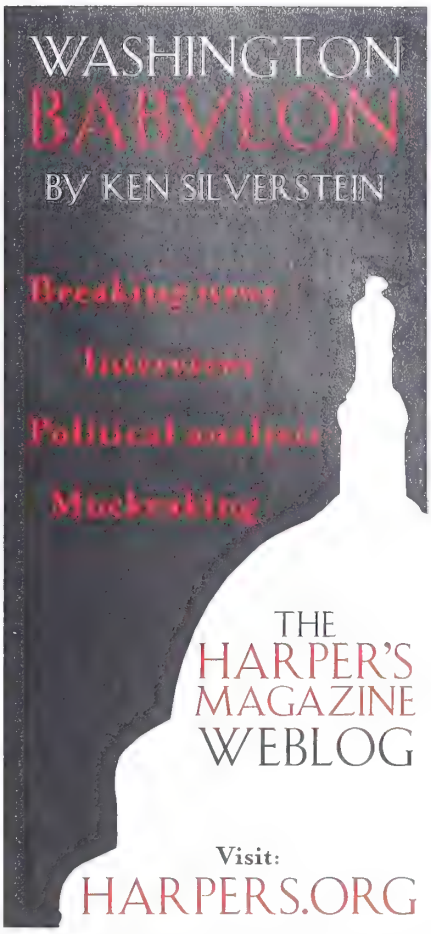
hen it came out. It's for an-
d of critic to point out the in-
y apparent philosophical con-
across Johnson's different
or now it can be described as
tween Spinozistic nature wor-
he abyss experiences itself,
ss/is alive") and a strain of
n mysticism that seeks the ec-
edemption along the road of
, the faith that can find a hap-
g in the last page of *Lear*.
ifferent plots in *Tree of Smoke*
a little on mystery for their
e effect—another reason to be
with them here. None of the
s get solved, mind you, but
n with consequence. Indeed,
ement of having a writer make
as deeply about two characters
on can suddenly turn and lay
an excruciatingly suspenseful
ssination scene that's scary in
you pay to be scared at the
is some legitimate entertain-
But on the level of language
paragraphs sparkle with little
ents. The Colonel brings word
ip's mother has died: "Palms
neld the cablegram like a big
ash." A dog "attacked its pri-
ith a volcanic, ecstatic grunt-
A water buffalo extricates it-
a mudhole "like some geologic
man "expelled a wad of to-
om his mouth and it bounced
pavement like a small turd."
son's power of empathy is a
at radiates and cannot be mod-
It's helplessly total. Everybody
erything gets its due. "There
way to go quietly," he writes of
taircase in a monastery and by
on his own work, "every tread
nething to say" (recalling Beck-
athless sentence, in *Malone*
There was nothing, not even
d on the paths, that did not ut-
ery"). It's a weakness, maybe,
es—meaning only that, in such
ook with so many actors, some-
ou wish he'd just do a crowd
nd not pause to sear some by-
into your consciousness. John-
written his *War and Peace* with-
ce galloping, even though to
one a little of it might have
im in certain instances from
his characters to say genera-
efining things that border on

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NOTES FOR "ABECEDARIAN JIGSAW":

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov.
*Note: * indicates an anagram.*

ANSWERS: 1. as(pic)s; 2. blowfish*; 3. brag(rev.); 4. car-d; 5. cat*-nap(rev.); 6. C-loves; 7. dazes (hidden); 8. dialler*; 9. encrypts, pun; 10. ex(E-MP)lar*; 11. (e)fas(rev.)–test; 12. fiber*; 13. freest*; 14. g-ill; 15. h.-yb(rev.)-rid, 16. in-cur, 17. ja-l-l, 18. jui-l, 19. kraken, (crack n), 20. levier*; 21. man-I.C.; 22. nary*; 23. o[rig-(sh)i(ft)]n; 24. plaques (hidden); 25. (s)quid; 26. relish, two mngs.; 27. re(n)d; 28. ret.-ail; 29. shirr, homophone; 30. S-k(I)ing; 31. sterling*; 32. strain, two mngs.; 33. ten-ET's; 34. (ref)uses; 35. utensil*; 36. valise*; 37. way-lays; 38. X-r(a-y.)ing; 39. yang(tze); 40. z(lot)y

hammy, or from having Skip carry his Boy Scout pocket knife around. If there's a holdover from his prime better at the shorter stuff, it's that.

But it's impossible really to regret this rawness of seeing in *Tree of Smoke*, when just that feature of Johnson's writing has made possible maybe the finest battle writing by a non-combat veteran since Stephen Crane. Interestingly, the two worked the same way, traveling back through the eyes of the wrecked veterans they saw or found them on the streets in order to reconstruct what must have happened. Crane went to Chancellorsville, Johnson to the Tet Offensive. Not a lot of actual fighting takes place in *Tree of Smoke*, but what's there is bewilderingly vivid. Johnson sounds especially like Crane when describing a soldier named Hanson who cracks under fire and starts talking crazily about himself in the third person: "Hanson loves his weapon like a pussy. Hanson wants to go home." One somehow feels the psychological accuracy when Johnson writes:

> Nobody bothered Hanson about it. They realized the enemy were killers, they themselves were just boys, and they were dead. They were glad to hear Hanson's voice talking about this very moment as if it could be understood and maybe even survived.

Elsewhere Johnson's gift approaches clairvoyance. In *Tree of Smoke* he describes, in one place, a man shooting another to death through a window, from the point of view of a stunned accomplice:

> From his waistband Hix pulled the .45 automatic. The company commander's officers, as I turned it, [illegible] and the man dropped like a puppet with its strings cut and disappeared. Right at that time Houston heard a [illegible]. He tried to understand [illegible] had come from, to find some other explanation for it rather than [illegible] had just shot the man in the chest.
>
> "Come on, come on," [he] said.
>
> There was a hole through it [illegible] screen.

And in another place, a man being shot to death through a doorway, from the point of view of the victim himself:

> In English [he] said, "Excuse me."
>
> Simultaneously the entire building turned on its end. The hallway's ceiling passed overhead, the stairs rushed up behind him and struck him in the back, the street door came to a stop upside down, hanging above him.
>
> Blows struck his chest. He had a question, but he couldn't draw a breath to ask it. The street door above him flew open, and a person was sucked up through it into the enormous darkness beyond. Something unbelievable began to suggest itself.

I can't be unusual in finding myself immediately gripped, without having any experience to appeal to for the sensation, by the sheer persuasiveness of those passages. In both, Johnson works by playing with time and by dramatizing the flowering of confusion into clarity. But the ability in the first place to enter these moments so fully that they can then be described in a straightforward manner like dreams is equally remarkable.

Johnson's done a nervy thing by constructing this book in such a way that you can get rather far into it before you realize that a certain potentially off-putting thing he's doing is deliberate and working toward an end. I refer to the element of pastiche. One first notices, with the appearance of the Colonel, that Johnson is allowing little flashes of Vietnam-movie cliché to slip through what otherwise is a new way of handling this material: a Vietnam novel that's almost completely indifferent, on the surface, to the political dimensions of the war. In his sermonizing, the Colonel starts to sound a little like Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*. Not Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*—it's definitely *Apocalypse Now*, the whole "If I had a thousand such men, our troubles here would be at an end" business. And Jimmy Storm, with his monologue of brilliantly stupid hippie-thoughts, channels Dennis Hopper's character from the same movie. There's even a reprisal of the scene from *Forrest Gump* in which Gary Sinise's wounded-vet character floats on his back in the water, smiling upward, with stumps for legs. A reader could come away feeling that *Tree of Smoke* was second [illegible] Vietnam novel that had to [illegible] Vietnam movies for its detai[illegible]

This is a story about stori[illegible] thing. Not about how they [illegible] make sense of loss, or ab[illegible] they're the repository of our [illegible] ity, or any of that, but ab[illegible] *nightmare* of them, the w[illegible] never tell the whole truth [illegible] us as it they did. Halt the tr[illegible] we think we're living life w[illegible] ly just trying to figure out [illegible] main character does next in [illegible] ry we're telling ourselves ab[illegible] selves, and the same can b[illegible] nations, governments, pe[illegible] power. The spies and assa[illegible] *Tree of Smoke* are being s[illegible] assassins—they read Simen[illegible] ham Greene, Poe. They [illegible] when they find themselves [illegible] ing fleeting scenes from spy[illegible] they've seen. Something ab[illegible] rings true. Don't they say [illegible] love mafia movies and patte[illegible] culture on them? Skip wo[illegible] times if he's Judas, or perh[illegible] mysterious, vaguely traitorou[illegible] who flees naked at Geth[illegible] when they arrest Jesus. Ma[illegible] one story, Adam Smith anot[illegible] Colonel and Uncle Ho still[illegible] In our stories are we ever *re*[illegible] good? T. S. Eliot said mos[illegible] evil in the world is done by[illegible] trying to think well of the[illegible] this novel helped me und[illegible] what he meant. When Ski[illegible] to Kathy that he "alte[illegible] thought of himself as th[illegible] American and the Ugly A[illegible] . . . and finally as simply the [illegible] American," we're meant to l[illegible] pop-cultural knowingness [illegible] possibility of his very rede[illegible] He may have seen that the r[illegible] portant thing about his own [illegible] not how he might defend i[illegible] some internal judge after all. [illegible] never the point.

I may be making excuses f[illegible] that could have been done m[illegible] tly. My point is just that this [illegible] operating on such a plane, [illegible] on its right to be an excellent [illegible] to dismantle our favorite, m[illegible] forting stories at one stroke.

Continued on

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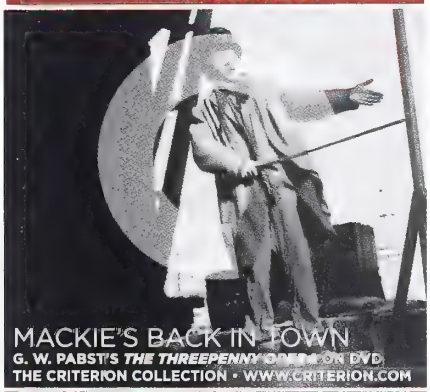
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Relaxivist, activist, Groucho-Marxist. Grateful veteran of a long equal-partner relationship. Widower seeking another EPR. Affectionate Africanist human-rights worker living in New York and New Mexico. Recently spent two months in New Orleans doing Katrina-relief work. Co-authored book used as text in African studies at Harvard. Now writing book on Sabbath. Occasionally scribbles limericks. Shall we laugh? **jeanlouisbour@yahoo.com (917) 930-1190 (212) 242-4984**

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Continued from page 116

sentence slips in a nod to J... last a nod to Joyce; it is goo... ious when it wants to be bu... thetic and sad throughout. ... exactly over-read this book. ... has put it all out there, as we ... written a novel that, with its ... ternal referencing of stories ... ten before, more or less begs t... as a summation and validati... fiction to this point, and he'... one that wears its high-m... sense of the novel's task un... ably high on its sleeve. Mayb... case that Johnson *himself* felt ... to make the kind of outsize n... statement no one could mis... minor. If so, he has not been ... look foolish by the ambition ...

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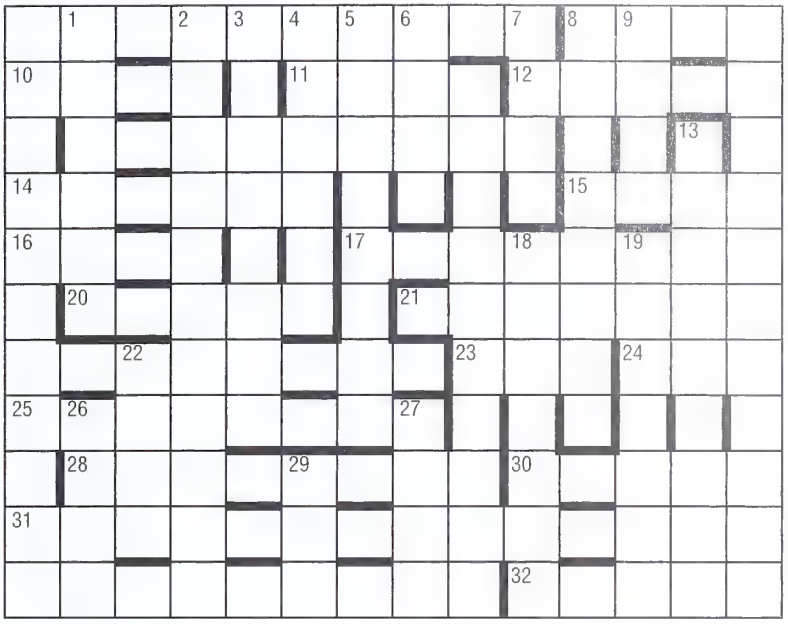
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PUZZLE

ORE SPLIT ERSONALITIES

Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Eight diagram entries are unclued. eir identities must be deduced from the wers to the Extra Clues.
Clue answers include six proper names.) is uncommon. As always, mental re- ctuation of a clue is the key to its solu- n. The solution to last month's puzzle ap- rs on page 115.



ROSS

8. Talking puppet is popular Indian fare (4)
0. One not qualified loses heart (4)
1. Dinner half-eaten, start to field softball! (4)
2. Large vessel sunk in Armada, or taken (5)
4. One involved in buying and selling a rush of words (6)
5. Study English before reading *Paradise Lost* (4)
6. *Man with a Country?* Not entirely! (4)
7. Left-hand page in antique frame, hyped (8)
0. Family rating given to *The Bad Seed* and *The Outer Limits* (5)
1. Using street talk, speak broken English, perhaps? (7)
3. Forest Whitaker played him as I would myself (3)
4. Getting a corporate leader not quite good service (3)
5. Curiously not some southern nocturnal events (8)
8. Peeper sees dress (refer vaguely to the lining) (4,4)
0. Talk-show host, for example, has superficial title taken back (5)
1. Like a safe investment? Contract up on a TV license (14)
2. Panic sale covering, initially, coats and ties (5)

WN

1. For future reference, no life gets reexamined (2,4)
2. In heavy accent, officer goes after an oddity (11)
3. Books with soft cover—you get words from them (8)
4. Flies, e.g., taking a hundred small pictures (6)
5. To alter the past is baffling to Carter (8)
6. "Horse goes into a bar . . ."—that can't be right! (4)
7. Company with a lock on an educational institution? (4)
9. Dry run needs outside help (4)
13. Freely televise about a hundred shows displaying discrimination (9)
18. Gore supports less developed plant based on rubbish (7)
19. Not good at logic—it's painful to the ear! (7)
22. Not sure of your opinion of *Rent*? (4)
26. Zero-digit population in Nebraska once (4)
27. Gospel music with vocal not shared (4)
29. Bog down, but right away, 11 Across turns up! (3)

EXTRA CLUES

a. Note from a city (2)
b. Resounding punch, with nothing omitted (3)
c. Eat ground meal (3)
d. Nervous reaction, and upset about it (3)
e. Those against company negotiations being decentralized (4)
f. Clipped the front end of a drape? (4)
g. Bug in your ear? Bug out (4)
h. Blue fish eating a bit of coral (4)
i. Sex appeal is included in the French diet (4)
j. Party with me all over southern hemispheres (5)
k. Taking club car, getting one cent back (6)
l. Stray gay left for a solo (6)
m. Something built out of softer wood (6)
n. Time lying all around leaves you with a prickling feeling (6)
o. Metal in poor condition (7)
p. Short session turns up first under "Comic Strips" (9)

ontest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Abecedarian Jigsaw," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 5. nders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "News Clippings," are Jeff Feldmesser, Oakton, Virginia; James Kaiser, Oak d, California; and Bill Piper, Lehighton, Pennsylvania.



FINDINGS

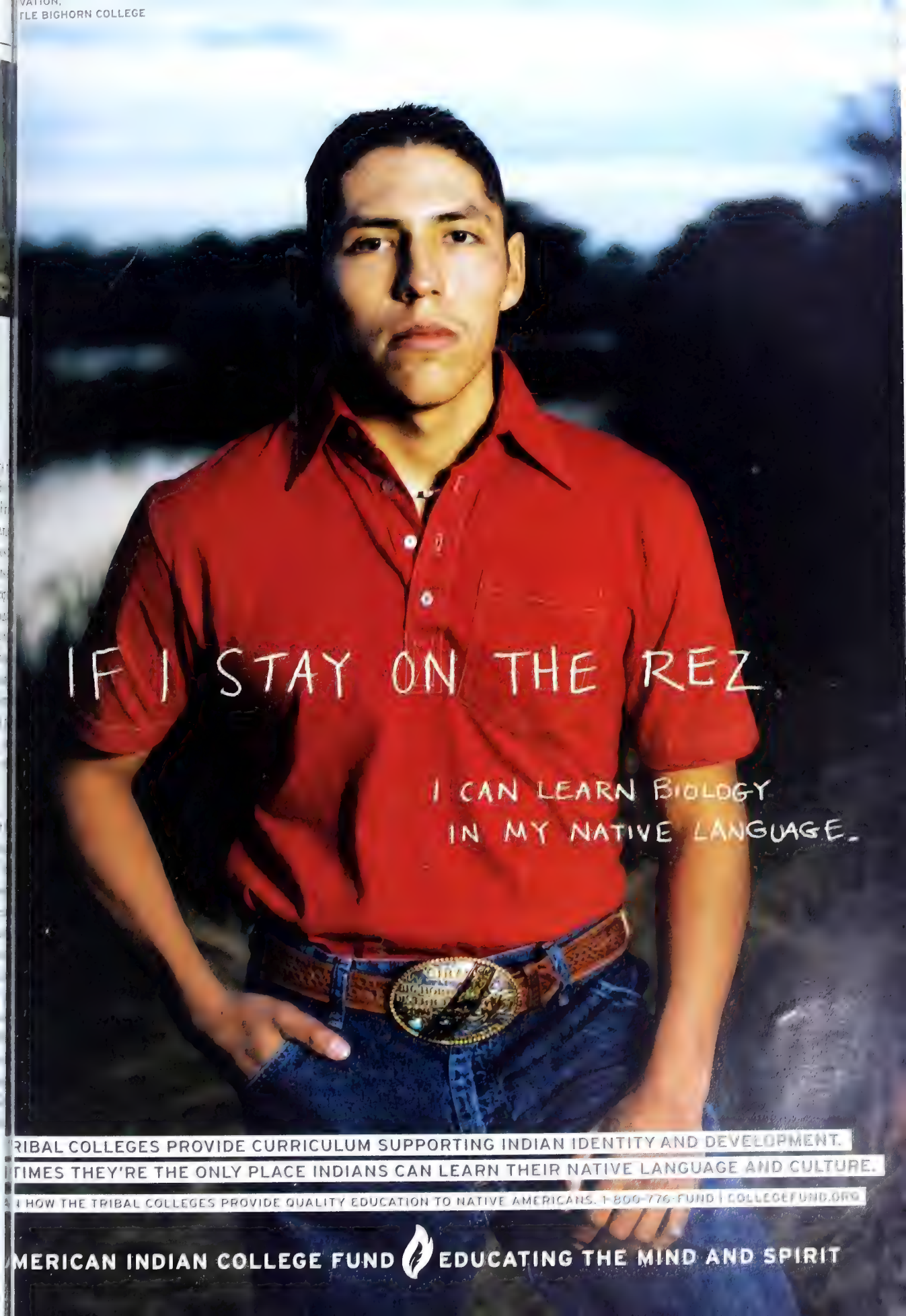
Physicists at the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics announced that electrically charged dust can organize itself into double helixes resembling DNA; these objects, known as plasma crystals, also exhibit some of the characteristics of living things, such as the ability to share information. The most likely environment for plasma crystals in our solar system would be the rings of Saturn or Uranus. Astronomers observed an octatetraynyl anion, a negatively charged organic molecule, in a cloud of cold gas near a dying star, and a large bulge of red supergiants was found near the center of the Milky Way. Astronomers noticed that the Abell 520 galaxy cluster has a massive dark core, which is presumably dark matter, though it is separated from any bright galaxies, which tends to upset established theories about the mysterious invisible cosmic substance. German scientists claimed to have propelled microwave photons faster than the speed of light. A planet was discovered that has the density of balsa wood.

Researchers successfully revived an 8-million-year-old bacterium that was extracted from the oldest known ice on Earth, experts said that the reemergence of ancient microorganisms as a result of global warming was nothing to worry about. A relatively new fungus appears to be killing frogs all over the world, and Spanish scientists found that an Asian parasite called *Nosema ceranae* is killing honeybees in Europe and the Americas. Queen bees use chemicals to prevent workers from hating them. Female mice with an altered nasal receptor called the vomeronasal organ engage in male pelvic thrusting and try to mount other mice, those that have babies soon abandon them, and scientists said that although humans lack the organ, the mouse finding suggests that human sexual behavior might not be controlled by the brain. The urine of powerful male mice alters the brain of females. A scientist trying to understand why Argentine lake ducks have foot-long spiral-shaped penises discovered that duck vaginas, which often have pockets and cul-de-sacs, spiral in the opposite direction; a comparison of sixteen duck species also revealed that as vaginas become longer and more complex, males evolve longer penises. A study by the National Cancer Institute found that a "personal lubricant" made from carrageenan, a thickener derived from seaweed, also inhibits transmission of the human papilloma virus. Promiscuous primates emit speedier sperm, scientists revealed, and teenagers in love exhibit many behaviors associated with mental illness.

Health experts continued to be concerned about the early onset of puberty, particularly among girls; chemical pollution was mentioned as a likely culprit, as was the growing number of families without live-in fathers, who emit chemical signals that inhibit their daughters' sexual development. Crystal methamphetamine use among young adults was on the rise; users tend to be white, male, Western, and poor, and they tend to have incarcerated fathers. Young adults who drink malt liquor are more likely to develop drinking problems; they're also more likely to smoke pot. Binge drinkers prefer beer. Researchers concluded that 40 percent of deaths worldwide are caused by pollution. There were reports of mahjong-induced epilepsy in China, and a lamb was born in New Zealand with seven legs. A health expert warned that humans are not fit for human consumption.

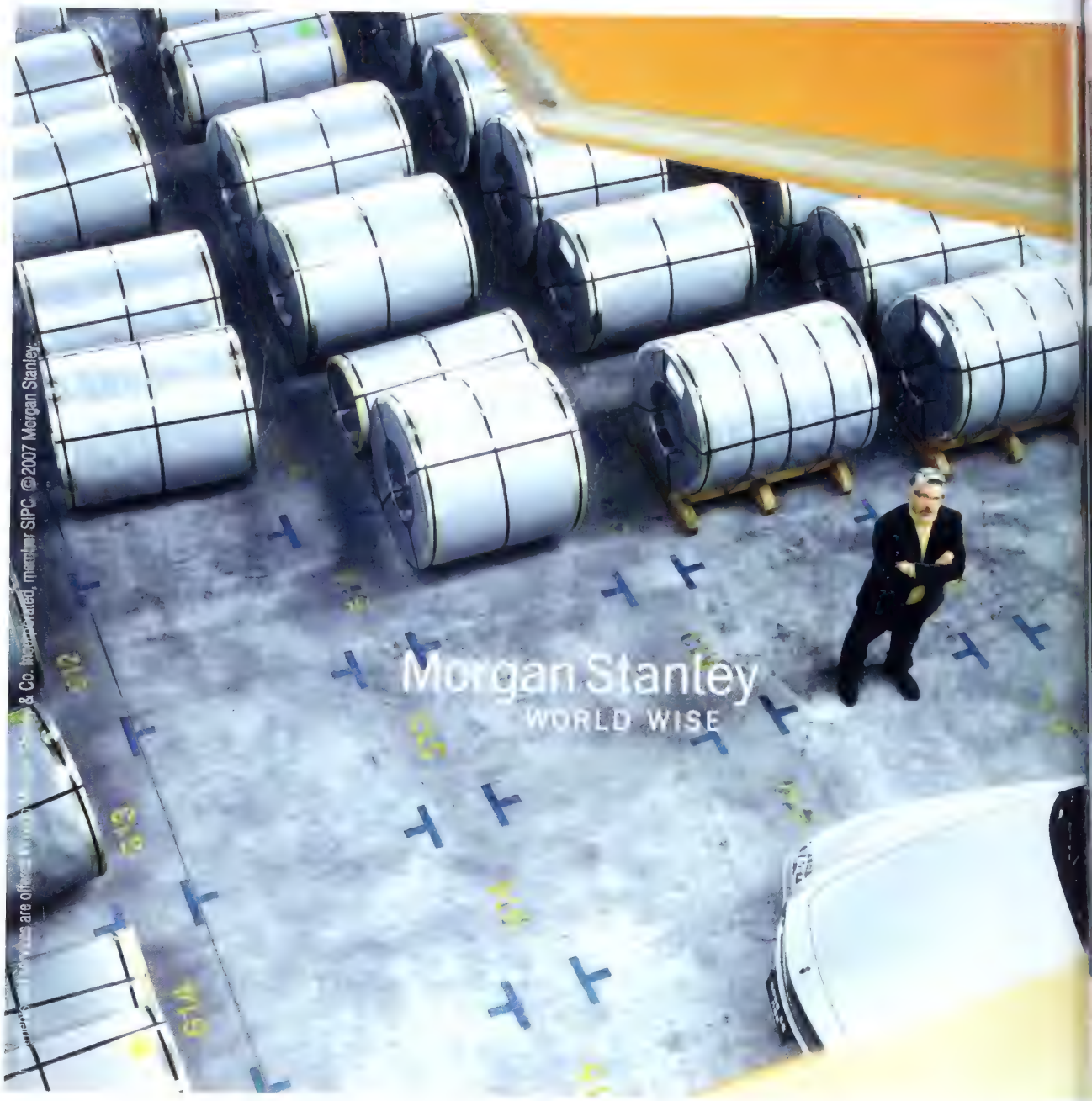
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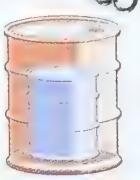
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Projected Global Oil Demand

2004 DEMAND
82 mbpd*

2030 DEMAND
115 mbpd



Global Oil Flows



Source: Energy Information Administration



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LETTERS

And a Log to Sit On

As a retired teacher with almost forty years of experience in high schools, I have taught the bright and the struggling as well as the privileged and the poor. I have also lived through all the various educational reforms and transient inspirations described by Peter Schrag in "Schoolhouse Crock" [Essay, September]. I paid attention to none of them. President James Garfield once commented that an ideal education would be a great teacher sitting on one end of a log and an apt pupil on the other. The truth of that statement was my guide throughout my career. Effective teaching does not require rigid formulas or grand new plans handed down from Parnassus. Rather, it takes getting to know students, discovering where their individual gifts and dreams may take them, and opening the doors for them to go through. This has not changed since the Lyceum of ancient Greece. My advice to students is to take a cue from Mark Twain: Never let your schooling interfere with your education.

Toby Grace
Trenton, N.J.

Harper's Magazine *welcomes reader response. Please address mail to* Letters, Harper's Magazine, *666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

Peter Schrag is right to po
that Americans expect too
their public schools. When
bemoan the amount we sp
public education, they fail to
er the fact that we are ask
schools to solve social and ec
problems we cannot, or wi
solve by other means. Cons
all the money we have saved
mantling the welfare state an
social policy on the cheap,
not spending much money at
schools, which leads me to
what the rhetoric of school
achieves for us. Is its purp
some suspect, to undermine
education in order to privatize
do we as a society respond o
threats? The danger is tha
time a language of threats lim
imagination and leads to unin
remedies. We need a language
form that is analytically sha
also affirms the grander visi
public education as a fundan
civic institution.

Mike Rose
Los Angeles

Peter Schrag concludes
schools have never been "
enough" and urges us to thi
them instead "as places wher
children might simply learn s
thing." But compulsory p
schooling has never encouraged
dren to learn. Based upon the
sian model, public schools wer

ed in an effort to condition
in a population of young
for factory work. Children
ight to stay quiet, stand in
in rows, respond to bells, and
bey authority without ques-
hool, then, has never been
ough because it forces chil-
o are naturally creative and
ve to submit to a regime of
and boredom for seven hours
America may no longer need
workers, but schools work ad-
well at training young
o submit and function in our
te structure. The problem, of
is that we have *all* gone to
and because of that, we have
y thinking outside its frame-
ut we owe it to our children

pell
ort, N.Y.

on the Side

a Kipnis's September review,
nd Disgust," is subtitled "a
istory of prudery, feminist and
ise," but the concern that ac-
nites the three books under
—Andrea Dworkin's *Inter-*
Wendy Shalit's *Girls Gone*
nd Laura Sessions Stepp's *Un-*
—is not sex but power. Inti-
ntails vulnerability, and with
es the potential for abuse.
ally, at least, these risks are
for women.

write, then, a critical essay on
in's bleak view of sex without
oning her horrific experiences
ual violence and her lifelong
e on behalf of similarly victim-
omen is irresponsible. A reader
the subject would come away
Kipnis's review believing that
e feminist author was animated
by a personal revulsion for the
intercourse. Kipnis's arch tone
es Dworkin's dramatization of
ality to a baroque romp, to be
d alongside other chronicles of
excess. To be sure, Dworkin's
is of male and female relations
e crude to the point of carica-
nd, as Kipnis observes, her gen-
sentialism is at odds with the
cy and individuality she hoped
tore to the sex act, but Kipnis discusses Dworkin's writing as if the entertainment value of her literary style were the main issue.

Female sexual vulnerability is a tricky subject for feminists. Overemphasize it and you risk reinforcing patriarchal modesty codes, as Kipnis accuses Shalit of doing. But in Kipnis's zeal to empower women in the abstract, she suggests that the young women interviewed by Stepp should not be taken seriously.

Kipnis is right to be troubled that both Shalit's and Stepp's books put all the responsibility to change our sexual mores on women. Where are the books teaching young men to respect their partners? Can we learn anything from how previous cultures taught men self-restraint without losing the egalitarian gains of the present? It is this larger and more interesting story that Kipnis misses in her haste to force all sex books into the clichéd drama of rebels versus prudes.

Jendi Reiter
Northampton, Mass.



Whoa, Canada

McKenzie Funk's description of the latest Canadian efforts to claim ownership in the Arctic ["Cold Rush," Report, September] was interesting to read in light of recent reports from the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, that the polar ice cap has receded to record lows and may completely disappear in summers by 2030. But these efforts to establish sovereignty are not new. During the Cold War, Ottawa rushed to stake a claim in the High Artic. This resulted in the 1953 relocation of several Inuit families from northern Québec to Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island, where they struggled to survive in an unfamiliar habitat so that Canada could claim permanent civilian occupancy. An inquiry later termed the relocation "one of the worst human rights violations in the history of Canada." The government paid $10 million Canadian to the survivors and their families bu to issue an official apolog only hope that my governme rent policies on the Arcti consider its traditional inh not just the area's econo strategic potential.

Matt Corks
Montréal

Turkish Insight

"Across the Bosphorus," Pet ley's September photo essay, e fies a common and enduring tion for Turkey to be a contra The photographs—a huma mule carrying electronics, fo ple, or scantily clad women a women almost completely co depict dichotomies striking t inquisitive visitor, but they little insight into the countr culture. Like the Bush Adm tion's much-maligned and o peated description of Turke Islamic republic, these image reinforce the notion of Turk bridge between the East and th without showing what is real pening in the country.

Mathew Creighton
Istanbul

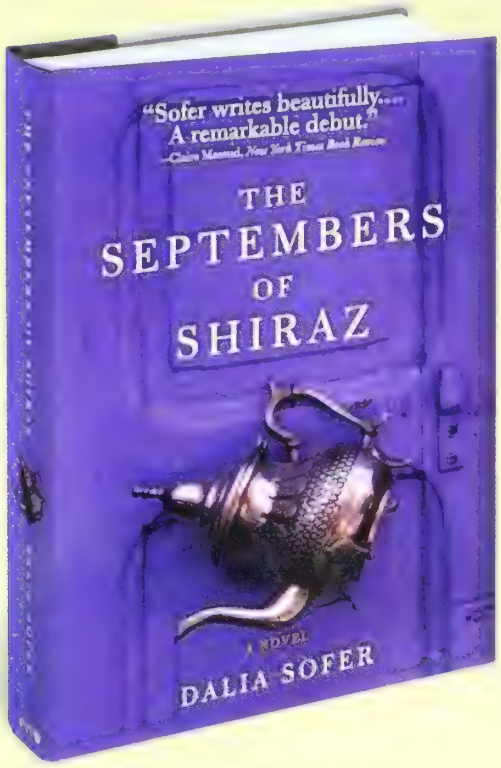
Game On

Lewis Lapham's September book, "Flies in Amber," conclud an apparent vindication of games. An avid gamer since I child, I have often been aske playing video games at your ag question can easily and effecti turned back on any accuser, es ly in the case of war advocat your age, still murdering stra Games are less agitators of viol stincts than safe repositories for All misanthropic fantasies are out in the digital realm so that real world—where it matters—o be civilized. I find myself lam the fact that men who make a h causing wars (e.g., George W. Dick Cheney, Donald Rum Osama bin Laden) are not addic video games instead. The world be a better place if they were.

Larry Nocella
Royersford, Penn.

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NOTEBOOK

Blowing Bubbles

By Lewis H. Lapham

ave an indistinct notion that if ep up this activity of joint stocks ades long enough all will at ride somewhere, in next to no and for nothing; but though a rushes to the depot, and the con- shouts "All aboard!" when the is blown away and the vapor ised, it will be perceived that a e riding, but the rest are run –and it will be called, and will melancholy accident."

—Henry David Thoreau

eading the reports from the scene ust's melancholy accident in the y's credit markets—the bursting home-mortgage bubble, banks g into the sand of subprime loans, funds losing 100 percent of their ied value in a matter of days, the ones Industrial Average dropping ints in the space of half an hour—struck by the resemblances be- the speculation floated on the ntee of easy money on Wall Street ne one puffed up on the promise tain victory in Iraq. To buyers of y leveraged debt the promoters of All aboard!" money schemes is- PowerPoints similar to those con- d in the White House and circu- with former Secretary of Defense ld Rumsfeld's proviso that "there nown unknowns. . . . But there lso unknown unknowns." A sur- of both commodities was found in uggage of the travelers run over ugust on the road to El Dorado. A ber of them deserve to be rendered ilitary acronyms:

H. Lapham is the National Corre- ent for Harper's Magazine *and the edi- Lapham's Quarterly.*

The "NINJA Loan"—Extended to borrowers possessed of no income, no job, no assets—comparable to the predatory lending of the United States Army to the freedom-loving sheikhs of Iraq.

The "Neutron Loan"—Designed to remove the occupants but leave the property intact. Within the next year over a million American home mortgages are due to foreclose. In August 80,000 people were "displaced by violence" from their houses and neighborhoods in Iraq; another 2.2 million Iraqis have been obliged to flee the country.

The "Teaser Loan"—An adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) sometimes requiring no money down or up front but in all variants offered at a low introductory rate that adjusts only in an upward direction. The American liberation of Iraq was originally priced at $50 billion over a span of seven months; the expenses now run to $2 billion a week. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize–winning economist, estimates the eventual cost of the Iraqi investment at $2 trillion.

The "Liar Loan"—Requiring no documentation attesting to the borrower's net worth, annual income, or intention to repay—the same terms on which the CIA accepted the story about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi defector code-named "Curveball."

SIV—"Structured investment vehicle" that "securitizes" subprime loans, thus creating credit with "access to liabilities." Soon after the invasion of Iraq the infatuation with a similar method of transforming loss into gain prompted the Pentagon to welcome terrorists arriving in Baghdad and Anbar province from everywhere in the Middle East. The bundling of America's enemies into one target supported the notion that the war on terror could be won at a single blow. Rush Limbaugh delivered the good news to his radio audience in the summer of 2003: "We don't have to go anywhere to find them! They've fielded a jihad all-star team."

"Toxic Waste"—Degraded financial material added as ballast to higher-quality assets contained in a mortgage-backed bond or security.

AAA—Bond rating affixed by Moody's and Standard & Poor's to SIVs transporting "toxic waste." The certifications correspond to former CIA Director George Tenet's assuring President Bush that finding WMDs in Iraq was a "slam dunk."

Risk Assessment Models—Systems of stock-market trading quantified as mathematical algorithms and engineered to guarantee the perpetual motion of profit. They bear comparison to the Pentagon's arsenal of high-technology weapons—the ones incapable of losing a war.

Model Misbehavior—Inexplicable displays of insubordination on the part of the algorithms, believed to account for the August loss of $5.5 trillion in the global stock markets. The Bush Administration attributes its failures in Iraq to model misbehavior on the part of the think-tank [illegible] (computer-generated, ideologically enhanced) of a constitutional democracy in Iraq.

CDO—Collateralized debt obligation. A coalition of the willing assembled with debt instruments of strength equivalent to the armed forces sent to Iraq from Albania.

Bubble—Employed as a verb in

eighteenth-century London "To Bubble"—i.e., to cheat, swindle, perpetrate a fraud. In contemporary American military parlance, a noun the "surge" of liquidity in the form of 30,000 troops restoring calm to the Baghdad market in civil obedience.

August's misfortunes in the credit markets produced a good deal of collateral damage elsewhere in the economy—severe losses in the construction and retail trades, to school and sewer districts, in the hotel and travel industries, to the 1.7 million families forced to flee their homes—but the proofs of Wall Street's stupefied greed didn't rouse the news media or the season's presidential candidates to exclamations of anger and disgust. Throughout the whole of its history, the American commonwealth has been subject to the depredations of what George Washington knew to be "a corrupt squadron of paper-dealers"; a hundred or even fifty years ago the brokers of the fast shuffle might have been seen in savage cartoons like those drawn by Thomas Nast (top-hatted dancing pigs) or pilloried in the language once voiced by Walt Whitman ("canker'd, crude, superstitious and rotten...") and E. L. Godkin ("a gaudy stream of bespangled, belaced, and beruffled barbarians").

Once upon a time in galaxies far, far away, we recognized the character of the risk in what was known to the first Dutch settlers in seventeenth-century New Amsterdam, many of them participants in land or stock-jobbing ventures, as "The Feast of Fools." It wasn't that the new arrivals on the American shore didn't believe or delight in the expectation and promise of fairy gold. Understood as the most demotic of economic activities, expressive of a yearning for freedom, the game of speculative finance aligns with the American passion for gambling and matches the spirit of the bet placed by the Declaration of Independence on the wheel of fortune set up with the slots marked "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." But we used to know that sometimes the numbers crap out.

The knowledge began to [illegible] from the American consciou[illegible] vocabulary during the dawn [illegible] "Morning in America" tha[illegible] Reagan perceived on the h[illegible] the 1980s when he set up [illegible] colored telescope on the Whi[illegible] roof. Convinced that "the d[illegible] between an American and a[illegible] kind of person is that an A[illegible] lives in anticipation of the fu[illegible] cause he knows it will be a gre[illegible] Reagan brought with him the [illegible] attitude that the dealers in t[illegible] seek to instill in the minds of [illegible] tomers shopping for financi[illegible] tion and political romance. Ev[illegible] a winner; the flowers never d[illegible]

The attitude has been sustai[illegible] the past twenty-five years by [illegible] porate news media's increasin[illegible] static testimonies to the wor[illegible] wisdom of the free market[illegible] Greenspan as infallible as the P[illegible] the entertainment industry's [illegible] applauding the miraculous t[illegible] mations of frogs into princes ([illegible] Trump the hero of our time) [illegible] government's policy of provid[illegible]



h infusions of cheap credit on
float speculative bubble baths
, 1998, 2001, again in 2007),
lily multiplying herd of eager
heir number now estimated
every two Americans acting
independent agents or as par-
in mutual and pension funds,
to acquire, at steadily rising
eachfront property on the
Utopia.
ner with the promises of an al-
ghter tomorrow (available on
net, delivered within twenty-
s), the widely distributed faith
ilosophers' stone (i.e., the one
ich medieval alchemists sup-
urned lead into gold) accords
revelation bestowed on a cor-
ent for the *New York Times* in
mn of 2004 by a White House
ntified at the time as "a senior
o Bush" but now generally as-
o have been Karl Rove, Presi-
h's recently retired man-for-all-
Disdainful of the meager and
truths that informed the think-
he reality-based community,"
opened a wider-angle lens on
the vision beheld by Ronald Reagan.

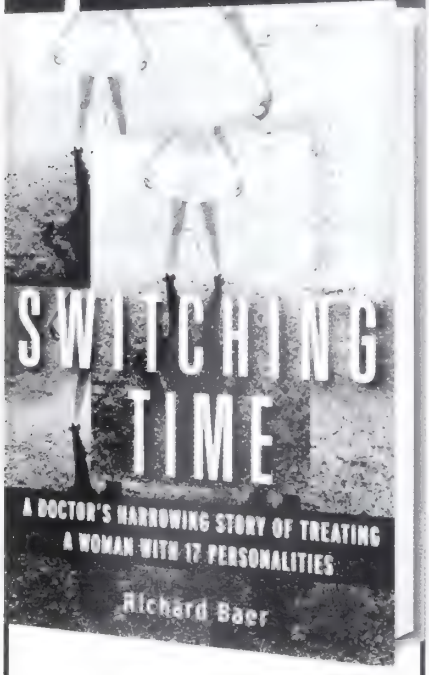
Guys like you, he said, "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality. That's not the way the world really works anymore. We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

Which didn't mean that the study would be easy to pursue. The Bush Administration's obsessive hiding of its actions and motives (from itself as well as from a public audit) rules against the handing-out of brochures illustrated with the four-color posters of imperial fantasies decorating the walls at the White House, the Pentagon, the Office of the Attorney General. On Wall Street the hedge against having to tell the truth is formed with exemptions from state and federal regulation that yield the elixir of "opacity." Highly valued by the speculators in the nineteenth-century stock swindles engineered by Commodore Vanderbilt and Daniel Drew, opacity allows the private-equity operations to bubble both the government and their clients, empowering the dealers in SIVs in the same way that it serves the creators of new realities in Mesopotamia and assists the poker players in the Las Vegas casinos. Unfortunately, as with the water in the tale of the sorcerer's apprentice, too much opacity sloshing around on the trading floors makes it impossible not only to see what cards the other players hold in their hands but also to know how much money is on the table. The government in March stopped publishing the figure that measures the extent of America's money supply, possibly because by some estimates the financial risk exposure in the global markets for leveraged derivatives now stands at a sum somewhere in the vicinity of $60 trillion, four times the size of the American economy.

When the smoke was blowing away and the vapor being condensed

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at the scene of the August wreckage, the fear of ghosts in the Wall Street attic precluded any movement in the markets for social conscience. The headlines flowed from the springs of panic, not from the wellheads of rage, the concern expressed for the concentrations of America's wealth (its safety, comfort, and good grooming) rather than for the health and well-being of the American citizenry. Together with most everybody else in the society, the big-ticket print and electronic media are heavily invested in the virtual realities that not only sustain the opulence of the country's *rentier* classes but also shape the course of the country's politics, sponsor its shows of conspicuous consumption, control the disposition of its armies. God forbid that the emperors of ice cream should be seen standing around naked on the reefs of destruction.

The financial press rounded up expert witnesses to cite the canonical distinction between *risk* ("present when future events occur with measurable probability") and *uncertainty* ("present when the likelihood of future events is indefinite or incalculable"), to implore the Federal Reserve for a surge of more money (Jim Cramer shouting into the camera at CNBC, "We have Armageddon! . . . This is not the time to be complacent!"), to say of the SIVs destroyed by the financial equivalents of improvised roadside bombs, "It is not the corpses at the surface that are scary, it is the unknown corpses below the surface that may pop up unexpectedly." "Corpse" in its Wall Street usage refers to a non-performing financial instrument, not to a dead human being.

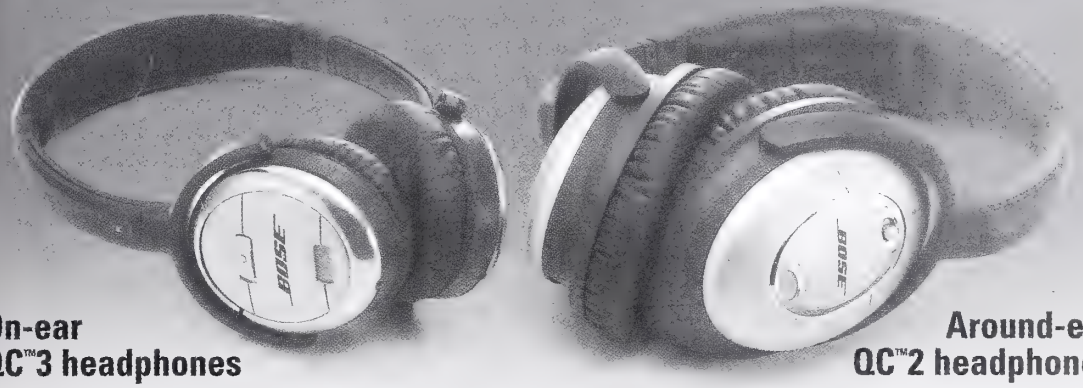
In the context of the war in Iraq, the word refers to a non-performing geopolitical instrument. If over the past four years Wall Street's deployment of lethal paper has increased the country's mortgage debt to $9.5 trillion, the Bush Administration's deployment of lethal weapons has outsourced or exhausted much of the country's military capacity, meanwhile reducing the credit rating of the All Aboard! American superpower scheme from an investment-grade security to that of a junk bond. By the end of August both speculations (the liberalization of America's capital markets, the liberation of the Islamic Middle E losing "tactical momentum reality-based community. Th ington politicians faced difficu ilar to those faced by Wall squadron of paper dealers —ho curitize" the subprime loans the Iraqi civil war, where to fi age in the imaginary numbers to the soundness of the Anbar ARM, what degree of protect left in the hedge of opacity.

The preoccupation with de forecloses debate about the w the underlying investment— ue or non-value of the war as in itself—and shifts the discu the positioning of the politic Process, not product. Not wh what end do we continue to own soldiers (the known unk as well as Iraqi civilians (the ur unknowns), but which artful stands the best chance of be the voters in next year's el while at the same time preserv bubble floated on the beli America's invincible military serves as collateral for the $2 lion debt to foreign central ban America has neither the mea the intention to repay.

Among speculators in the modity pits trading geopoliti tures, the rumors speak, as th among the speculators followi play in the stock markets, coming of "the next big thing." after the Labor Day weekend nancial press was unanimous opinion that the Federal Reser bound to step up the flows of li ty to the Wall Street banks in to sustain the world's faith i American dollar. Informed s in Washington were predict preemptive military strike a Iran. Three Navy battle groups known to be present in the P Gulf, the president was castin Iranian Revolutionary Guard increasingly evil light (terrorist emies of civilization), and how ter to replenish the credit lost than with a weapons-grade spreading the risk to investors where within range of a melan nuclear accident. With us or a us; buy American or lose the c of a lifetime.

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HARPER'S INDEX

rcentage change since the start of the Iraq war "surge" in the number of Iraqis detained in U.S.-run prisons : +50
Percentage change in the number of Iraqis aged nine to seventeen detained : +540
Number of sixty Iraqi detainees surveyed who said they had attacked U.S. forces for political reasons : 12
Number who said they had done it for money : 16
Percentage change, since the beginning of the surge, in the number of internally displaced Iraqis : +43
Percentage of Iraqis who say the surge has reduced security in the areas it targeted : 70
Percentage of Americans who believe the U.S. has "already achieved victory in Iraq" : 11
mount that a U.S. Army private paid a man to shoot him in the leg last July to avoid another tour in Iraq : $500
Price that a Boston-area company charges for My Child's Pack, a bulletproof backpack : $175
Estimated number it has sold so far this school year : 1,000
mated amount that teacher turnover costs U.S. school districts each year in recruiting and training : $7,000,000,000
Chances that a new public-school teacher in Philadelphia will leave within six years : 7 in 10
Chances that an entering high school student will not graduate within the same span : 4 in 10
Percentage of Americans who have not read a book in the past year : 27
Percentage of African Americans who have not : 20
Factor by which the education-related debt of African-American Ph.D.'s exceeds that of white Ph.D.'s : 2
er of the top ten TV shows watched by African Americans in 1997 that were also among the top ten shows overall : 1
Number today : 8
Portion of whites and African Americans, respectively, who say that immigrants take American jobs : 1/4, 1/3
centage of all race-hate crimes in L.A. in which the victims are Latino and the perpetrators African-American : 18
Percentage that are the reverse : 41
Number of immigration measures introduced into state legislatures so far this year : 1,404
Estimated number introduced during the previous ten years : 1,300
Feet on each side of the U.S.-Canadian border that by law are supposed to be kept clear of brush : 10
Percentage of the border that has not been maintained since 2000 : 44
entage change in U.S. residential-construction employment since March 2006, if illegal immigrants are counted : –15
Percentage change if illegal immigrants are excluded : –4
erage percentage decrease in a home's value for each foreclosure that takes place within a one-eighth-mile radius : 1
Number of Manhattan residents who received federal farm subsidies between 2003 and 2005 : 573
Portion of Israel's 265 kibbutzim that are now at least partially privatized operations : 7/10
Number of customers who have flown the Vatican's new "pilgrim airline" to holy sites in Europe : 890
Size, in ounces, of the bottle of holy water provided to each customer on its inaugural flight in August : 3.4
Maximum number of "unsaved" players permitted per team in a Massachusetts evangelical softball league : 4
imated percentage of women's college sports teams that were coached by women when Title IX was enacted in 1972 : 90
Percentage today : 42
Average number of hours of housework that a boyfriend in a cohabiting couple does each week : 10
Average number a married man does : 9
entage change since 1991, based on a survey of U.S. hospitals, in the number of electric-carving-knife accidents : –80
iber of students whose pre- and post-Thanksgiving weights were measured for a 2006 University of Oklahoma study : 94
Factor by which the average weight gain of the graduate students exceeded that of the undergraduates : 2

Figures cited are the latest available as of September 2007. Sources are listed on page 94
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READINGS

[Criticism]

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

By Robin Fox, from an essay in the September/October issue of Society. *Fox is a professor of social theory at Rutgers and the author, most recently, of* Participant Observer: Memoir of a Transatlantic Life. *His "Human Nature and Human Rights" appeared in the April 2001 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Since Laocoön's warning to his fellow Trojans went so tragically unheeded, the course of history has been strewn with the corpses of ungrateful nations which, despite the misery that stemmed from their inability to govern their own affairs, bitterly resented and actively resisted the firm and forceful help of others. The stranger's gift of peace, order, and prosperity is less welcome to us than the death, chaos, and poverty that are our own doing. For in the end they are our own, and that is what matters to us. Like truculent adolescents, we do not want to be told how to do things or have them done for us; we want to make our own, even fatal, mistakes. We will take what we can use from what is offered, but we want, at last, to do it ourselves: to manage our own lives, however badly. The main thing about the stranger, after all, is that he is strange. He is not like us; he will never understand us. Our greatest fear, perhaps because the possibility is often so seductive, is that we will become like him and lose our selves. The stranger's gift never comes without strings, and we do not want to be tied.

We of the post-Enlightenment Anglophone West are among the most earnest of the givers. We are not, like our medieval Catholic ancestors, really proponents of the Crusade and the holy war against the heathen. We are at heart Protestant missionaries. We want to bring the good news and the benefits of civilization to the benighted of the earth. And if they don't want it, then like Protestant parents, and entirely for their own good of course, we must sternly make them accept it. Certainly, we hoped to make profits and attain political power in the process, but these were small prices the benighted had to pay for the incomparable gifts we had to offer. Critics of colonialism miss the point if all they see is the profits and the power. Our civilizing mission was, and still is, as dear to us as the jihad is to Muslims. Even when it is not Protestantism per se that we are offering, it is the children of the Protestant Ethic that we know as democracy, liberty, equality, and the free market. Our learned men tell us we are the foreordained bearers of a truth so fundamental that with its triumph history will come to an end, there being nothing left for mankind to achieve. If this is so, how can the benighted so stubbornly, and even violently, refuse our gift of a free leg up onto the stage of world history?

There is no question that we went into Iraq to defend our oil interests: that, at least, was the rational part. But the holy warriors of the White House saw a far greater opportunity. They could plant the banner of liberal democracy in the heartland of Arab totalitarianism, and thus change the world for the better. To do this was to collaborate with the inevitable progress of mankind to secure winner of a policy. We would simply give the in-

evitable progress a friendly shove in the right direction. The "Iraqi People" (much invoked) would greet us as liberators and gratefully accept our gift of free elections. How could they possibly prefer the savagery of Saddam and the hegemony of the brutes of Baath? Once rid of these monsters, the "Iraqi People"—like people everywhere, as "lovers of freedom"—would set up a representative democracy modeled on our own. Ballot boxes and purple finger paint would be provided, political parties would be free to form, the press would be unrestricted. This model democracy would stand as a rebuke and an example to the monstrous regimes in the Middle East, which would gradually succumb to the same happy fate. What is more, it would be an Arab democracy, thus saving the Arabs from the embarrassment of Israel being the only democratic state in the region. Since democracies are inherently peaceful, the more of them in the region the better, and the better for our "national security." And above all, as the guarantors of this liberal democratic paradise, we would have a continuing benign influence in the area, which would, incidentally, protect our oil interests.

For the missionaries this was a chance too good to be missed. Saddam's regime was ripe for the plucking. There was no way its army could stand up to the superior Western forces, and once the army was disbanded, the criminals tried, and "de-Baathification" completed, the grateful freed "People of Iraq" would take it from there. They would need help and firm guidance from the missionaries, of course. They would make mistakes, and there would be all the baggage of dictatorship to unpack. But it had been done in Japan and Germany with startling success (both totally misleading examples, as it happens), why not in Iraq? To suggest otherwise, said George W. Bush, was to suggest that the "Iraqi People" were inherently incapable of "freedom and democracy." That was to be condescending and colonialist. Everyone everywhere wanted these benefits, and only wicked regimes prevented them from realizing these universal human goals, toward which, we must not forget, mankind was inevitably evolving anyway.

I am not caricaturing this position. Those who would see the ideology as a cynical cover for the arms industry, Halliburton, and Big Oil are missing what is truly at issue here, and what is much more frightening. The colonial powers always look out for their economic and strategic interests; it would be foolish of them not to. But they have also always believed the "civilizing mission" to be just as important. This was justified partly by religion—bringing Christianity to the heathen—but was also seen as an end in itself: the production of an industrial, peaceful, democratic (sometimes socialist) world.

As societies evolved from military to industrial institutions, so would peace and democracy spread around the globe. Free-trade advocates repeat it today: the more we are dependent on each other through trade, the less likely will we be to fight each other. Trade requires the rule of law, the rule of law promotes democracy, and democracies don't fight each other—we know the logic. This is the fundamental belief of the missionaries. We have a precious gift that we can give the nations of the world, and whether they want it or not, we are going to give it to them. If they think they don't want it, then they must be re-educated, with force if necessary, to realize that they do. History is going to end in universal liber-

[Poem]

IF THE DEAD CAME BACK

By Robert Pinsky, from his collection Gulf Music, *published this fall by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. An earlier version of the poem appeared in the January/February 2005 issue of* The American Poetry Review

What if the dead came back not only
In the shape of your skull your mouth your hands
The voice inside your mouth the voice inside
Your skull the words in your ears the work in your hands,
What if they came back not only in surnames
Nicknames, names of dead settlement shtetl pueblo

Not only in cities fabled or condemned also countless dead
Peoples languages pantheons stupidities arts,
As we too in turn come back not only occulted
In legends like the conquerors' guilty whisperings about
Little People or Old Ones and not only in Indian angles
Of the cowboy's eyes and cheeks the Dakota molecules

Of his body and acquired antibodies, and in the lymphatic
Marshes where your little reed boat floats inches
Above the mud of oblivion O foundling in legends
The dead who know the future require a blood offering
Or your one hand accuses the other both lacking any
Sacrifice for the engendering appetites of the dead.



ing the Boardwalk *(2006), by Lisa Sanditz, was exhibited last year at ACME., in Los Angeles.*

al democracy, so they might as well learn to cooperate with the inevitable.

The problem for liberal and radical critics of Bushism in the West is that they really believe this too. It is no longer fashionable to think that some form of communism or socialism will be the inevitable end product, but some kind of democratic open society is seen as the only alternative for the decolonized peoples of the world. It is hard to find any fervent postcolonialist who will agree that, having thrown off the imperial yoke, the ex-colonial peoples should be free to choose dictatorship, theocracy, tribalism, nepotism, clitoridectomy, or the rule of warlords. Respect for "indigenous cultures" goes only so far. The left-liberals assume as fervently as the Bushites that people everywhere aspire to a state of liberal democratic polity where human rights and the rights of women will be assured and tolerance and religious freedom will be institutionalized. It is to their constant embarrassment that this does not happen, and fifty years later the excuse that the failure lies in the pernicious aftereffects of colonialism is wearing thin; they do not really believe it themselves. (They have substituted neocolonialism, neoliberalism, globalization, transnational corporations.) But the alternative is hard to bear for the progressive mentality that assumes we can indeed write our own script and exclude all those factors of "human nature" that seem so stubbornly to resist our enlightened blandishments.

Against this naive optimism of the missionaries of whatever stripe, we can set an opposing view that is historical and what we might call naturalistic. It sees that the institutions we [illegible] *product of* a freedom-loving human [illegible] result of many centuries of [illegible] human nature. However desirable th[illegible] are not natural to us. We maintain them [illegible] stant vigilance and the [illegible] nomic, political, legal, [illegible] have taken hold. [illegible] place. In England universal suffrage had to wait until 1928, when women under thirty were finally in-

[Amendment]

RESTRICTIONS SHOULD APPLY

By Alexander Swartwout, from "On American Monarchism," in the March issue of Four Essays.

A comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the Electoral College certainly qualifies a citizen to the rare status of Upstanding; but we as Americans are all equals in that we know how raffles, drawings, sweepstakes, and giveaways operate. The entrant submits his name, or has it submitted for him unwittingly. (Why we don't register our voters the way we compile our marketing rolls is a question for a higher authority.) The entrant then wins or loses, based on a combination of chance factors: which caller he was, his Social Security number, how persuasive was his essay. And the sponsor of the contest—be it General Electric, Publishers Clearing House, or the local clergy—confirms that the winner is not an *employee, officer, shareholder, or relative* of any of these, before his random victory is made real.

If the Presidency were run by the same commonsensical rules as a fruit-basket giveaway, neither George W. Bush nor Hillary Clinton would be allowed to take the seat, even *if* one of their names was drawn first from the tumbler. If we think it generally right and fair that the game show may not give a trip to Fiji to the producer's niece, why don't we think the same about the Presidency? The principle of it, anyway, was the impetus behind our very foundation. But we have done better at writing the rules of sweepstakes than living by principles.

The creeping monarchism of the American executiveship may even bite both ways, albeit softly. The Clintons and the Bushes both maintain a sense of entitlement that must make them utterly insufferable dinner guests. In the case of George W. Bush, however, his woeful maintenance of the government has likely scuttled his brother's own conviction that the office is owed to him next. Not for reasoning with a democratic scheme, of course, but more because Jeb sees clearly that such a power grab may provoke revolutionary sentiments; after one Bush has so bungled the job of King, the plebes would surely be restless about a namesake flexing his entitlement. Better for the Bushes to let the Clintons reign until the decreasingly potent public memory has cleared Mr. Bush Junior of his many crimes and numerous shortcomings, and remembers him as fondly, and falsely, as it has lately remembered Mr. Ford.

cluded. In the United States it was only after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that we can be said to have achieved true democracy. Far from being a fact of human nature, the voluntary ceding of power after elections, the basic feature of liberal democracy, actually flies in the face of nature. It is self-evidently absurd. Our political opponents are always disreputable and their accession to power will be the ruin of the country. Listen to the rhetoric of campaigns: allowing the opponents to take over amounts to almost criminal malfeasance. Yet that is what we do after a mere counting of heads—cede control to the villains and incompetents.

The cynic will say that we allow this to happen only because we know there is no real difference between political parties in these systems, and so we join in a conspiracy of the willing to take our turns. Even so, this willingness that we take for granted is an amazing, unusual, and fragile thing. Our Western democracies still struggle with nepotism and corruption whose energetic persistence should tell us something. How could we believe then that we could walk into a country like Iraq and do in a few months, or even a few years, or even several decades, what millennia had failed to evolve spontaneously? Because the "Iraqi People," like everyone else, "loved freedom"?

For a start, there are no "Iraqi People." The phrase is pure rhetoric. Iraq as a "nation" (like the "nation" of Kuwait) was devised by the compasses and protractors of Gertrude Bell when the British and French divided up the Middle East after World War I. We know well enough the ethnic-religious division into Kurd, Sunni, and Shiite. But what is not understood is that Iraq, like the other countries of the region, still stands at a level of social evolution where the family, clan, tribe, and sect command major allegiance, and the idea of the individual autonomous voter, necessary and commonplace in our own systems, is totally foreign, and would not make sense to the "average Ahmed."

I received a call in 2003 from a *New York Times* reporter, John Tierney, who was baffled by what he discovered in his Baghdad hotel. Each week there was a lavish wedding in the dining room and ballroom. It looked very Western until he discovered that the bride and groom were inevitably cousins, and, more than that, they were most often paternal parallel first cousins, as the jargon has it; they were the children of two brothers, and if they were not that close, then the bride was usually from the same paternal clan as the groom. Occasionally, a woman from the mother's paternal clan was married, as in the case of Saddam Hussein. When questioned about this, the young people told the reporter, "Of course we marry a cousin. What would you have us do, marry a stranger? We cannot trust strangers." Such a system of close-cousin

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"Untitled 8," from the series Time after Time: Exploding Flowers & Other Matters, by Ori Gersht, whose work was on view in July at the Jewish Museum, in New York City.

marriage, the commonest form of preferred marriage in Arab society, literally keeps the marriage in the family. These groups are inward-looking and suspicious of strangers. It is the "Mafia solution" to life: never go against the family. Trust is only possible, ultimately, between close relatives, and preferably those of the paternal clan. The idea of voluntarily doing anything for strangers has to be worked at. It is another of those things we in Western democracies do every day without thought. It is "human nature" for us. We give large sums of our money to complete strangers to distribute to other strangers for purposes often unknown to us. This is taxation. It is everywhere hated, but absolutely necessary to run a complex society. We trust strangers to do things absolutely essential to our lives and welfare. We take it for granted they will do them: they are doing their jobs. But this is as foreign to much of the world as our odd acceptance of the relinquishment of power. And to that same world it borders on the immoral as well as the insane. In those places where the state cannot be trusted with the welfare of individuals, they turn to the older and wiser certainty of kinship.

When there was no electricity in Baghdad, the reason was that as soon as copper cable was laid,

the Iraqis came out in the night and stole it. Copper brought a good price. When the troops expostulated with those caught and tried to make them see that their theft was against the "Iraqi People," the indignant thieves demanded to know who these "Iraqi People" were who stood between them and the feeding of their starving families. They were responsible not for some mythical Iraqi People but for their kin: their cousins who were their spouses. The few ambulances in Baghdad cannot function properly to get the injured from bombings to the hospitals. The armed clansmen of the injured commandeer the ambulances and turn out the unrelated wounded. Firefights often break out between armed groups competing for the ambulances. Remember the graphic scene in *Lawrence of Arabia* when the tribal chief Auda, played by Anthony Quinn, is told he should join in the attack on the Turks in Aqaba for the sake of "the Arabs." "What tribe is that?" he asks. He recites the tribes he knows, but demands to know what tribe is "the Arabs" that he should sacrifice for them. "The English" he understands as a tribe he can ally with against his enemies, including the Turks if it suits him. Thus some of the sheikhs in Anbar ally with the Americans against Al Qaeda and its allies if it suits them. But their and Auda's sole concern is with their tribal advantage. This was Auda's highest moral imperative. And Auda loved freedom above all other things.

If this tribal "mentality" is closer to the default system of human nature than is our cherished individualistic democracy, then we ignore its appeal at our peril. The marriage of close cousins may appear to us backward, unhygienic, or immoral, but it is the pattern that has dominated the world until fairly recently. If we could get into God's memory, we would find that the majority of marriages throughout history have been with close cousins. In the West we had to move from tribalism, through empire, feudalism, mercantile capitalism, and the Industrial Revolution to reach our present state of fragile democracy (shrugging off communism and fascism along the way). We were helped in the shedding of dominant kinship groups by the relative individualism of the Angles and Saxons with their emphasis on the independent nuclear family, and then by Christian monogamy and the banning of cousin marriages by the Church. And we had to do it by our own efforts, to pull ourselves up by the social bootstraps, to make it stick. We have seen in Germany, in Italy, and in Spain how fragile this really is. Russia never did make it. France is always problematic. Latin America and the Balkans continue to be a mess. But in making this move we had to change the entire communalistic, ritualistic, kinship-dominated society that is natural to us. We had to transform "nepotism" and "corruption" from tribal virtues into criminal offenses, and we have to keep at it all the time. I live in New Jersey and I stare into the pit.

The future is hypothetical. The old formula "no bourgeoisie, no democracy" still holds. What independent professional class there was in Iraq, with its need for the rule of law to guarantee contracts, was destroyed by Saddam. It is something we cannot re-create with any amount of aid or surges, nor can we force it upon the "Iraqi People." The price of failure, says Bush, is too high. But failure was written all over this enterprise from the start. The goals set, beyond the toppling of Saddam, were impossible, and the real mystery is why our leaders ever thought they could be achieved. The administration may, by increased force and bribery (the "Iraqi People" understand both very well), patch up some kind of "order" for a while. But it cannot create the whole civil infrastructure and the sea change of values that underpin a functioning liberal democracy. To do that you have to turn tribesmen into citizens.

These White House children of the Protestant Ethic should understand how hard won is the open society we live in, how much it is the work of centuries of struggle and suffering, how fragile it is, and how *we had to do it for ourselves*. Our fundamentalist Islamic opponents have on their side the atavistic attractions of the closed society, and we should take them at least as seriously as they take us. Before we try to make them over in our image, we should remember how unnervingly recent was our own makeover, and act with becoming humility and caution. A helping hand here and there may not be amiss, but we should never be surprised at the rejection of the stranger's gift.

[Branding]

TARGET AUDIENCE

From a summary of recommendations in Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation, *a 211-page report released in July by the RAND Corporation's National Defense Research Institute, under a $400,000 contract with the United States Joint Forces Command.*

DEVELOP MEANINGFUL AND SALIENT POSITIONS

Positioning is a business tool used to create product identities that are meaningful and salient in the consumer marketplace. The essence of positioning is the promise a brand makes regarding what consumers will achieve

by using the brand. Perspectives should be sought from the indigenous population and incorporated into U.S. shaping initiatives. This positioning will then serve as a platform from which consistent messages can be launched.

KNOW THE TARGET AUDIENCE. The U.S. military should adopt the business strategy of segmentation and targeting, based on individuals' levels of anticipated support for coalition operations.

UNDERSTAND KEY BRANDING CONCEPTS. While the term *brand* often refers to a product name (e.g., Lexus), it is more importantly construed as a collection of perceptions in the minds of consumers (e.g., expensive, luxury, Japanese, and so on). Virtually every organization or entity has a brand identity. The U.S. military is no different.

UPDATE THE U.S. MILITARY BRAND TO REFLECT OPERATIONAL REALITIES. Brand identities rarely last forever, and a given product may require a brand update to fit new competitive environments.

SYNCHRONIZE THE U.S. OPERATIONAL PORTFOLIO. The business practice of strategically synchronizing brand actions so they convey a single and clear message to target audiences affords another valuable lesson. If the U.S. military opts for a new brand identity, it should seek to synchronize all its actions and messages around that identity.

SYNCHRONIZE THE U.S. MILITARY WORKFORCE. Business practices that help align customer-service actions with the intended brand identity can benefit the U.S. military. These practices include creating a brand-driven organization, addressing civilian complaints quickly, and carefully selecting and training U.S. personnel who conduct negotiations with indigenous counterparts.

MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS. Products that are thought to be superior from a business standpoint but fail to meet customer needs court failure. The U.S. military should seek to tailor activities around projects that meet civilian priorities. The coalition can apply a similar approach to understanding indigenous perspectives regarding use of force and tolerance of civilian casualties.

MONITOR OUTCOMES. Businesses frequently conduct surveys to monitor satisfaction levels. Customer advisory boards and complaint lines provide additional avenues for customer feedback. Coalition forces can use these techniques to gauge attitudes toward U.S. force actions and to determine ways to modify efforts to increase popular support.

HARNESS THE POWER OF INFLUENCERS. Businesses strive to harness the power of influencers and word of mouth in their marketing efforts. The U.S. military should harness the influencing power of indigenous government employees and security forces by having them blog about their views regarding coalition forces. The military might further consider enhancing the Internet access of indigenous populations via distribution of cheap and durable Wi-Fi–capable laptops and by sponsoring Wi-Fi clouds around U.S. operating bases.

ACHIEVE CIVILIAN SATISFACTION. Customer satisfaction refers to the level of fulfillment consumers experience after using a product or service. Civilians who live in areas where U.S. and coalition forces are conducting stability operations have a choice to make in terms of which side they support (or refuse to support). The management of expectations plays a prominent role in achieving customer satisfaction. The promises a business makes create high customer expectations, which, in turn, increase the levels needed to achieve customer satisfaction. Unfulfilled promises create disappointed customers. The U.S. military should be wary of making promises to civilian populations. This warning includes creating the expectation of an improved standard of living.

[Reminiscence]

POLAR DISORDER

From an interview by Nicholas Johnson with "Nero," an independent contractor who has worked in Antarctica, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Nero and Johnson were colleagues several years ago at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. Johnson posted the interview this spring to Big Dead Place, *the website he edits about Antarctica.*

NICHOLAS JOHNSON: How long have you been contracting?

NERO: When I was nineteen, I was working as a busboy at a Mexican restaurant in Denver. One night the waitresses were talking about some men who had just walked into the bar: "They came from, like, Antarctica! They worked down there and, like, go back and forth and, like, travel all over. Oh, my God, they are, like, so brave!" I inquired and was offered a job washing pots and pans. That was over thirteen years ago. Since then, I have spent about four years in Antarctica working multiple jobs. Other than a short stint at the South Pole, most of my time was at McMurdo Station. The contract that followed was Iraq, where I spent about a year and a half. Currently I'm in Afghanistan.

JOHNSON: You spent a lot of time in Antarctica. Why did you stop contracting there and go to Iraq?

NERO: When I first went down, McMurdo was still like a fire-swept mining town, full of rust, canvas, and barefoot hillbillies playing fiddles in their tents. It was a portrait of struggle, of the odd and the rustic. Strange events blossomed without scripts in a landscape of decay, dirty machines, and whiskey-soaked mustaches. Men were piled into old military tents on the side of the mountains far from the heart of the town. It was the only place I had been where at night you lulled yourself to sleep pretending that the noise of half a dozen men whacking off was actually a group of thirsty dogs lapping at a water bowl. As cum-soaked socks hit the floor with gentle thuds, the heavy breathing was followed by the click of Zippos, and I would grab my blanket for comfort in the darkness. Simple pleasures: watching a line of pale white zombies lined up at Sunday brunch waiting for a slab of bloody beef to be hacked from the shoulder clod and placed on their plate. A bearded man sits alone in the corner with a half glass of milk mumbling words unheard. We had stepped back in time to a place where you would never bring your mom or your sister—a primate working-class culture in the harshest of environments. Anything seemed possible.

But as the years went by, McMurdo morphed into Boulder, Colorado—full of mountain bikes and bongos and penguin paintings. A delousing had replaced the raw and the real with gingerbread crap and rainbow-riding unicorns. People were suddenly drinking chai, doing yoga, and listening to the sounds of whales. The rust was removed, the vehicles replaced, and even the grubby dining hall ended up looking like a ski lodge. There were raves and disco parties—it was as if everyone had purchased a copy of *Antarctica for Dummies* and followed it page by page. The dudes became carabiner-on-my-coffee-mug, North Face jacket–wearing, I-knitted-my-own-hat yuppies while the lesbians spilt their menstrual juices on their guitars at the coffeehouse, and everyone started holding hands and singing Carpenters songs.

Then there was Raytheon. It took the town and put it in a petri dish as an experiment. Management was forced to sit around in white coats with microscopes looking for the viruses and discolorations. These coats would have collars with chains that extended to the mother ship, where reports were expected at least five times a day. Someone in Denver who drove home in a Lexus with an I BREAK FOR PENGUINS bumper sticker controlled the puppet show on the ice. This Someone in Denver would stop at Blockbuster on the way home and rent the latest Robin Williams movie. This Someone in Denver liked Home Depot and decided that McMurdo, too, could be run like a corporate giant. A new level of idiocy had reached the ice, and it became not unusual to find yourself watching a video on HOW TO WALK CORRECTLY, or being forced to sign a contract disallowing the use of the word "vagina."

And the winter—to live seven months without a drop of sunlight, trapped in a small town at the base of a volcano. Over time, the cold or the lack of sunlight creates a hormonal imbalance: T3 syndrome, or, as it is better known, "Going Toast." Psychologists have found that after a winter in Antarctica, 5 percent of the people there are deemed clinically insane. I loved watching people fall apart. I loved falling apart myself. When I became Toasty, I began to hold semi-decent conversations with the several mannequin heads in my room. I had shaved my

[Poem]

SELF-PORTRAIT AT TWENTY YEARS

By Roberto Bolaño, from the Fall issue of The Threepenny Review. *Bolaño, who died in 2003, was the author of three collections of poetry and several works of fiction, including the novels* The Savage Detectives, *published in April by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and* 2666, *which will appear for the first time in English next year. Translated from the Spanish by Laura Healy.*

I set off, I took up the march and never knew
where it might take me. I went full of fear,
my stomach dropped, my head was buzzing:
I think it was the icy wind of the dead.
I don't know. I set off, I thought it was a shame
to leave so soon, but at the same time
I heard that mysterious and convincing call.
You either listen or you don't, and I listened
and almost burst out crying: a terrible sound,
born on the air and in the sea.
A sword and shield. And then,
despite the fear, I set off, I put my cheek
against death's cheek.
And it was impossible to close my eyes and miss seeing
that strange spectacle, slow and strange,
though fixed in such a swift reality:
thousands of guys like me, baby-faced
or bearded, but Latin American, all of us,
brushing cheeks with death.

eyebrows off. I was drinking liquid morphine with someone named Big Hand George. A pair of panties belonging to my friend's girlfriend lay under my bed as a reminder of my corroded morals. My plan to disappear from station and live in a snow cave at winter's end fell through disastrously; I was found facedown in front of the fridge clutching a half-eaten five-pound summer sausage. The employee who found me helped me to my feet and said, "Bro, you got to go home." At that point it became crystal-clear that home was no longer Antarctica.

JOHNSON: Comparing the contracts, why do you prefer the combat zone to the Antarctic contract?

NERO: Remember when we used to discuss going to "the hell" of the Middle East while we sat in the bar in Antarctica? We talked about being chained to a group of scavengers, dragging giant stones across the desert with men on camels yelling at us to get down as rockets flew overhead and scorpions stung at our heels. To take a bath in hot oil and shit in holes in the sand. The war zone offered a chance to experience this misery: putting myself in bedlam and unknown circumstances. I would watch the war unfold on television and grow jealous that there were people over there experiencing this moment in history while I was busy shaking martinis at a bar in Long Beach. War was happening, and I had an opportunity to go. Application after application, I waited for the call back.

The main reason the war zones pull people in is the pay. Antarctica offered nickels and dimes compared to Iraq and Afghanistan. Contracting allows the government to disperse funds in a cloaked fashion and to stand upon the shoulders of the corporate giants: Raytheon, Halliburton, Boeing, Blackwater. And at the feet of these giants scurry the smaller contract rats that feast on all the meat and bones dropped from the giants' table. History will one day catch up to the scams, the money shuffles.

I enjoy the war-zone contracts more because so many horrible and amazing things happen in war zones. I swam in Saddam's swimming pools and hung out in his palaces. I shook hands with Bush, lifted body-filled caskets onto trucks with a forklift, and built boxes for those killed in action. I have been in over eighty rocket and mortar attacks and watched helicopters blow up insurgents. I have shot guns, ridden in tanks, flown in a chopper as it attacked ground forces. I have been rocked by car bombs, been involved in underground booze operations, sung "Blue Suede Shoes" in the middle of Kabul. I have watched them pull bloated bodies from the Tigris. I have said good-bye to somebody who was dead ten minutes later. Antarctica prepared me for the war zones, but the ice is a place I will never go back to.

[Communiqué]

ALL THAT UGLY STUFF

By Hunter S. Thompson, from "Fear & Loathing: CORRECTIONS, RETRACTIONS, APOLOGIES, COP OUTS, ETC.," a 1972 memo to Rolling Stone *editor Jann S. Wenner. Thompson's reportage during that year is collected in* Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72. *The memo appears in* Gonzo: The Life of Hunter S. Thompson, *an oral biography compiled by Wenner and Corey Seymour, published this fall by Little, Brown. El Ropo is Charles Perry, then copy chief of* Rolling Stone.

For various reasons that probably don't mean shit to anybody but me, I want to get straight—for the record, as it were—with regard to some of the most serious of the typographical errors that have marred the general style, tone & wisdom of "Fear & Loathing."

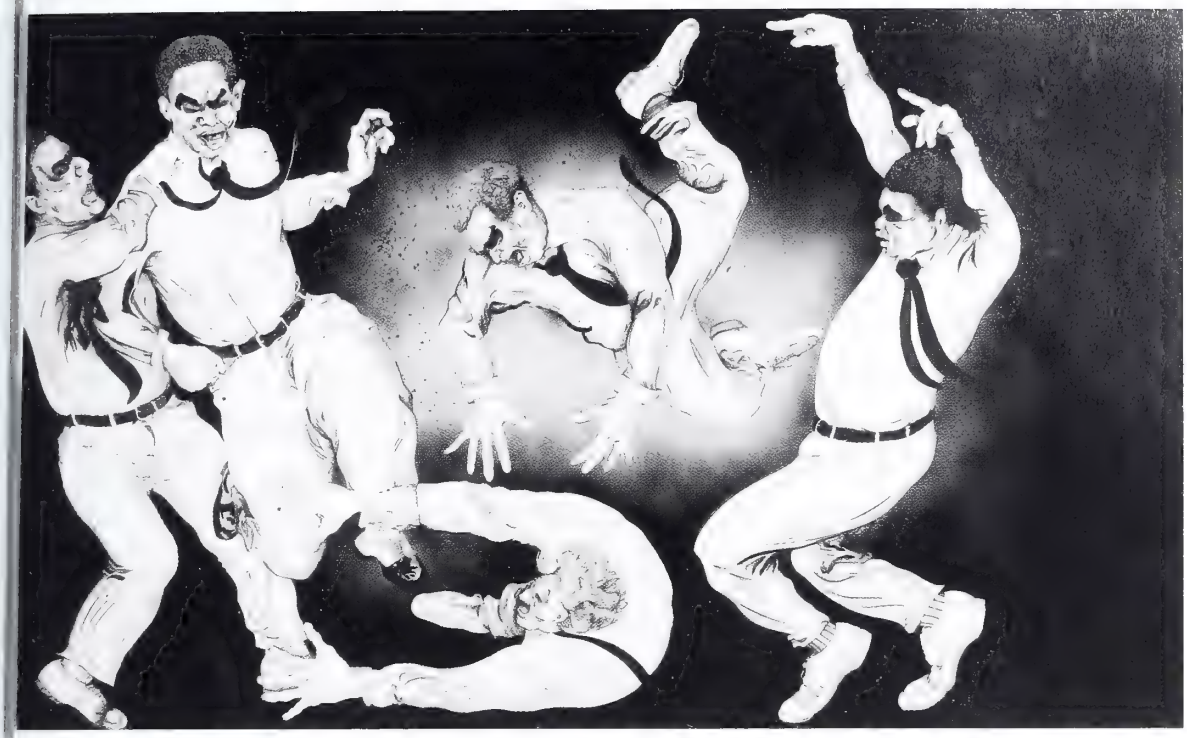
I have tried to blame various individuals in the San Francisco office for these things, but each time we trace one of the goddamn things back to its root, it turns out to have been my fault. This is mainly because I never seem to get my gibberish in to El Ropo, who has to cope with it, until the crack of dawn on deadline day—at which time I have to get him out of bed and keep him awake by means of ruses, shocks, and warnings while I feed my freshly typed pages into the Mojo Wire, which zaps them across the nation to El Ropo at the rate of one page every four minutes.

This is a fantastic machine, and I carry it with me at all times. All I need is the Mojo Wire and a working telephone to send perfect Xerox copies of anything I've written to anybody else with a Mojo Wire receiver—and anybody with $50 a month can lease one of these things. Incredible. What will they think of next?

The only real problem with the Mojo Wire is that it tends to miss or skip a line every once in a while, especially when we get one of those spotty phone connections. If you're playing "New Speedway Boogie" in the same room, for instance, the Mojo machine will pick up the noise and garble a name like "Jackson" so badly that El Ropo will get it as "Johnson"—or "Jackalong"—or maybe just a fuzzy gray blank.

Which would not be a problem if we had time to check back & forth on a different phone line—but by the time El Ropo can assemble my gibberish & read it I am usually checked out and driving like a bastard for the nearest airport.

So he has to read the whole thing several times, try to get a grip on the context, and then decide *what I really meant to say* in that line that came across garbled.



ance, Dance, Dance and Go Crazy, *by Justin Francavilla, will be exhibited next spring at Daniel Cooney Fine Art, in New York City.*

This is not always easy. My screeds tend to wander, without benefit of such traditional journalistic landmarks as "prior references" and "pyramid reverse-build foundations."

I still insist "objective journalism" is a contradiction in terms. But I want to draw a very hard line between the inevitable reality of "subjective journalism" and the idea that any honestly subjective journalist might feel free to estimate a crowd at a rally for some candidate the journalist happens to like personally at 2,000 instead of 612—or to imply that a candidate the journalist views with gross contempt, personally, is a less effective campaigner than he actually is.

Hubert Humphrey, for instance: I don't mind admitting that I think sheep dip is the only cure for everything Humphrey stands for. I consider him not only a living, babbling insult to the presumed intelligence of the electorate, but also a personally painful mockery of the idea that Americans can learn from history.

But if Hubert meets a crowd in Tampa and seventy-seven ranking business leaders each offer him $1,000 for his campaign, I will write that scene exactly as it happened—regardless of the immense depression it would plunge me into.

No doubt I would look around for any valid word or odd touches that might match the scene to my bias. If any of those seventy-seven contributors was wearing spats or monocles I would take care to mention it. I would probably follow some of them outside to see if they had AMERICA—LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT bumper stickers on their cars. If one of them grabbed a hummingbird out of the air and bit its head off, I think it's safe to say I would probably use that—

—but even if I did all that ugly stuff, and if the compilation of my selected evidence might persuade a reader here and there to think that Humphrey was drawing his Florida support from a cabal of senile fascists, well, I probably wouldn't get much argument from any of the "objective" journalists on the tour, because even the ones who would flatly disagree with my interpretation of what happened would be extremely reluctant to argue that theirs or anyone else's was the flat objective truth.

On the other hand, it's also true that *I* will blow a fact here and there. A month ago I wrote that a registered independent in Colorado could vote in either the G.O.P. or Democratic primary—which was true last year, but the law was recently changed. Somebody wrote to curse me for that one, and all I can do is apologize. In 1972 I knew every clause, twist, subsection & constitutional precedent that had anything to do with voter-eligibility laws in Colorado. (When you run for office on the Freak Power ticket, the first thing you do is learn *all* the laws.) But when I moved to

Washington got into the Presidential Campaign I stopped keeping track of things like that.

The only other serious error that I feel any need to explain or deal with at this time has to do with a statement about Nixon. What I wrote was: "There is still no doubt in my mind that he could never pass for human. . . ."

But somebody cut the word "never." El Ropo denies it, but our relationship has never been the same. He says the printer did it. Which is understandable, I guess; it's a fairly heavy statement either way.

Is Nixon "human"? Probably so, in the technical sense. He is not a fish or a fowl. There is no real argument about that. Most juries would accept, prima facie, the idea that the President of the United States is a *mammal*.

He is surely not an Insect; and not of the Lizard family. But "human" is something else. A mammal is not necessarily human. Rodents are mammals. An extremely intelligent Bayou Rat called "Honeyrunner" was once elected to the city council in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. Nobody called him "human," but they say he did okay on the job.

It would take a really sick and traitorous mind to compare the President of the United States to a Bayou Rat, regardless of intelligence. So maybe El Ropo was right. By almost any standard of responsible journalism the President must be referred to as "human." It is one of those ugly realities—like the Amnesty Question—that we will all have to face & accept.

[Epistemology]

THE CONVERSATION

From an August 15 exchange between Thomas Bondy, a Justice Department lawyer, and judges for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in the ongoing case of Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation *v.* George W. Bush. *Al-Haramain, an Islamic charity in Oregon, sued the government after the Treasury Department accidentally released a document indicating that the charity and its attorneys had been illegally surveilled under the National Security Agency's warrantless wiretapping program. The Justice Department has argued that the evidence is inconclusive and that hearing such a case would pose a threat to national security.*

THOMAS BONDY: They don't know. Let me make clear what I mean by that. When plaintiffs explain what they mean when they say they, in quotes, "know," they don't know. What they mean when they say that is that they—although they think or believe or claim they were surveilled, it's possible they weren't surveilled, or it's possible that any surveillance was supported fully lawfully by a court order, but that information, in the plaintiffs' words, would be peculiarly within the knowledge of the government. Exactly. Indeed, it would be. They just can't get access to that, and they admit it. So, that's the first point. When they say they know, what they mean by that, on their own terms, is that they don't know. That's number one. Number two, it does not matter what they know. The harm to national security here, on a broader level, is public disclosure of this information, to protect the world from knowing, and whatever they know, or believe they know, or claim they know, it is absolutely clear and undisputed that the world at large, the whole world, does not know whether or not any of the plaintiffs were surveilled. The world doesn't know that.

JUDGE MARGARET MCKEOWN: The only—the world knows what they think they know, whatever that is that they know.

BONDY: Exactly. And that's less than actually knowing whether it's true.

MCKEOWN: Boy, we are really splitting the knows.

BONDY: No, that's a huge difference. The government hasn't confirmed or denied—

JUDGE MICHAEL HAWKINS: Sounds like—

MCKEOWN: It reminds me of something—

HAWKINS: —Donald Rumsfeld, yeah.

BONDY: But your honor, let me be plain. If it's entirely possible, and I'm not saying one way or the other, obviously—

MCKEOWN: Right, because you don't yet know.

BONDY: It's entirely possible—

MCKEOWN: And we can't know.

BONDY: It's entirely possible that everything they think they know, just to give one example, is completely false. It's possible, or maybe it's partly true.

HAWKINS: There are things we know that we know, and there are things we don't know that we don't know.

BONDY: What I'm saying here is that, on the broadest level, the national-security interest in this case isn't in any way limited to what the plaintiffs know or think they know. The world at large doesn't know. And the rest of the world has no way to know what they—what plaintiffs are trying to get in this case is to get it officially confirmed, one way or the other, whether they were surveilled. If that were officially confirmed or denied, one way or the other, that would be something of interest to people who are, you know, hostile intelligence entities who watch this stuff.

MCKEOWN: Do you think they're watching this argument just to see if anybody knows?

BONDY: Well, I go back to my basic point. We just can't confirm or deny.

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Professor Amy-Jill Levine (Ph.D., Duke University) is E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, where she also holds the position of Director of the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality. She is a prodigious scholar, author, and lecturer.

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[Fiction]

PANDEMONIUM

By Donald Barthelme, three stories from Flying to America: 45 More Stories, *to be published this month by Shoemaker & Hoard. "Among the Bean woods" and "Heather," which date from the 1970s, appeared for the first time this fall in the inaugural issue of* The Hopkins Review. *"Pandemonium," apparently written just before Barthelme's death in 1989, appears here for the first time. Barthelme was the author of more than a dozen works of fiction, including* The Dead Father *and* Snow White.

AMONG THE BEANWOODS

The already-beautiful do not, as a rule, run.

I am, at the moment, seated.

Ireland and Scotland are remote; Wales fares little better. Here in this forest of tall, white beanwoods, the already-beautiful saunter. Some of them carry plump red hams, already cooked.

I am, at the moment, seated. On a chair in the forest, listening. I will rise, shortly, to hold the ladder for you. Every beanwood will have its chandelier scattering light on my exercise machine, which is made of cane. The beans you have glued together are as nothing to the difficulty of working with cane, at night, in the dark, in the wind, watched by insects. I will not allow my exercise machine to be photographed. It sings, as I exercise, like an unaccompanied cello. I will not allow my exercise machine to be recorded.

Tombs are scattered through the beanwoods, made of perfectly ordinary gray stone. All are empty. The chandeliers, at night, scatter light over the tombs, little houses in which I sleep, from time to time, with the already-beautiful, and they with me. We call to each other, at night, saying "Hello, hello" and "Who, who, who?" That one has her hips exposed, for rubbing.

Holding the ladder, I watch you glue additional chandeliers to appropriate limbs. You are tiring, you have worked very hard. Iced beanwater will refresh you, and these wallets made of ham. *I have been meaning to speak to you.* I have set bronze statues of alert, crouching Indian boys around the periphery of the forest, for ornamentation. Each alert, crouching Indian boy is accompanied by a large, bronze, wolflike dog, finely polished.

I have been meaning to speak to you. I have many pages of notes. I have a note about cameras, a note about recorders, a note about steel wool, a note about the invitations. On weightier matters I will speak without notes, freely and passionately, as if inspired, at night, in a rage, slapping myself, great tremendous slaps to the brow which will fell me to the earth. The already-beautiful will stand and watch, in a circle, cradling, each, an animal in mothering arms—green monkey, meadow mouse, tucotuco. That one has her hips exposed, for study. I make careful notes. You snatch the notebook from my hands.

The pockets of your smock swinging heavily with the lights of chandeliers. *Your light-by-light, bean-by-bean career.*

I am, at this time, prepared to dance. The already-beautiful have, historically, danced. The music made by my exercise machine is, we agree, danceable. The women partner themselves with large bronze hares, which have been cast in the attitudes of dancers. The beans you have glued together are as nothing to the difficulty of casting hares in the attitudes of dancers, at night, in the foundry, the sweat, the glare. Thieves have been invited to dinner, along with the deans of the great cathedrals. The thieves will rest upon the bosoms of the deans, at dinner, among the beanwoods. Soft benedictions will ensue.

I am privileged, privileged, to be able to hold your ladder.

Pillows are placed in the tombs, together with pot holders and dust cloths. The already-beautiful strut. England is far away, and France is scarcely nearer. I am, for the time being, reclining. In a warm tomb, with Concordia, who is beautiful. Mad with bean wine, she has caught me by the belt buckle and demanded that I hear her times tables. Her voice enchants me. Tirelessly you glue. The forest will soon exist on some maps, a tribute to the quickness of the world's cartographers. This life is better than any life I have lived, previously. I order more smoke, which is delivered in heavy glass demijohns, twelve to a crate. Beautiful hips abound, bloom. Your sudden movement toward red kidney beans has proved, in the event, masterly. Everywhere we see formal gowns of red kidney beans, which have been polished to the fierceness of carnelians. No ham hash does not contain two beans, polished to the fierceness of carnelians.

Spain is distant, Portugal wrapped in an impenetrable haze. These noble beans, glued by you, are mine. Thousand-pound sacks are offloaded at the quay, against our future needs. The thieves are willing workers, the deans, straw bosses of extraordinary tact. I polish hares, dogs, Indian boys in the chill of early morning. Your weather reports have been splendid. The fall of figs you predicted did in fact occur. There is nothing like ham in fig sauce, or almost nothing. I am, at the moment, feeling very jolly. Hey hey, I say. It is remarkable how well human affairs can be managed, with care.



COURTESY FRANCES YOUNG TANG TEACHING MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

"Friends Smacking Me (Jay 2)," by Martin Kersels, was on display this spring at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, in Saratoga Springs, New York.

HEATHER

"This it?"

"That's it."

The twins, Hilda and Heidi, have had a baby.

Sam is in shock. How did this happen?

True, he's been sleeping with them both.

"Baby's crying," says Hilda.

"'*Course* it's crying," says Heidi. "Got no credit cards, can't speak French, don't know where its next meal is comin' from, I'd cry too."

Sam pokes the bundle with a knuckle.

"Appears to be some kind of foot down here."

"A good foot," says Hilda. "Made it myself."

"She did the feet," Heidi says. "I did the elbows."

"C'mon, guys," says Sam, "ease up, ease up."

The baby's in a clear plastic bin atop a rolling cart placed between their beds. Why do the nurses giggle constantly as they bring trays, offer pills?

Sam's been away for months. They did this behind his back, as it were.

The baby is a handsome article with light brown hair and one ear that folds forward when she turns her head against the pillow. He's allowed to hold her.

He's brought the twins pâté, spinach quiche, beer, and wine.

"Well," he says, "what are we going to do now? I mean practically speaking?"

"When you were in North Dakota for all that time," Hilda says, "we thought of you."

"Yeah," says Heidi. "Barbecued, mostly."

"It was an intolerable situation," he says. When they nurse the baby, handing her from bed to bed, he notices that both have breasts bursting with milk. "But what are we going to *do* about this? I mean we got to regularize this thing in some way, is the way I see it."

"The wages of sin," Hilda says, "are doubt, confusion, fear, and paternity suits, plural."

"Come off it," he says. "You guys knew what you were doing." They've named the baby Heather. He was not consulted. He takes a swig of red wine from a Styrofoam cup. "Like where are we going to live, for example?"

"We and Heather," Hilda says, "will live 't home, like always. Where you live will depend entirely on how you act."

"How I act? What am I supposed to do?"

"The right thing," says Heidi.

"Which one?"

"Both."

"That's against the *law*."

"Little late in the day for ethical musings, ain't it?" says Heidi.

They're both musicians, Heidi a violinist, Hilda a flutist.

"Them that sows wild oats has got to bale the barley," Hilda says.

"Okay, you got fast mouths, this we knew already," Sam says. "The question is, Smart Asses, which of you is the actual producer? Which one did the work?"

"Us did it," the twins say together. "We."

"I did the ears, footprints, and organs of generation," says Hilda. "Buddy, let me tell you it was not easy. Gettin' all those whorly lines on the footprints just exactly right, took me nine fuckin' months."

"I did the hair, the chin, and the joints," says Heidi. "You notice she's got a lot of flex in those joints. We do good work around here. We don't let nothin' out of the shop less it's just 'zackly right."

"Whoo boy," says Hilda, "you bein' off reconstructing North Dakota and all, you missed a lot. You missed morning sickness, evening sickness, and high-noon sickness. You ain't been pullin' your weight, Donor."

"I remind you," says Sam, "that putting old Hilda in old Heidi's bed was not my idea."

"Got to have some fun in the world," says Heidi, and Hilda says, "Mother always taught us to share."

"So you've told me." The baby's staring at him.

"She did the medulla and the bad habits, I did the thyroid and the family resemblances," Hilda says. "Doesn't she look a bit like Uncle Hamish?"

"That the one hung for stamp theft?"

"Now come on," says Hilda, "don't be bitter."

"We're just funnin' you," Heidi says.

"Well," says Sam, "I'll marry somebody, but I'll be Goddamned if I'll marry *everybody*."

"One potato, two potato," Hilda says, "who do you love best?" She really wants to know the answer. She sits up in bed.

Heidi reaches for a Tab that's close to hand.

"You mean you want to know who I love best," Sam says. "Like more than the other one?"

"That's the question, Daddy," says Heidi.

"Well," he says, "old Heidi is the really good-looking one, of course."

"The hell you say," says Heidi.

"But on the other hand, old Hilda is the most fun to roll around in bed with. There's just no doubt about it."

"*You pig*!" says Hilda.

He's grinning. They begin to giggle. The truth is, he loves them both, adores them both, that's why he fled to Fargo.

"We-all are going to have to leave town, you know that," he says. "I don't want any damn scandal."

"Prepare the caravan," says Hilda. "Hitch up the oxen."

"You kids think you can get work in Missoula, Montana?"

"What's the population?" asks Heidi.

"Maybe eighty-five thousand."

"We need a semi-pro symphony and at least the possibility of chamber music," Hilda says. "Check it out."

He lingers in the door.

"Tomorrow I wouldn't mind a little chili," Heidi says. She looks at her sister. "Can we eat chili?"

"This ain't right," he says. "You know that."

"We got the Blue Cross, the Red Cross, and the Star-Spangled Banner," Heidi says. "What can go wrong?"

[Counsel]

SEED CAPITAL

From Girl, Get That Child Support, *by Cathy Middleton, issued last year by Smart Mom Publishing. Middleton is a family-law attorney in New York.*

Money doesn't grow on trees, and neither does child support. You have to go after it and hunt it down, like an animal in search of prey. Start by finding out whether your man really is your baby's daddy. Child support is about a father meeting his financial obligations to the children he has helped to bring into this world, so be smart, sister. Don't let some slick man sweet-talk you into letting him slide without giving your kids what he owes them. Girl, make him pay by any means necessary. And if your man happens to be African-American, then whatever you do, please don't let him run any guilt trips on you about the evils of dragging a brother through the court system.

Most men are very tight-lipped when it comes to exposing the intimate details of their lives. Few males will tell you the juicy tidbits, especially in the early stages of your relationship. For example, a guy may tell you that he spent some time in the military, but he will skip right over his serial number or the exact dates of his service. That kind of stuff you will just have to work a little harder to get. Far be it from me to suggest to any woman to go snooping around in a man's things. This kind of behavior is not only deceptive but can also land you in a hospital if you get caught by a man who happens to be the violent type. That said, I don't think there is anything wrong with taking a peek at his stuff if he happens to have it lying around the house for anybody to see. If he has you doing his laundry, you need to be doing a once-over of his pockets. Write down every important thing you can find: his Social Security number, his birthday, or anything else you can get. I always tell women, if he wants your sex, he ought to be willing to give you a little something too.

PANDEMONIUM

The unfortunate thing—

We learned to our chagrin that the annual games had been scheduled for the dates we had picked, with great care, for our event. Because the stars in the heavens had to dispose themselves in a certain peculiar alignment to assure the success of our project, changing the dates was impossible. We applied for relief to the sponsors of the games, but were met with a stony indifference. "Go fly a kite," they told us.

I wondered about my colleague. Wondered about his wisdom.

Doubt was not confined to any one person. Doubt was, I may say, general.

He was, and is, incorrigible. This was not the first time I had lent myself to his schemes.

I am, I do admit, fertile.

"The time in Panama—"

"The time in Paraguay—"

"But this event, having a religious character, will, I submit, redeem the rest."

"He was persuaded that this event, having a religious character, would redeem the rest, the sorry string of failures, farces, and calamities that had marked our history together."

"An event of such glamour and such radiance, just on the secular level even—"

"Redemption. Within our grasp. The ecstasy of the crowds."

"Fervor extending in every direction like a beneficent effluvium . . ."

"Blessed outflow of invisible vapor or imponderable radiation . . ."

"It was to be our first event of the year. Much thought had gone into the planning of it."

"We hoped not only to entertain, but also to instruct."

"But also to entertain. 'Production values' were never far from our minds."

"The plans were drawn on vellum."

"Twelve bloody dollars a sheet."

"I have always made my plans on vellum. If one begins to cut corners at the conceptual stage, all that follows is inevitably compromised."

"We established a subcommittee to deal with the rubber-glove salesmen who were passionate in their importunities. Sales of rubber gloves nationwide, they said, were up four hundred percent. Why then did we not buy?"

"Semaphore and shared memory were to be the second and third principal means of communication between the 'center' and the massing hordes. Straight talk was to be the first."

"Do you think she'll really do it?"

"In no mythology anywhere does Eve refuse the apple. Our Eve would, so to say, return the apple. This was to be the first event of the event."

"Our Eve's real name was Eve."

"We sought unity. To have a real Eve appear as Eve was an advantage."

"A slight advantage."

"We thought it an advantage."

"Our Eve was, by training, an architectural draughtswoman."

"Sparkling black lines on the crispy vellum."

"Difficult to hold an argument firmly in mind while also worrying about tent pegs and the quality of the lemonade. Thus the need for a script to ensure that the higher urgencies were not neglected."

"Desperate for approbation, desperate."

"He was desperate for approbation, myself less so but still, one might say, hungry, the various blows life had showered upon me during my forty-six years of ill-considered fecklessness and ruth now . . . worn . . . faltering . . ."

"Courage."

"What?"

"Courage."

"What?"

"White chocolate."

"Then Eve informed me that she was pregnant. But, I said, you can't be. I'm too old."

"Far, far too old."

"She had been using, she told me now, one of the devices. It failed."

"The oldest person in my rather wide acquaintanceship. I usually prefer youth. I made an exception, for you."

"And it was much appreciated, it was like a new lease on life. I bought a new necktie, then another. The first clashed. With itself."

"The photographer Nadar was said to know ten thousand people in Paris alone. Many of them young."

"Youth. A hoot and a half."

"For thou art Pan, thou Bacchus art, and Shepherd of bright stars!"

"I had given her a personal adornment allowance. Anything in the world she wanted so long as it was made of hair."

"They're doing some great things with hair nowadays, elephant hair, fish hair—"

"We made mistakes."

"Brilliant mistakes, frequently, of the kind only the most gifted among us can achieve."

"A light rain was threatening but did not fall."

"I gave her a bouquet, scarlatina, diphtherium, phthisis, sweet megrims, purple mange—"

"We were going to kill somebody right in front of them, and then bring him back to life, the regular Corn God routine, I suppose, but enlivened with certain aesthetic touches no one had ever envisioned before—"

I wondered about my colleague. Was he, perhaps, skewed in the brain?



Barbara and David Stone's Bookshelf *(detail), by Dylan Stone, whose work was exhibited last year at Encosta Contemporary Art in Lisbon*

Artwork courtesy Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York City, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

MAKING MITT ROMNEY

How to fabricate a conservative

By Ken Silverstein

Mitt Romney keeps his South Carolina headquarters in a single-story building at one end of Gervais Street, which is Columbia's version of Washington's K Street, lined with the offices of local lobbyists, P.R. consultants, and other fixers and power brokers. The main room of Romney HQ is decorated with hand-painted red-and-blue signs, mementos from previous campaign events: MITT IS MY HERO! MITT'S THE MAN! MITT'S MY PICK! I visited on a steamy Monday night in late July, a time of year when few South Carolinians are interested in politics and fewer still want their evening interrupted by pitches for a presidential primary six months away. But eleven volunteers, mostly college students, were hunched in cubicles spread around the office, diligently placing cold calls to area residents. Boxes of pepperoni pizza from Domino's (a company Romney backed when he ran the investment firm Bain Capital) were piled on a table against a wall.

"Senator Jim DeMint asked me to call you," said one young woman, reading from a script into a cell phone. After running through a list of Romney's accomplishments—rescuing the 2000 Olympics in Salt Lake City, "cutting a $3 billion deficit without raising taxes" while governor of Massachusetts—she asked if her listener would be willing to join DeMint, South Carolina's junior senator, in supporting Romney over his Republican rivals. There was a pause.

"Well, I understand, ma'am, there's a long way to go before the election," the volunteer replied. "I just hope you'll keep us in mind."

Directing the phone-bank operation was Terry Sullivan, a thirty-three-year-old political consultant. As we spoke in his office at the back of the headquarters, Sullivan—dressed in a blue-and-white striped shirt, jeans, and flip-flops—pulled from a laptop on his desk a smattering of fund-raising numbers, TV advertising rates for various states, and other political detritus. "There's a poll out today that shows McCain's got 10 percent in South Carolina, and he had 36 in April," he said. "Rudy's got 28 percent, Fred Thompson has 27, and we've only got 7, but [Newt] Gingrich is included and that pulls straight from us—those are Mitt Romney voters."

South Carolina is known for its hard-charging political consultants, and Sullivan is undeniably a rising star. After growing up in North Carolina and serving as youth coordinator for Jesse Helms's final Senate run in 1996, Sullivan relocated to South Carolina the following year to work on a congressional campaign. Now he is a partner of TTS Strategies, the consulting firm run by J. Warren Tompkins, perhaps South Carolina's most prominent Republican operative and Romney's chief handler here. Although he was reluctant to go into details about who exactly was being targeted tonight by the campaign's phone-bankers, Sullivan defined them broadly as "hard cores." He elaborated: "We set out to identify and recruit grassroots activists, because no one else cares about the presidential election at this point. These are people who are just about guaranteed voters, the type who turn out even for special elections. Political campaigns are checkers, not chess. It's largely about turnout, and that means coming out for a candidate they are excited about or to stop a candidate that they're angry about."

Ken Silverstein is the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine.

For at least two decades, our political landscape has been dominated by consultants; but there is no presidential campaign this year whose success or failure so will depend on media managers, marketing strategists, and political gurus as that of Mitt Romney. Unlike his chief competitors for the Republican nomination, he started out with a fairly low national profile and hence has needed to be introduced and marketed to a national audience. And the task of reformulating and repackaging the Romney brand—from the moderate Republican governor of the most liberal state in the Union to a red-meat social conservative and heir to Reagan—has been entrusted to an army of consultants far larger than that of any of his challengers. Campaign disclosure records are convoluted and poorly categorized, so it's difficult to make a precise inventory. But based on filings with the Federal Election Commission, as of this summer, Romney's campaign has employed more than a hundred different consultants, making combined payments to them of at least $11 million—roughly three times the amount spent by John McCain or Rudy Giuliani. Much of that money paid for the creation and placement of TV ads through Romney's media consultant and chief strategist, Alex Castellanos, but the campaign also spent heavily on polling, political strategy, and voter mobilization.

THE TASK OF REMAKING ROMNEY AS A SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO AN ARMY OF CONSULTANTS

A strong showing in South Carolina is critical to Romney's ambitions. Since 1980, the year of the first primary here, no Republican has ever gained his party's nomination without winning the state, which is traditionally seen as the "Gateway to Dixie" and a key indicator of Southern support. If Romney—who prior to running for president was deemed so moderate in his politics that *Human Events* magazine put him on its list of the top ten "Republicans in Name Only"—can win over South Carolina's conservative electorate, it augurs well for his chances in states where the party faithful are less fervent. It is a daunting sales job, but Sullivan was confident that Romney's poll numbers in the state would eventually rise. "Everyone here knows Giuliani and McCain, and who doesn't like Arthur Branch?" he said with a smile, referring to the character Thompson plays on the television show *Law & Order*. "We haven't spent money yet to get [our message] out."

He was talking mostly about TV advertising, but only a month later, a striking reminder came to light of just how South Carolina consultants tend to get their messages out. The *Washington Post* discovered that an anti–Fred Thompson smear site, entitled PhoneyFred.org, was being run by an executive of TTS Strategies. The site mediately taken down; Romney made distance himself from it, and so—mu believably—did Tompkins, who claimed ployee had conceived and run the site with knowledge. Whatever the truth of the site the PhoneyFred episode perhaps most showed that when one is contemplating ho Mitt Romney, the problem of ph can never be far from the brain.

Earlier this year, the *Boston Globe* o a copy of an internal campaign PowerPo sentation that outlined Romney's streng weaknesses as he embarked on his presiden One page—entitled "Primal Code for Romney"—explained that Romney shou ket himself as a foil to such Massachusett als as Senators Edward Kennedy and John and also run against such "enemies" as wood, France, and "moral relativism." Pr identified by the campaign included the tion that Romney would not make a wartime leader and the possibility that would be spooked by his Mormon religio

The presentation also acknowledged th lematic view that Romney is a "phony" "political opportunist"; but that view is least in part to the fact that by any reas standard it's true. The basic contours of portunism are by now fairly well known. Romney's unsuccessful run for the U.S. against Edward Kennedy in 1994, he es liberal beliefs on a number of social issues litically damaging clip from a campaign that year has surfaced, inevitably, on YouT shows Romney posing as an advocate fo women, and minorities, and—in perha gravest sacrilege—distancing himself fr political legacy of Ronald Reagan. Romney Bozell wrote the day after the debate in a p UPI, had "demonstrated very clearly ... that more in common with liberal Democrats t does with Conservatives."

During the 1994 campaign, Romney' (and current) political consultant Charles ning described Kennedy as a political oppo on abortion. "He was pro-life before *Roe* v and now he's changed," Manning said. "M always been consistent in his pro-choic tion." Manning was citing a twenty-thre old letter as evidence that Kennedy was ocrite. Campaign foes of the now pro-life R don't need to go back nearly as far to do th to him. In 2002, a Democratic oppositi search specialist named Jason Stanford wa by a pro-choice group to research a number publican candidates nationwide. In the er group decided Romney was too liberal to o "He wasn't pure on choice, but they thou

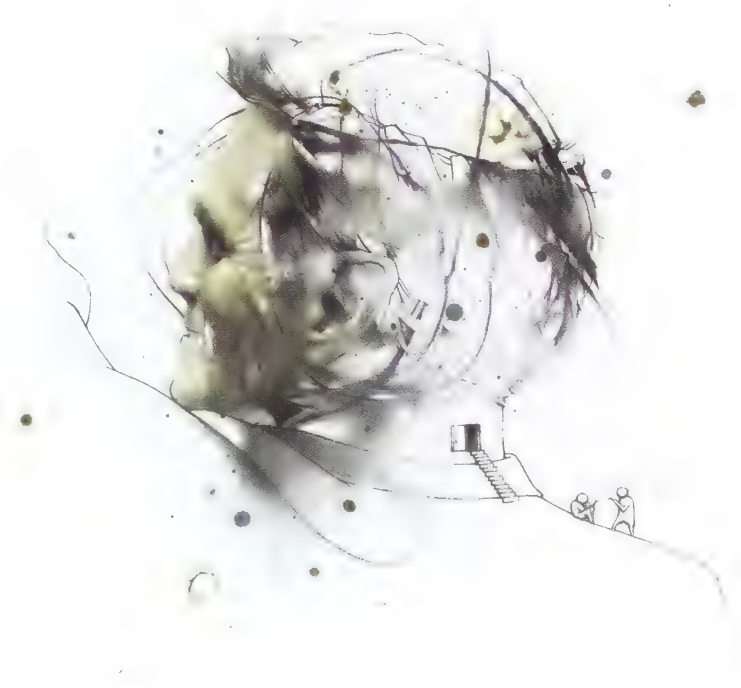
ıg the right thing from a liberal, Dem-
erspective," Stanford told me. "And
100 percenters—you're either for us or
ıs."

ıt just Romney's flexibility on the issues
ables people. A related problem is the
at whatever his political convictions may
not passionate about them. As with the
f political opportunism, there appears to
truth to that perception. "Religion, fam-
business were his focus," a person who
for Romney in a previous campaign told
didn't have strong opinions on the ma-
s of the day." This person, who admires
but is not supporting him in his presi-
bid, found it frustrating to see him now
sharply to the right, particularly on im-
on. "He knows better, because he under-
usiness and the economy and trade," he
's an easy political position for him to
d a hard one for McCain and the presi-
ho was governor of Texas. My guess is
thought about the pros and cons, made
ation, and picked a spot further out on the
l spectrum."

image of slickness is heightened by
ey's appearance and persona, which
e genuine but—because he seems like a
ter-generated composite—invariably ap-
contrived. Everything about Romney
and sounds manufactured: the pretty
wife and five *Leave It to Beaver* sons, the
Dick Tracy jaw, the ramrod-straight
, the "say cheese" smile, and the Rea-
que hair, which even the campaign
Point worried might be too perfect. Ear-
s year, it was revealed that Romney had
several hundred dollars of campaign
for the ministrations of Hidden Beauty, a
rnia company that describes itself as "a
e beauty team for hair, makeup and
grooming and spa services." This did not
he governor's reputation for being a
kaged candidate, though Stacy Andrews,
wns Hidden Beauty, said he barely need-
keup. "He's already tan," she told re-
s. "We basically put a drop of foundation
n . . . and we powdered him a little bit."

nney's speeches and public appearances seem
ularly vapid. "There is no place that is more
tant to the future strength of America than
merican home," he said during a South Car-
stop. "The work that goes on within the
of a home is the most important work that
done in America." And even by the debased
ards of contemporary political propaganda, his
tising looks remarkably hokey. Of particular
is a thirteen-minute, faux-cinéma-vérité
, posted on the campaign website, that shows
ney and his family sitting in their living room
and having a supposedly spontaneous, unrehearsed conversation about whether Dad should run for president. The conversation took place last Christmas, and even though it was by then obvious to the entire country that he was running, Romney is seen dutifully taking down the pros and cons on a writing pad.

Some voters, understandably, question what Romney truly stands for, if anything. Conservatives in particular seem unconvinced of his sincerity, and that could be fatal in a state like South Carolina. "We may not be the smartest people in the country, but we know how to spot a fake," a political consultant and popular blogger named



Will Folks replied instantly when I asked why Romney had, at least until then, fared poorly in state polls.

Political consultants probably have a more exalted position in South Carolina than anywhere else in the country. The reasons for that aren't entirely clear, but it likely has something to do with the state's small size and tight political networks, both of which have allowed consultants to emerge as power brokers. It's also probably connected to the legacy of Lee Atwater, one of the state's most famous political figures. "Atwater was not a policy wonk, he was a strategist," Lee Bandy, a longtime columnist and reporter for *The State*, the Columbia daily newspaper, told me. "And his strategy was to destroy his opponent. He was good

tions by Andrew Zbihlyj

at not leaving a trail. I'd tell him, 'Lee, I know you did it, but I can't find your fingerprints.'"

There are bitter rivalries among the big-name players, and consequently races here tend to be particularly hard-fought. Warren Tompkins's chief adversary is Richard Quinn Sr., who ran McCain's state campaign in 2000 and is doing so again this time around. Each has a loyal circle of associates, and state politicos frequently are labeled as belonging to one camp or the other. Quinn tends to be the more conservative of the two—he led the battle to keep the Confederate flag atop the capitol dome, founded a neo-Confederate magazine called *Southern Partisan*, and worked for the presidential campaigns of Pat Robertson in



1988 and Pat Buchanan in 1996—but the feud between them is personal, not ideological. Six years ago, Senator Lindsay Graham hired them both as a means of preventing internecine campaign warfare.

The power of the consultant class has contributed to South Carolina's reputation as a swamp of dirty politics. In 1980, Atwater served as a consultant to G.O.P. congressional candidate Floyd Spence in his race against Tom Turnipseed, a heavily favored Democrat. Turnipseed had suffered from depression as a teenager and undergone electroshock therapy; Atwater ensured that became a campaign issue by planting a fake reporter at a press conference who innocently inquired as to whether Turnipseed had ever "had psychotherapy treatment." In comments to reporters, Atwater remarked that Turnipseed had been "hooked to jumper cables" one too many times. Spence won; the Republican National Committee soon hired Atwater.

A common practice in state politics is the exploitation of race and religion. "In his races, it drew upon intense, visceral fears on the part of large numbers of white voters that they were facing a life and death struggle, to maintain white supremacy and later to combat the rise of a godless political culture," says Carter, a former professor of American history at the University of South Carolina. Rod Shealy, who once worked under Atwater and is considered by many South Carolina insiders to be the smartest and shrewdest of the state consultants, gained a bit of national notoriety in 1990, when he was running the campaign of his sister, Sherry Martschink, a candidate for lieutenant governor. Shealy was looking to increase the Republican primary turnout of racially conservative low-country voters, a group more sympathetic to Martschink. To do so, he recruited Benjamin Hunt Jr., an unemployed fisherman, to run for Congress in the Republican primary against incumbent Arthur Ravenel. Shealy paid Hunt's filing fee, gave him money and mailed out thousands of HUNT FOR CONGRESS leaflets showing the candidate with a Kentucky Fried Chicken sign in the background. "Many of us heard about Rod's story and thought, 'There but for the grace of God go I,'" Sullivan said with a laugh when the subject came up. "It's one of those harebrained schemes you dream up in the middle of the night and wonder, 'Would that be illegal?'"

Given the state's history of political dirty tricks, it wasn't exactly a surprise when the PhoneyFred.org story emerged in September. The site ripped Thompson as a fake conservative, bestowing on him such labels as "Pl Fred," "Fancy Fred," "Flip-Flop Fred," "M Fred," and "Playboy Fred." Tompkins said the site was solely the work of an employee, W Donehue, who (so Tompkins and Rom staff claimed) did not work directly fo campaign—despite the fact that Romney h tained not only TTS (whose "daily operat Donehue was running, according to the own literature) but also a direct-mail com where Donehue worked. But Tompkins and Sullivan held firm in denying their own inv ment, and as of press time they were still ployed by the Romney campaign. "[Q frankly I am very internet dysfunctional," T kins claimed in an email after the story b

e who knows me would laugh at the prospect of my even being involved in such an undertaking."

s past summer, I visited Tompkins at his -floor office on Gervais Street, over- the state capitol. "National consultants nderstand the nuances of South Caroli- told me. "We understand the state, the how to reach them, and how to moti- em. And when you hire me, you get my k, my friends and associates, the people where I go."

ne dozen or so consultants I met in South a, Tompkins is the only one who looks as ould fit in as well in Washington as at Smooth and corporate, he wore a stylish it and snappy, polished dress shoes. Pho- hs on his office walls include shots of ins with former South Carolina Senator Thurmond, George H.W. Bush, and e W. Bush, all past clients. Along with ove and Karen Hughes, Tompkins was a chitect of Bush's victory over McCain in 00 South Carolina primary. That race is of- n as the ugliest one of modern times, with s spread—often via anonymous flyers, s without caller ID, and untraceable email ses—that McCain had fathered an ille- te black child, that his wife was a drug ad- nd that he favored removing tax-exempt from churches.

e of Tompkins's primary jobs in that cam- was to mobilize the religious right for Bush. irst thing we had to do was build a wall be- McCain and the social conservatives," kins later explained. "If we didn't do that, we lead. That's why we went to Bob Jones," by he meant Bush's notorious visit to the Chris- niversity that then had a longstanding ban erracial dating. And in a meeting of Bush's evel South Carolina strategists, Tompkins ad- ed a general hard-line approach. "We aren't to pussyfoot around," Tompkins told the . "We play it different down here. We're not y, if you get my drift." But when I asked him South Carolina's reputation for dirty pool, ugged it off. "Our goal," he told me, "is to win n taste, reason, and the law."

r the most part, Tompkins sees Romney as sy sell. "You need three things to win: a mes- r, a message, and money," he said. "He's t, articulate, clean, has good moral charac- nd looks good on TV. He's the complete and package. Not to make a comparison to ld Reagan, but he has the same qualities: got a good sense of humor and is a great nunicator." The flip-flop charges were not sue, said Tompkins, who argued that Rom- s only real inconsistency was on the issue of abortion. "He flat changed his position. That will be acceptable, because since *Roe* v. *Wade* we've been seeking converts. He's a success story—that will be a plus for us."

The only worry in Tompkins's mind was the governor's current state of residence. "Since I was a kid, Massachusetts has been the whipping boy down here," he said. "JFK was from there and Teddy, Michael Dukakis, John Kerry, Barney Frank. When all else fails, you try to link your opponent to Massachusetts. We have to sell his record there. He got elected as a Republican and did things the right way. He cut taxes, solved the health-care crisis, and put business principles ahead of expansion of government."

Tompkins sees Romney's strategic position in South Carolina as being formidable. In his view, Giuliani can't win the primary because of his stance on abortion and gay rights, not to mention his three marriages and general lack of family values. "If it's Romney versus Giuliani, we win if we do our job right," he said, and one could almost hear the wheels turning in his mind at the delicious prospect of that matchup. "Social groups, right-to-life organizations, the Bob Jones crowd are all sitting on the sidelines, but Rudy scares them, and when a conservative alternative comes to the top, they will move there. If it's a four-way race, 35 percent wins, and the question is where do you get it. It's all about organizing, finding the voters, and making sure they vote. We're trying to win the war of the activists, and we're doing well so far."

THE POWER OF THE CONSULTANT CLASS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SOUTH CAROLINA'S REPUTATION AS A SWAMP OF DIRTY POLITICS

Asked about the Democratic race, Tompkins didn't hesitate to pick Hillary Clinton as the likely nominee. "With Hillary we could gin up the vote, but it would be a mistake to underestimate her," he said. "She'll have the money and she has the best people. They are good, tough, and ruthless, and will do whatever they need to win." One gathered that this, from Tompkins, was the highest praise.

In 1988, *Time* magazine ran a cover story entitled "It's the Year of the Handlers," which noted that more than "any other race in history, this has become a narrow-gauge contest between two disciplined teams of political professionals." The magazine complained that the foremost goal of the campaigns of both George H. W. Bush and Michael Dukakis was to "prevent their candidates from uttering a spontaneous thought in public," and that "backstage puppeteers" were directing the entire race. "Something," *Time* concluded, "has tru-

ly gone awry in 1988." It was the year that Lee Atwater unleashed the infamous ad about Willie Horton, the black convict who terrorized a white couple while out on a weekend pass from a Massachusetts prison; the ad is widely credited with clinching Bush's victory. Ever since then, the tough, savvy campaign consultant—from James Carville to Karl Rove—has become a standard character in any presidential-campaign narrative.

What has changed in the past two decades is the sheer quantity of different handlers who massage the entire electoral process from announcement to inauguration. *Campaign & Elections* magazine publishes an annual directory of political consultants, and the 2007 edition lists thousands of practitioners, in categories that include events planning, crisis management, direct mail, fund-raising, GOTV (Get Out the Vote), grassroots strategy, Internet, mailing and phone lists, speech training, media buying, polling, voice-over talent, and voter registration. All of this has in turn contributed to the ever-rising costs of campaigns. A study last year by the Center for Public Integrity found that political-consulting firms received combined payments of $1.85 billion for federal campaigns during the 2003–2004 election cycle.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN TWO DECADES IS THE SHEER QUANTITY OF DIFFERENT HANDLERS WHO MASSAGE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

In the case of the 2008 Romney campaign, the roster includes a host of speechwriters, among them Matt Rees, who served in the George W. Bush White House producing speeches for the president and for National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. Then there are the finance consultants, paid to strengthen Romney's fund-raising effort (and thereby allow him to hire more consultants); these firms include the California-based Davis Group, which worked for Arnold Schwarzenegger's gubernatorial campaign and for Bush/Cheney 2000. Romney has employed a number of firms to stage his campaign events, among them Political Productions, which was paid $20,800 to help choreograph his announcement ceremony in February. The firm is headed by David Grossman, who has handled rallies for President Bush, produced and designed the 2001 inaugural parade, and helped prepare the Desert Storm victory celebration in Washington during the term of George H.W. Bush. (Political Productions is also, according to its website, "the leader in confetti services for the political production market," and its team of professional confetti-releasers assures that a "synchronized event" will come off flawlessly "with all elements occurring on cue when and where you want. With only 20 to 30 seconds following each speech available for a headline photo opportunity or a video lead-in clip, why your production to anyone but the leade litical production?")

In an especially calculated move, the R campaign has invested heavily in winnir straw polls around the country, which do essarily measure popular support as muc ganization and financial resources. None victory can win a news cycle's worth of at and hence be used to hype the candidat posed popularity and momentum. In Iowa ney hired Nicole Schlinger, founder of Cap sources, Inc., a G.O.P.-event-manageme as his straw-poll director. She helped orc Romney's triumph at the Ames Straw Poll was achieved by shelling out huge sums o ey to buy supporters' tickets for the eve ranging a fleet of buses to bring them in an ing a barbecue lunch to feed them, finar direct-mail campaign, and paying fees to of "super-volunteers" who promoted Romn to mention more than $2 million in tel ads in Iowa and roughly $1 million more ganizational support, which included the $1 Schlinger was paid). All this bought Romn percent of the ballots cast in Ames—4,51 ers, which means the campaign spent a $650 per vote.

To handle opposition research, the ca has engaged Barbara Comstock—a lawye worked for former Attorney General Ashcroft—at the price of $15,000 per m Comstock honed her skills as research d at the Republican National Committee a fore that worked for the House Governme form Committee when its head, Represen Dan Burton, was leading investigations in Clinton-era Democratic fund-raising scand trying to prove that White House counsel Foster did not commit suicide but was mur Comstock's talents were on display this su during an appearance on *Hardball*, when s sentially argued that Senator Barack Ob support for "age-appropriate sex education" that he favored educating kindergartners masturbation and homosexuality, and p abortion as well. "There are more important that we need to be spending our money on than kindergarten sex education and fu abortions for everybody," Comstock said.

The list of Romney's consultants gets l There is the direct-mail specialist Stephen ers of SCM Associates; Gary Marx, who wo Ralph Reed at Century Strategies and rou social-conservative support for the campaign did for Bush/Cheney in 2004; pollster and group guru Jan van Lohuizen, who worked f Bush Administration; and Get Out the Vot cialist Claire Austin. Then come the hor local specialists hired to help Romney na

ain in individual states, especially ones
n large in the primary schedule. In Flori-
campaign hired political strategist Sara
v, who is to Governor Jeb Bush what Karl
s to President Bush. In New Hampshire,
scal conservatism is a more potent force
ial conservatism, he hired as advisers mod-
ke Rich Killion and Tom Rath. And in
arolina, where religious activists have the
and, he hired not only Sullivan and
Tompkins but several other brand-
name conservatives.

eking to woo conservatives, Romney has
l his personal PAC—the Commonwealth
l Action Committee—to contribute lav-
several national pro-life groups, the Fed-
ociety, the *National Review*, and the Her-
ndation, among others. In South Carolina,
y set up a branch of the PAC all the way
2004. (He started branches in Iowa, New
ire, Michigan, and Arizona at the same
ince then, the state branch—with guidance
umber of consulting firms, including DC
tors, a top Washington-based group—has
expenditures of roughly $518,000. Recip-
South Carolina include dozens of state
ntatives as well as Lieutenant Governor
Bauer ($3,500) and Attorney General Hen-
laster ($1,000). Romney has ladled $9,500
state Republican Party, $3,500 on the state
G.O.P. caucus, and $7,000 on the House
and has sent tens of thousands of dollars in
numerous county-level party committees.
ney's game plan in South Carolina de-
on winning a large share of the social-
vative vote, which makes up at least a third,
haps even two fifths, of the state's G.O.P.
ate. To that end, his PAC has also funded
metto Family Council, which, according to
site, "works in the centers of influence
h, government, media, academia, and busi-
o present biblical principles through re-
, communication and networking." An-
$5,000 was delivered from Romney's PAC
organization sponsoring a statewide ballot
ive, passed in 2006, that added an amend-
anning gay marriage to the state constitu-
The PAC also sent money to South Caroli-
izens for Life ($500), South Carolina Club
owth ($1,000), a school-choice group called
Carolinians for Responsible Government
0), a Republican GOTV effort called South
na Victory ($2,000), and a group of con-
ive school-board candidates in Charleston
0) called, humorously enough, "The A-
." (One pities the fool who might oppose
) Moreover, the Romney campaign in June
d a national "faith and values steering com-
e" that includes four South Carolinians,
among them a pastor, Mark White, and a Christian political activist, Dee Benedict. Both White and Benedict—whom Romney also put on the payroll as a consultant—are from upstate, the heart of South Carolina conservatism.

To ensure that all this goodwill gets translated into votes, Romney's campaign has retained Drew McKissick, a former board member of the Christian Coalition and state director for the campaign to ban gay marriage. "If he [Romney] wins Iowa and New Hampshire, it puts huge pressure on the other candidates," he told me over coffee at a Starbucks on Gervais Street, a few blocks from his office. "South Carolina becomes a fire wall for them to stop him."

Like Romney, McKissick is perfectly groomed, with not a single hair askew. He's worked as a consultant since 1990—his first campaign was a race



for county coroner—and has arranged private meetings for Romney with Southern Baptists, charismatics, fundamentalists, and other religious conservatives. "I help the campaign with communications and messaging towards that sector of the party," he told me. "I network with people I know around the state and help them decide who they'll support. That's a conversation best had in small groups. Building a campaign is like throwing a rock in the pond. There's a big ripple and then smaller ripples outward. We're focusing on the first few ripples—key leaders within church and community, people who have networks of influence and who other people listen to."

McKissick helps the Romney campaign develop materials targeted to social conservatives, such as a packet, mailed to a small group of religious activists, that included a cover letter under his name. (McKissick and Terry Sullivan both told me I could get a copy of the letter but in the end declined to send it.) He also created a website, Christian Conservatives for Romney, that includes news on the campaign, Romney videos, and summaries of the governor's positions on such issues as "abortion & life," "traditional marriage," "protecting our children," and "free speech." As laid out on the website, Romney's position on the final item is largely confined to deploring the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance law, which is loathed by conservatives everywhere and has cost McCain dearly in his own extensive efforts to woo the Republican right.

Some religious voters will never see Romney as the ideal candidate, McKissick acknowledged. His goal is to make sure that those people are comfortable enough with the governor that they will turn to him in the event that their first pick—McKissick didn't name names but was certainly thinking of Sam Brownback and Mike Huckabee, whose conservative credentials are far more solid than Romney's—drops out. "There is a segment of the party that is looking for purity and is leery of anyone who might not meet that ideal standard," he continued. "I'm trying to alleviate fears that he doesn't measure up."

Doubts about Romney will diminish as the campaign's advertising kicks in, McKissick believes. "Communications is the primary purpose of any campaign. The message with this segment of the party is shared values. What values do you have that will carry forward in the campaign? That's more important than a ten-point plan. If I know his core values, I can more or less figure out where he'll be on the issues. That's more important than where he goes to church on Sundays."

If Romney retains his current lead in the polls and wins New Hampshire and Iowa, a victory in South Carolina's primary could propel him toward the nomination. If he performs less well than expected in the two key early states, he'll be even more desperate for a good showing here. At least through mid-September, though, Romney had failed to find his footing; despite repeated visits to South Carolina, and at least $1 million spent on advertising and organization, he remained mired in or near single digits in the polls behind Giuliani, Thompson, and McCain. He will likely rise in the polls, especially with a major TV advertising campaign planned for the fall, but the question remains how high.

The problems holding him back were all identified in the campaign's PowerPoint pr
tion: the Massachusetts background, the
of slickness, the fears about his religio
above all, mistrust of his ideological tr
mation. Romney and his handlers portray
having undergone a political conversi
they can't point to any convincing c
There was no religious epiphany (as, for
ple, with George W. Bush) or political av
ing (as with Ronald Reagan, a New Dea
ocrat who joined the Republican Party i
and backed Barry Goldwater for preside
years later, which at the time was hardl
litically savvy move). With Romney,
merely been the recent espousal of positi
ametrically opposed to his earlier ones, f
the suspicion that his political shifts are m
flective of his ambition than of his convi

In Mount Pleasant, at a dockside rest
just across the bay from Charleston, I m
Cyndi Mosteller, a social conservativ
served until recently as head of her coun
publican Party and before that as vice c
the state G.O.P. I had expected her to ex
conservative persona that matched her p
but Mosteller, bubbly and energetic, ha
streaked with reddish highlights and
sleeveless black-and-white dress with high
We took a window table and watched s
boats bobbing on the water as we talked
the race in South Carolina. She had start
as a McCain backer but opposed his views
sues like embryonic-stem-cell research and
gration, and left his campaign over the su
Giuliani is anathema to her. "We've worke
for years to hold the line on Judeo-Chr
ethics, and it would be difficult for conserv
to cast our vote, which is our trust, for so
who disagrees with us," she said.

But Mosteller (who not long afterward
declare her support for Fred Thompson) i
scornful of Romney. "It's a question of trus
said. "He says all the right things, his speech
through the litmus test on conservative
but there's no conviction behind it. Authe
ty means a lot in the South. You can't run
left up North and the right down here. I finc
tronizing to my intelligence, to my conserv
and to the South."

By all accounts, Mitt Romney is smar
pragmatic—not at all as vacuous, that is,
has been made to sound. The irony is t
attempting to market him to the Repub
base, his handlers have created a thor
phony. The "electorate is not where it ne
be for us to succeed," his campaign Power
had concluded; hence, the strategy has be
move Romney where he needs to be to
ceed. It remains to be seen how well thi
play in South Carolina.

WOMAN MARRIES SNAKE

A peculiar Indian love story

By Mischa Berlinski



neswar, June 2. A woman, laimed to have fallen in love snake got "married" to the rep- per Hindu rituals at Atala vil- Orissa's Khurda district, 14 km ere. The unusual marriage took n Wednesday with over 2,000 taking out a procession to cel- the event. . . . When Bimbala disclosed her idea of marrying a , villagers reportedly appreciat- saying the marriage will bring ortune to the area.

—"Woman marries snake,"
Press Trust of India
June 3, 2006

irty-year-old Bimbala Das's mar- to a cobra made her for a little last year the most famous woman ie east Indian state of Orissa, ough—being illiterate and pos- ig no radio, television, telephone, mputer—she was likely unaware e extent of her fame.

n ambitious young television re- r named Umakanta Mishra, based ie nearby state capital of Bhu- swar, first broke Bimbala's story. A t journalist named Satyasundar k saw the TV coverage, and al- igh he neither witnessed the wed- nor visited Atala village, he did k on the telephone with the village headman and put together two hundred or so words on the marriage.

It was Barik's reporting that quickly spread around the world. Barik works for the Press Trust of India, the largest of the Indian wire services, and the story was published in all of the major Indian dailies, then picked up by the international wire services and translated into two dozen languages, including Malay, Polish, Chinese, Russian, Greek, Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish—and Latin. Dozens and dozens of newspapers ran the story. It was featured in Yahoo's Odd News section.

Then the story was blogged. Hundreds of bloggers linked to the story, and thousands of blog readers commented on those posts. Many, many people wrote that they or their sisters had also married a snake. A controversy followed. Gay bloggers wondered why, if this woman could marry a snake, they couldn't marry their beloveds. Conservative bloggers argued that if gays were allowed to marry, next thing you know, people would be marrying snakes. Christian bloggers affirmed that the whole thing was clearly in violation of God's natural law. Hindu bloggers also took issue with the marriage, saying that this was the kind of thing that made the world think Hindus were weird.

Bimbala neared the epitome of her fame when Daniel Henninger, a *Wall Street Journal* opinion-page editor, referred to her on Fox News. "A woman in India last week married a snake," he said. "And it was done at a traditional Hindu ceremony attended by 2,000 people. Now, I would like to ask the proponents of gay marriage, which after all violates traditions going back through all of human history, to now absolutely positively guarantee that the next movement is not going to be allowing people to marry their pet horse, dog, or cat."

But the very height of Bimbala's glory came a few days later, when Stephen Colbert of Comedy Central countered Mr. Henninger's attacks on Bimbala's behalf, pointing out that the marriage was, after all, a heterosexual union, the snake in question being male.

My fiancée and I were in Madurai in the far south of India, on a

ha Berlinski is a writer living in Haiti. the author of Fieldwork, *a novel.*

ation by Steven Dana

three month tour, when I read about Bimbala Das's marriage in the *New Indian Express*. The trip was in celebration of the completion and sale of my first novel, which was about, more or less, anthropological fieldwork. To write the novel, I had invented both a tribe and an anthropologist, and *voilà*. But I had never done any real fieldwork, and I wanted to see what it was like. Cristina was willing to indulge me, and we left the next day for Bhubaneswar, a twenty-four-hour trip by train up the length of India's eastern coast.

In Bhubaneswar we found a graduate student in anthropology at the local university who was willing to work with us as a translator, a young man named Deepak Kumar Ojha. Deepak and I bonded over a shared enthusiasm for witchcraft (not as a practice, but as an anthropological subject: "Exciting, very exciting," he said, describing a series of tribal witchcraft-related murders in Sundigarh district) and for the great English anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard, who studied witchcraft in Sudan. At the mention of Evans-Pritchard's name, Deepak's handsome face broke into a broad smile, as if we had just discovered, improbably enough, a mutual friend, which perhaps we had.

Atala is just on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, no more than a half-hour drive from the city center. We drove north on the road to Cuttack, through light-industrial suburbs, passing stores advertising things like STEELIUM: COLD ROLLED STEEL, and when we came to the canal we left the highway and followed a rutted and pitted red-dirt road fringed by rice paddies.

The Indian monsoon comes in phases. Several weeks earlier, the first phase had blown through Orissa with its attendant rains and hard winds. The very first shoots had come up in the rice paddies. But then the monsoon had paused. The newspapers were full of predictions for the date of the monsoon's return—"Monsoon Break, no rain 'till June 17," one proclaimed; page four of that morning's *Indian Express*: "High Humidity Saps Capital"—but for now the sky was low and the color of cold rolled steel. It was so humid that my glasses fogged over, and I had to rub them down with my shirt.

On the other side of the canal was the northernmost fringe of Bhubaneswar, with rows of finished houses, but on this side there were only haphazardly placed concrete husks, overgrown with weeds, banana trees, and palms. Sheep, goats, and water buffalo grazed in the lots. A sign read HEMALATA PARADISE. GLORIOUS PLOTTED SCHEME. In the paddies, egrets with giant white wings balanced on spindly legs. Men and boys bathed themselves in the greenish-black waters of the canal, outnumbered by the water buffalo. The land was absolutely flat in every direction.

We parked the car on the edge of a grassy field beside a small concrete shack, which on further investigation turned out to be a temple of the god Shiva, and were soon approached by some young people. One of the braver ones came up to us, and Deepak said something to him in Oriya.

Before long there were many people around us: perhaps fifteen children and a dozen adults, their numbers quickly swelling. It was a peaceful crowd. Soon everybody was laughing and talking, then the villagers were pushing at each other in a good-natured way to see us, and kids were shinnying up bamboo stalks. I had my notebook in my hand, but the conversation was entirely in Oriya. When I asked Deepak what the people were saying, he had a very persuasive way of putting up one hand to shush me.

Finally, Deepak introduced me to a man who he said was "the girl's brother."

"But the girl isn't here right now," Deepak added: the woman who had married a snake had gone off on her honeymoon.

Atala, it was easy to see, was a village where marriage mattered. On the main street, where the upper-caste people lived, cement-and-brick house after cement-and-brick house advertised the weddings to come or the weddings recently celebrated: on the front of one house was painted, in English, ARUNA TIES SASMITA, above a drawing of a pair of tabla drums, a horn, and a peacock. Another house said, WELCOME, WEDDING, and showed the same gay images, this time adding a conch shell. On a third house, the names JHILITA and SURYA NARAYA were j
a drawing of a pair of hands ve
ly shaking.

But outside the home of
Das, whose marriage has give
what little notoriety it possess
were no joyful pictures of pr
cocks, no celebratory drums. I l
er showed us the hut, in the sh
tall palm and beside a small
slender bamboo. It was low a
of mud, with a thick thatched r
the huts of the village's oth
touchables. It was a peaceful pl
despite the heat and humidit
feeling, like coconut water.

The anthill in front of Bi
hut attracts most of the attent
we talked to the villagers thro
the day, a constant stream of p
approached the anthill, whic
about twelve feet tall and s
around, like the stump of a hug
Out of respect for the deity wh
within, visitors slip off their s
and flip-flops when coming c
the anthill. At the base of the
a small shrine has been carve
with a photo of Lord Jagannath
is an avatar of Krishna and one
most important of the region's g
small brass pitcher and bell;
and red flowers; a few coconut
and a small steel plate for dona

It is in this anthill that Bimbal
husband, a snake-god
Debo, is said to reside

Local tradition requires a
bride to visit her in-laws and s
their village. But Bimbala Da
married a snake—so she had de
to make a pilgrimage to a local te
We spoke to Bimbala's mother a
other villagers instead.

We talked with the villagers fo
haps an hour or two that first day
I have to say, Deepak didn't quit
it about the translation business.
pak and I both wanted to play
Evans-Pritchard, and you can r
have only one E. E. Evans-Pritcha
an anthropological expedition. A
tle friction quickly developed bet
us. I kept asking, "Deepak, what
they say?" and he kept doing that t
with his hand to shush me, then
marizing five minutes of conversa
in a sentence or two. Also, othe
lagers would sometimes throw

ere and there, and because only summarized, I was never o was telling me what.

villagers introduced us to Jyoti ıe snake's new mother-in-law, silver-haired woman of about -five. She was very shy, and ıen one of her granddaughters climbing across her shoulders seem to relax, scooping the o and placing her in her lap.

girl," Deepak summarized— never called her anything but l," although he was referring man who was thirty years old ut eight years his senior— "was a long time from tuberculosis. mily tried to care for her but 't. They visited temples, tried ıes in hopes of curing that girl." of the villagers' cell phones be- ring.

after some time," Deepak con- , ignoring the ringing phone, rl dreamt of the snake-god. In am, God said, *I am with you. I testing you. Now, don't worry. ll surely be cured.* In a few days, rted to cure up, and the disease dicated. After that the girl was ved in her faith that there exists . After that she denied to mar- body."

bala's brother had answered the ıone and was talking on it.

e family tried to marry her off," k said. "They searched for can- s, but the girl refused. After that dicated her life entirely to God. she dreamt that the god had di- her to marry him. It was impos- o marry another human being."

villagers were staring at us.

o many people here marry s?" I finally asked. I was trying re out if we were investigating an ıtion or an idiosyncratic act.

ıis is the first time anyone heard rrying a snake," Deepak said.

ın you ask them and tell me what said? In their own words?"

epak looked a little put out, but nslated my question nevertheless. villagers laughed. A lively con- tion followed, then Deepak said, is the first time anyone heard of ying a snake."

the end, a portrait of the bride oped. Before her marriage, the girl een quiet, perhaps even unhappy.

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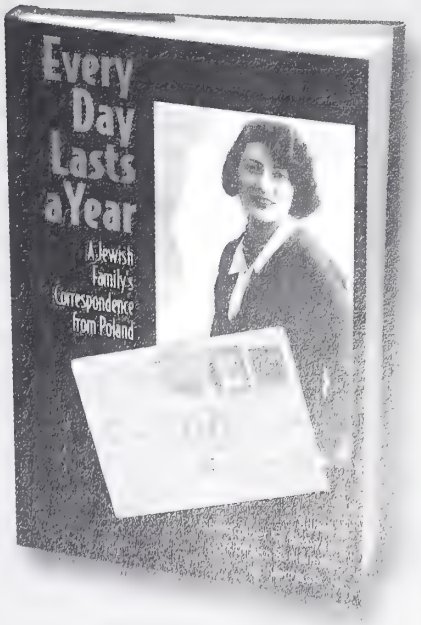
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Did she have close friends? No. *Where did she live before the marriage?* There, in her mother's hut. *And her father?* Died ten years ago. They told me it was Basu Deb, her father, who had first begun to feed and care for the cobra that Bimbala, ten years later, would marry. Another brother, married with children, died just a couple of years ago. Bimbala's surviving brother had mortgaged his fields to pay for the wedding expenses. He wouldn't tell us how much he had spent, but it was clearly a substantial sum, although less than he would have had to pay had Bimbala married a human being, for no dowry was expected. To marry the snake, Bimbala had been required to change her caste. She had been adopted by an upper-caste family and was no longer considered an untouchable. We met her adoptive family, who told us that the adoption had been only for technical reasons: they had no more contact with Bimbala than did the other villagers.

Following the marriage, the villagers said, Bimbala changed. She no longer worked in the fields with her mother or brother, and her ties with the village were in many ways now distant. "She is just living here," one shirtless man with spiky hair told us. It was still too soon to tell if Bimbala was happier than before—the marriage was only, after all, ten days old. But she had begun to dress differently, they said: "like a goddess," with beads around her neck, and a yellow sari, and marigolds as an armlet.

"They consider her, that this is one image of the goddess," Deepak said. "People come to see God and provide donations."

"Is she a goddess?" I asked.

"They *believe* she is a goddess," Deepak said carefully. "They believe she has certain goddess powers."

"Like what?"

"Like dreaming that she should marry a snake," Deepak said. But he added, a little ominously: "If she doesn't purchase certain kinds of supernatural powers, the god may punish her in this life."

Before we left, Cristina asked Jyoti Devi if she was happy that her daughter had married a snake.

Jyoti thought for a long time, then said, "We can't disturb God's work."

By "God," Jyoti seemed to mean Bimbala's husband, the snake, of whom we had so far seen no trace at all.

"The snake is not an animal to the people of India. It is a god," Deepak said in the car on the way back to Bhubaneswar. "Snakes are considered as religious leaders in the village. Snakes think of the betterment of the village, because a snake is no less than a god."

Ophiolatry, the anthropologist Sadhu Charan Panda notes, is perhaps the oldest of religions. There is evidence of snake worship in the antiquity of just about every place where there are snakes: one of the first challenges for the authors of Genesis was to confront the cult of the snake.

Of all the animals confronting the prehistoric Indian, two in particular must have been terrifying: the elephant, on account of his overwhelming power and his unpredictable rages, and the snake. When a man went out to his fields or to hunt, or even if he was in the village itself, in the serenity of his cool hut, this strange, low, fast, brilliantly colored thing was death, the quickest and most unpredictable death there was. And he struck often: few villages, even in today's India, are without a story of death by snakebite.

I imagine that the earliest form of snake worship was an attempt to propitiate a particular snake—the cobra that could be seen at sunset near the banyan tree, or the krait that frightened the bullocks—and that the propitiation was material. In offering the snake milk or flour, the villagers hoped that he would leave them alone. The man who knew how to manipulate the snake had a certain power and prestige in the village; perhaps these were among the duties of the earliest priests.

Then the worship of particular snakes was generalized to include the worship of snake spirits. This idea may have been the result of the snake's confusing habit of changing its skin: there was the terrible fear that one was appeasing the wrong snake, or that the snake was mysteriously morphing from one body to the next. One needed to calm the *spirit* of the snake, and the men who knew how to communicate with snake spirits grew more powerful than the old snake handlers. One of these men would have been ch
with controlling lightning, e
death-dealing snake in the l
snake was now a god, not a t
dent universal God but a loc
the next village over, there w
snake spirit to appease. This re
the stage of religious develop
thropologists call animism.

The worship of the cobra in
India is particularly associat
the god Shiva, one of the m
pressive and terrifying of the
pantheon: Shiva, who looks r
tle like a blue-skinned Rastafar
his dreadlocked hair and ston
traditionally wears a cobra
around his neck. But Shiva is a
newcomer to the villages of In
oldest Hindu religious texts, the
do not mention him.

We don't know when Shiv
ship came to Atala, but I can e
the moment: a newcomer t
about a thing human in form b
more powerful than the snak
priest of this new cult and the p
the old snake cult eyed each oth
ily. Perhaps villages divided ov
allegiances. Such is the stuff
gious warfare, and religious diffe
far more subtle have led other p
to violence. But in India a co
mise was struck: one cult was su
nated to the other, the local ani
traditions incorporated into the
fold of what would someday be
Hinduism. By making the serpe
companion of Shiva (or, accordi
some accounts, his weapon), th
cults were able to exist side by
indeed to reinforce each other.
snake never lost his identity as a
but Shiva now was seen as the
powerful of the two. To worship
va was to worship the snake; to wo
the snake was to worship Shiva.

India is a conservative countr
god is ever thrown away. In A
where Bimbala Das married a snak
these forms of snake worship exi
multaneously. Bimbala Das is sa
have married a specific snake, a b
cobra named Debo, whom she f
and attempts to please. But she
married a local snake god. "She is
sidering Snake as a whole, not any
ticular snake," Deepak said, talk
about Bimbala's marriage. This l
snake god was a manifestation of

l snake god. And the univer-
e god was an aspect of Shiva;
va was God—omnipotent, om-
, and indefinable.
ot easy to understand just what
Das was thinking when she
. But in the West we have an
us practice: a nun renounces
itional childbearing and mar-
es to form a lifelong union with
much the same way, Bimbala
ame an object of religious ven-
capable of blessing others and
ling with God. This was my first
tation of Bimbala's marriage,
but of course, I had yet to
meet the bride herself.

week or so after we left Atala,
e back in Bhubaneswar, meet-
h Umakanta Mishra, the tele-
journalist who first broke Bim-
as's story. Mishra had found out
the marriage after receiving a
m one of his sources in a neigh-
village. He went to the wed-
ith a cameraman.
s was the story that the villagers
m: For the past twelve years or
snake who would later be Bim-
husband had been worshipped as
ge god. At some point, the snake
imbala—whom Mishra always
"the lady"—formed a bond;
ver she called, the snake came
rank milk. The lady talked to
ayed with the snake; she under-
the snake and the snake under-
her.
n we take this as a love match?"
a asked the lady—and the lady
es.
shra looked at me. There was
thing about the story that he
like. "These must be the last days
snake," he said. "After all, snakes
nly ten to twelve years." But this
must be, he said, a good fifteen or
n years old, because it first ap-
d in the village as a large, mature
nt. For this reason, Mishra was not
y convinced by the lady's story.*
imself had never seen the snake.
shra produced his videotape of
wedding. The video was about
ninutes long. The wedding was
ded by almost four thousand
le; villagers climbed trees to get

ct, the average cobra lives twenty years.

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M.F.A IN CREATIVE WRITING

Our program, one of the oldest and most prestigious in the nation, is small (our workshops are limited to the ten students admitted in any genre); very intensive (the M.F.A. is usually awarded after one year and must be completed in two); and highly competitive (normally twenty-five students apply for each spot in fiction and poetry). We are best known for the quality of our graduate workshops. All of these are held in the same small room, which allows through its dusty windows a glimpse of the Charles River. Perhaps the most remarkable such workshop occurred when Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and George Starbuck gathered for instruction by Robert Lowell—gathered, by the way, less often in that little room than at the Ritz Bar. These days, the poetry workshops are run by our regular faculty, Robert Pinsky, Rosanna Warren, and Derek Walcott, who also conducts playwriting workshops; and those in fiction are led by Leslie Epstein and Ha Jin. Because our students have about them the resources of a great university they might also find themselves in classes taught by such superb scholars as Elie Wiesel and Christopher Ricks.

It is difficult to know how best to measure a student's success, or the worth of a program to a writer; we can say that our graduates in each genre have accomplished a good deal. Among numerou[illegible] our playwrights can list The Heideman Award, The Charles MacArthur Award for "Best New Play," and six national playwriting awards from the American College Theater Festival. Quite recently, our graduates in poetry have won the $30,000 Whiting Award, the Barnard New Women Poets Series [illegible] from the NEA, and the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of Amer[illegible] been three winners in three years of the Discovery/The Nation Award, and two winners of t[illegible] Poetry Series. In fiction, our students have also won the Whiting Award [illegible] of the nationwide Henfield Awards. A few years ago, our writers swept every major literar[illegible] country, with Ha Jin winning the National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner, and Jhumpa L[illegible] PEN/Hemingway and the Pulitzer Prize. Every few months a graduate of our program [illegible] book with a major publisher; and some, like Sue Miller and Arthur Golden, spend a go[illegible] on best-seller lists. Over the last decade we have placed more than a score of our grad[illegible] track positions at major American universities (Peter Ho Davies and Carl Phillip[illegible] direct[illegible] Michigan and Washington University in St. Louis). W[illegible] promise to those who join us is of a fair amount of time in that river-view room, time shared with other writers in a common, most difficult pursuit: the perfection of [illegible] the program, visiting writers, and financial aid (our teaching fellows conduct undergrad[illegible] writing classes and may teach at the Boston Arts Academy, a pilot high [illegible] Creative Writing Program, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Bo[illegible] website at *www.bu.edu/writing*. Application deadline is Mar[illegible]

Boston [illegible]

a better look at the bride and groom. The bride is dressed in a yellow silk chiffon sari flecked with red; on her forehead she has two yellow sandalwood stripes. She wears a red shawl, a nose ring, a yellow flower in her hair, and a string of marigolds around her neck. She is a slender young woman, almost pretty, with large brown eyes and a somber, serious manner. We would later learn that she was intensely shy, and it must have been torture for her to be the object of so many stares. Nevertheless, she smiles once or twice, revealing reddish betel-stained teeth, then quickly covers her face with her hand. She is chewing *paan* all through the video.

A Hindu wedding takes a long time: this was a five-hour ceremony. The lady sits on a bright red plastic chair, sometimes distracted by a wisecrack or comment from one of the villagers milling around. Most of the time, she just looks bored, as the priest drones on in Sanskrit. In the background, one can hear Hindi film music.

The video cuts. Now she is walking in procession to the marriage *mandap*. The rituals are reaching their climax: the film shows a brass snake, a cobra, curled and ready to strike. (Because of the size of the crowd, the real snake could not be coaxed into appearing; hence the brass idol.) The snake has been decorated with flowers and red paint. Women ululate. The lady now wears a cardboard crown.

Now the lady is seated in front of the brass snake, and there is a slight hitch: in a normal Hindu wedding, the bride and groom's hands would be tied together. Here her hand is tied to the snake's body.

Somebody throws rice.

Somebody blows a conch.

The video shows the town's betel-nut vendor. He says that people say that the snake bites the lady, but *nothing happens*.

Now the lady, with tremendous dignity and composure, lowers her forehead to the dust in front of the brass snake.

Mishra commented, "The snake is like a god to her. Ladies believe their husband is the equivalent of a god."

The video shows the wedding lunch. The villagers are in long rows, seated cross-legged on the ground. They are eating rice, pickled mangoes, and *dal* with their hands off plates of woven banana leaves.

The video then shows the village at dusk. The palms are just silhouettes.

Before leaving the village, Mishra asks the lady to bring him the snake. The lady's voice is curt. She says,

"Please don't call him 'the snake.' He is my husband."

Deepak had obligations in the mountains and couldn't wait for Bimbala to come back from her honeymoon, so Cristina and I hired a new translator named Bulu. We found Bulu under a sacred tree in front of our hotel, where he was sitting cross-legged with a towel on his head, smoking dope and watching the World Cup on television. His real name was Naresh Sethi, but everyone just called him Bulu, which, Bulu said, means "that you are everywhere. Wherever there is action, you are there."

He was thirty years old and unmarried, and when we asked him why he wasn't married, he pantomimed smoking pot and said, "I'm happy." He thought about it a minute and then said, "Me now nothing do, how can I serve my wife? I not serve myself." Twenty times, Bulu said, he had interviewed for various government jobs, and each time he'd been refused because he had no money for a "commission," which I think was his way of saying a bribe.

A lot of foreign tourists pass through Puri, and Bulu seemed to have had girlfriends from every European country. He had a son in Sweden whom he had never met, and he was madly in love with a French woman who lived in Monaco. In my eyes, Bulu was an unlikely ladies' man—but aren't so many womanizers the most unlikely candidates?

I asked Bulu his secret with women.

"I follow like dog," he said.

We had hardly hit the highway to Atala when Bulu began emptying a cigarette of its contents into his palm, mixing the tobacco with pot, and sucking the mixture back into

the empty tube of cigaret
About halfway to the vill
looked down at his feet.
"Shit, I lost my shoe."

He didn't look particularly
about losing his sh
just a little perplex

Seeing Bimbala for the f
was like seeing a deer in y
yard: she made you want to
ly, but it was also a little t
She looked like she would b
into the jungle if anyone
loud noise. She had a doe'
nervous eyes, which flicker
me to Bulu to Cristina and
me. Then she looked at the
and started backing up slowly
direction of her hut. A crow
lagers had assembled aroun
watch the encounter. B
looked at them nervously. Sh
to her brother for a mome
very low voice, and he told
Bimbala would not talk to u
out her guru present. So we w
meet Bimbala's guru, who li
another village about twenty
utes' journey by rickshaw. Bin
brother showed us the way.

Bimbala's guru was sixty
years old, and her real nam
Padma Bati Natha, but eve
just called her Guru-ma. She
vermilion trail through her
hair, and she stood as tall
shoulders. Her cheeks and lips
in around her toothless mouth
nose was flat and her eyes
slightly bulging; when she we
pray in front of her shrine, her
rolled slightly upward. She w
dozen bright-red plastic bangle
her forearms, and armbands h
up, in the manner of a holy wo
Her toenails were painted
purple. When she spoke to
she made brilliant eye cont
hardly blinking—the kind of
contact that I can only describ
"soul-searching."

We were seated on the floor o
ashram, a small brick building wi
corrugated-tin roof. It was extre
hot in the ashram, and Guru-
two disciples occasionally swung
around to stir up the air. Guru
told us her story.

She was born in a village no

tala. When she was eight
d, she dreamed that her fa-
uld die, which he did, very
thereafter. When young Pad-
l her mother this story, she
aten so intensely that she
nd shit herself. Six months
adma dreamed that her uncle
die the next day at ten
, which he did, from vomit-
l diarrhea. This time, Padma
the jungle so her mother
't beat her.
na was not like the other chil-
the village. She was a thief,
e thing. There was hardly a
old in the village from which
ln't steal vegetables or fruits,
she gave to the other children.
imes she went into the fields
t rice from the wealthy farm-
ich she gave to poor people,
larly the people of the lower
She also possessed a magical
g touch. She came into this
hich she still possesses, when
s twelve years old. The people
village asked her, *What do you*
How do you do this? But Padma
know how to control her gift.
id, *I know nothing. I just touch*
When Padma was just a child,
er only money in the world,
wenty-five pies, she bought a
e of the goddess Kali, and she
to worship this picture. She
ad it in her shrine.
d here our rickshaw driver
sed. He had accompanied us
gh all of our various stops, and
eated directly behind Bulu,
legged. He had been extreme-
ferential to Guru-ma, as if
ly frightened of her. Now he
ed over in a dead faint. Guru-
two acolytes went to his side.
as groggy and somewhat con-
; they tried to convince him to
own, but he stayed where he
I asked Bulu what was happen-
He said, "He gets spiritual pow-
Goddess power coming inside.
y, too much happy." Outside,
e was a low crack of distant
nder. The rickshaw driver
ed out for a little air. Guru-ma
ed and swung her sari around in
a way that we could see her
d back. She pointed out little
e spots on her skin.

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One time many years ago, Padma went into the forest to find roots for cooking. The forest goddess came to her and looked at her directly. But Padma did not understand, and she tried to beat the forest goddess with a stick. Every place her stick touched the forest goddess, Padma herself began to bleed in the same place. She still bore the scars. These were the white marks that she wanted to show us.

From the moment of her encounter with the goddess, she was no longer Padma but Guru-ma. From that point on, she was renowned for the power of her healing touch and her understanding of spiritual matters. The goddess had come into her. Her fame spread from village to village. In addition to her two full-time disciples, there were people in every village, from every caste and level of society, who followed Guru-ma's every word. One such follower was Bimbala Das, who had first met Guru-ma just five months earlier.

"If Guru-ma says die, Bimbala Das die," somebody in Atala would later tell us to describe Guru-ma's absolute mastery over the young woman.

Guru-ma loved having her picture taken. She led us out of her ashram and posed with her disciples and the villagers. She had us take numerous photos of her: standing with one disciple, and then the other, then with the villagers. She had a silver wand tipped with horsehair that she waved in our direction, another of the apparatuses of the holy woman. She led me into her private shrine, and I photographed her with the small image of the goddess that she had bought so many years ago for twenty-five pies. She had me photograph her making her private prayers, lighting candles, ringing a bell, and chanting. Later, after we got to Atala, she would choreograph more photo sessions. With a flick of her finger, she instructed Bimbala's brother to prostrate himself at her feet in front of Debo's shrine, then waited for me to take the picture; then she flicked her finger again and had me take the same picture with one of the village women. But most of all, Guru-ma wanted to be photographed with Bimbala Das. She helped Bimbala to dress herself and told her how to pose beside the brass idol of her husband. She helped Bimbala apply makeup, and even told her not to laugh.

All of Atala wanted to know what Guru-ma had to say. The crowd had doubled. They sat in rows, clambered over one another's backs, pushed and shoved: women in saris, shirtless men, staring children. At first, I had thought that my fiancée and I were the star attractions. But then I began to realize that the villagers were as interested as we were in Guru-ma and Bimbala, that we were giving them an excuse to come and hear the two women talk.

It wasn't the most successful of interviews. I posed questions to Bulu, who asked Guru-ma, who would whisper a minute or two with Bimbala, and then reply on Bimbala's behalf. At one point, Bimbala, wilting under the weight of so many eyes, got up and sat inside her hut, so that she was visible only to her guru.

It was in the course of this interview that I began to wonder, like Umakanta Mishra, whether there was any snake at all. It was a series of little things. I asked Bimbala just how long Debo was, and she looked at Guru-ma, and then she began to laugh. This was the first time I had seen her laugh, and her laughter was quite charming compared with her typical grave demeanor—but it was definitely an embarrassed laugh. She stretched her arms out wide and looked at Guru-ma again, who nodded. The snake would have been perhaps three feet long—which is very small for a black king cobra, the largest venomous snake in the world. (Maybe Bimbala was just trying to say *Big, very big*, but it didn't seem like it.) Then I asked Bimbala the last time she had seen the snake, and again she looked bothered by the question. This was when she removed herself to the interior of her hut. She and Guru-ma whispered together. Finally, Guru-ma said that Bimbala had seen Debo eight days earlier. But eight days earlier, Bimbala had not been in the village: she had still been making her pil[grimage]. There was more whispering [between] Bimbala and Guru-ma, a[nd] Guru-ma told us curtly th[at] snake appeared every Monda[y].

If there was no snake, I w[as] why Bimbala Das and Guru [had] cooked up this huge hoax. Th[e] ding had been very expensiv[e] all. Lost in the crowd that [had] rounded Bimbala's hut was Bi[m]mother. She looked so sad, st[ill] her daughter, and I wondered [if] was sitting there staring at [her] cause she was as befuddled [by] marriage as I was, and was h[ope] that something in this conve[rsa]would illuminate the story.

I wanted to talk with Bimba[la] Guru-ma away from the large [crowd] of villagers. So I decided to [ask] them to attend the Rath Yatr[a] us. The Rath Yatra is an enc[hant] annual religious festival in [Puri] where we were staying, and it [would] happen in just a few days. Th[e fes]val generates tremendous e[xcite]ment in this part of the world [and] about as big a deal as the Super[bowl] and the Second Coming combi[ned].

Guru-ma accepte[d my] invitation.

Three days later, we were ba[ck] Atala. We had hired a white Am[bas]sador car and a driver to take [Bim]bala and Guru-ma back with [us] Puri. We had even reserved [two] rooms for them. We had discuss[ed] great length their particular n[eeds] what kind of food they would li[ke] eat (pure vegetarian, we decid[ed]) whether they would feel comfor[table] in our hotel (maybe not, so w[e re]served them a room at the next[-door] tel over), what kind of toilets [they] would prefer.

When we got back to Atala, G[uru]ma had a small traveling bag in [her] hand and was ready to go. Bim[bala] was sweeping by her hut and lo[oked] incredibly unhappy, like Cinder[ella]. Guru-ma told Bulu that Bimb[ala] wasn't coming.

It took just a minute or two fo[r ex]lations to break down. Guru-ma [ex]plained that Bimbala couldn't c[ome] because she had to stay behind [to] tend the shrine of her husband. T[his] seemed mean-spirited to all of

't Bimbala have arranged for
e-sitter? Soon we were all
ing, Guru-ma, Bulu, my fi-
and me. Bulu was our expert
l mores, and *he* started to ar-
th Guru-ma, asking if this
that Bimbala would have to
front of the anthill every day
e rest of her life. If Bulu
t this was unjust, so did we:
a, who is a hot-tempered Ital-
nounced that we weren't run-
taxi service, that Guru-ma
have told us this before we
ed almost a thousand rupees
a car and driver, and I said
e had come to interview Bim-
as, the woman who had mar-
snake, and not her guru.
be it was the heat and humidi-
we were all getting fairly ex-
The usual crowd had developed,
ing in front of a crowd makes
ne just a little more dramatic. In
ase, Guru-ma and her cronies
up stalking off one way, toward
s anthill, and we ended up stalk-
the other way, toward the shrine
va, and although they pretend-
gnore us and we pretended to ig-
hem, there was a lot of glower-
ing on. The only person who
d really calm amid all the ex-
ent was Bimbala. She kept sweep-
the dried mud in front of her
, methodically raking away the
leaves and dust and smil-
ing gently.

My fiancée comes from a small
ge in the south of Italy—and
ges, Cristina maintains, are all
y much the same, whether they
olives or rice, whether they
a thirteenth-century *chiesa* or a
e to Shiva. Cristina felt com-
ble in Atala in a way I never
and while Bulu and I were argu-
with Guru-ma she drifted off into
rowd and made friends with one
ne village women. (This woman
d not to be identified by name,
use she was frightened of the
r-caste villagers, so I'll just call
J.D.) The two of them ended up
ng for an hour or two. J.D. was a
ersity graduate and spoke good
lish. By the time Cristina and
new friend were done talking,
looked like they were ready to
attend each other's wedding show-
ers. They exchanged addresses and
hugs and promised to stay in touch;
then in the car on the way back
to Puri, Cristina told us what she
had learned.

Cristina said that J.D. didn't
think there was a snake. J.D. had
been living within sight of the
anthill for a long time and had nev-
er once seen the snake. Neither had
anyone else she knew, except for the
devotees of Guru-ma. She also
thought that Guru-ma was "bad"
and "mean," and said that many
other people in the village felt the
same way. It was a very sensitive
subject, because the headman of the
village, who was the most powerful
man there, was a devotee of Guru-
ma. But some suspected that Guru-
ma was pretending to have holy
powers in order to frighten people
and make them worship her. J.D.,
for one, didn't believe that Guru-ma
actually possessed occult powers.
Moreover, there was no reason Bim-
bala couldn't have married a snake

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as an untouchable, but none of the upper-caste villagers would have attended the wedding. Therefore Guru-ma had organized Bimbala's temporary promotion to a higher caste, so that the wedding would be more widely attended, particularly by that part of society that Guru-ma was most eager to impress.

Guru-ma had not been well known in this village before Bimbala's marriage. Perhaps, J.D. proposed, Guru-ma had somehow frightened or tricked Bimbala into marrying the "snake" and was now exploiting the notoriety of the marriage—and Bimbala's new status as a holy woman—to gain a toehold in this and the surrounding villages. The huge wedding feast was an opportunity to present herself to the local people, and because local people would come to visit Bimbala, Guru-ma now had an excuse to stay in Atala and meet the newcomers.

Bimbala herself was a very nice, very sweet, very naive girl. She always had been. That, said J.D., was why Guru-ma wouldn't let us talk to Bimbala and wouldn't let Bimbala come with us to the Rath Yatra: because she was frightened of what Bimbala might say.

We drove back to Puri that night in our rented car. Over a million people were expected the next day for the Rath Yatra, and most of them were coming by foot: on the road we passed bands of barefoot pilgrims, one after another, holding banners celebrating Lord Jagannath and dancing and chanting. The pilgrims would walk all through the night. They sang songs extolling the beauty of Lord Jagannath, his goodness and his grace, and beat out furious, intricate rhythms on drums. There was a full yellow moon, and the road was like a strip of silver, passing through the paddies and palms.

What an extraordinary little woman, I thought to myself, was this Padma Bati Natha! An illiterate sixty-eight-year-old woman—and burning with ambition! Her ambition was matched by an instinctive genius. Could she have settled on a more brilliant and provocative gesture than a marriage to a snake? I doubt it was her intention, but by this r
Padma Bati Natha had ac
worldwide fame: the articles n
mentioned the name Bimb
but Guru-ma h
the real star of t

We went back to Atala
last time about a week lat
were nervous about returnin
still wanted to talk, at leas
with Bimbala Das while G
wasn't hovering over her shou

We had a little stroke o
Once a week, it was Guru-ma
to remain in silence for a d
arrived, by chance, on Gur
day of silence. She was in f
Bimbala's hut washing clothe
she glared at us as we came f
Bimbala was in her hut, b
came out when she saw us c
Soon the other villagers were
ing around. They didn't want t
a word.

I had prepared for this m
carefully. I bowed deeply in
ma's direction, and I instructe
to do so as well. I told Bulu to
late: "For two nights, I have
dreaming of you and the goddes

Bulu translated, and a mu
went through the crowd.

I said, "The goddess told me
back to Atala village and learn
bala's *true* story.' For two nig
have not been sleeping, only d
ing of you and the goddess. P
can we sit with you and talk aga

Everyone in the crowd look
Guru-ma. She was in a tight co
undone by her vow of silence.
looked at the crowd: at the chil
huddled behind their mother's
at the mothers, with their credu
faces, at the pilgrims who had c
that morning to pray at the an
to drop a few coins at the sh
and to take *prasad* with Bimb
Guru-ma hesitated a moment,
then smiled—a cool smile, but
a certain respect in it, I lik
think, as if she had underestim
her adversary. She waved us u
the shade of the awning of B
bala's hut.

A woman in the crowd said so
thing, and Bulu translated: "
you believe!" the woman said, s
ing her head. "You see!"

bala's brother took her aside old her, in a voice loud that Bulu could eavesdrop, say anything to us. He told t to go to sleep, although it ly eleven in the morning. In- Bimbala gave us pieces of a and some tea. The banana, xplained, had been offered to d before it had been offered so it was holy banana. Never- s, Cristina thought it was , and when Bimbala wasn't g, I ate her piece.

had been there perhaps a r of an hour when a college nt named Kishore from the chable side of the village told t the village headman, Khi- nna, wanted to see us. The han had been in the hospital ing from a vascular disorder we first arrived, but now he nome. Kishore showed us ay.

rod was still a sick man, and oked tired. His gray face was and drawn, his breath harsh abored. He massaged his legs as we spoke. Khirod, Bulu, and I made a little triangle as we spoke. Khirod had a deep voice and chose his words with care.

From the moment we set foot in Atala, I'd had the impression that the villagers were attempting to hide something from us. I'd chalked up any number of forced smiles and evasive glances to the villagers' discomfort in our presence. Direct questions had produced stuttering, conflicting, or impossible responses, sometimes verging on a child's outright fantasy. But this was not the case with Khirod Jenna. He spoke slowly and authoritatively, and made direct eye contact with me. I could see why he had been the village headman since 1979. For the first time since I came to Atala, I had the feeling that somebody was telling us the truth as he saw it.

Khirod told us that for a very long time, long before Bimbala had ever considered marrying a snake, she had suffered from a "special sick." According to her mother, Bimbala had been very ill with tuberculosis. But this was not quite true, Khirod said: tuberculosis had been a euphemism for Bimbala's real and far more horrible illness, and it was to escape from this illness that Bimbala had married a snake. The real illness had been, in Bulu's translation, "nighttime-goddess-speak-power-going-Bimbala-Das-inside."

"She know nothing when power coming, and she make strange things, like different style of personality—angry, ugly face," Bulu translated. "She is sleeping on floor. She talk, do bad things. If someone asks what happening, beating. Goddess coming inside, big problem for family. When that power come, problem for the family. Goddess wants something."

The first victim of the goddess who possessed Bimbala Das was Bimbala's own father. When the goddess entered Bimbala, the headman said, she had only to look on her own father, and he grew ill and died. After her father's death, the goddess continued to haunt Bimbala, with regular, devastating ef-

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fect. Ten years passed. The goddess entered Bimbala—and her neighbor was dead. Then three others. Also many babies. Children or pregnant women struck by her poisonous gaze needed to be transported immediately to the temple for purgative rites. Normally, Bimbala was a sweet, gentle young woman. But when the goddess was inside her, the headman said, Bimbala's sight alone could kill.

Perhaps it was something in my look, but a few seconds later the headman added, "We are *believe*."

The last victim of the goddess inside Bimbala was the latter's brother, who died from the same disease as their father. "Thin, thin"—that was the headman's description of the malady. That death was what finally convinced Bimbala's mother, Jyoti Devi, that something had to be done. Fearing for her daughter's life and the lives of others, she came to the headman. She had already consulted doctors who had said that there was nothing they could do for the girl. Now she was desperate. The headman, in turn, consulted Guru-ma.

The headman had known Guru-ma for over a decade, and so close was their rapport that he considered himself Guru-ma's adopted son. Guru-ma regularly came through Atala and, in the traditional manner of ascetics and diviners, would beg for alms at his door or ask for water. Thus the headman and his family had learned of Guru-ma's extraordinary ability to predict the future and cast fortunes—her "heavy powers."

Khirod looked at Bulu and at me. "Guru-ma telling something, *it is true*," he said.

For months before Guru-ma's arrival in Atala, Khirod said, Bimbala had been haunted by a recurring dream. The snake god came to her in her sleep and warned her: if she failed to marry the snake, there would be more problems for her, and more problems in the village. It was Guru-ma who realized that this was not a dream but a commandment, and that only if Bimbala married the snake would the village and Bimbala's family be safe. And Guru-ma revealed another extraordinary fact to Khirod and the other villagers: the god had come to her as well, and she had dreamed the same dream. When Bimbala was first introduced to Guru-ma, Bimbala collapsed.

Guru-ma and the headman together arranged the marriage. There were a number of details to take care of. Guru-ma accompanied the young girl to visit the priests at Kakatpur, who considered the story and gave permission for the marriage. Khirod helped Bimbala's brother mortgage his lands to pay for the wedding. Together, Guru-ma and the headman arranged Bimbala's adoption into one of the upper-caste families of the village. (This was effected only with the assistance of the god: Guru-ma had selected the family of a man named Kustapranchan to adopt the girl, but Kustapranchan at first refused the honor. Then one day when Kustapranchan was in his garden picking flowers, a large black snake slithered around his ankles and looked him in the eye. Kustapranchan was terrified. He apologized to the headman and agreed to take the girl under his family's wing.) Then Guru-ma helped organize the rite by which the stain of Bimbala's caste status was washed from her: she was buried up to her face in rice seed and left there for seven minutes. The wedding proceeded shortly after her conversion.

To be a holy woman in rural India requires the adoption of a specific set of mannerisms, a way of dress and comportment, and entrance into a specific social circle—and all these things Guru-ma taught Bimbala. Guru-ma taught her how to look at people with that intense and spooky stare, and she showed her how to dress like a holy lady. After the wedding, a string of important religious figures came to Atala, invited by Guru-ma, and attested to Bimbala's newfound status. "Many tantric people also see Bimbala, forget everything," Khirod said. "From that day, people understood she have big, heavy power." One man saw Bimbala and was so affected that he fell down and began to vomit. He passed out and came b consciousness only when th lagers poured water on his Another claimed to have light streaming forth from he A third came to Atala unin drawn by—who knows wha kissed Bimbala's feet on me her, and she gave him a fl Bimbala's new career as a woman had been launched.

Khirod was looking quite now, and his wife came int room. Bulu whispered to me she wanted us to go, and so I up. I had one last question. I Khirod if he had ever seen the named Debo.

He had. A few days after the ding, the villagers organized a musical program in front of the a For a few moments, Khirod said, came out as well, and lifted hi high in the air, the better to w the proceedings an ten to the music.

We went back to Bimbala' and spent the better part of day with her, just observing. cause nothing was happening. crowd slowly dispersed. Dap sunlight fell on the anthill. shrine itself had been closed with a piece of cardboard beca somebody told us, a dog had t to eat Debo's food. Bimbala aft little while seemed to accept us ting there quietly, and she w about her morning chores, wash some dishes in a blue bucket. A women from another village c and made *puja* in the directio the anthill. The women also p trated themselves at Guru-m feet, and she gave them her bl ing. They dropped a few coin the steel tray, then sank to th knees and closed their eyes prayed. Then they sat near B bala's hut and smiled nervously her. Bimbala gave them piece banana. It was moving, the de tion of these women to Bimb They sat at her feet while worked, just as we were doing. all sat there through an unexpe edly peaceful afternoon, saying v little and hoping that Debo wo come out from the anthill.

A LIE THAT TELLS THE TRUTH

Memoir and the art of memory

By Joel Agee

et at nine . . .
We met at eight . . .
on time . . .
No, you were late . . .
s, I remember it well.
—Alan Jay Lerner,
from *Gigi*

A little over a year ago, my
ıer-in-law introduced me to a
g woman who had moved into his
borhood. She was a novelist, he
"Not yet," she interjected, "I'm
ing on my first novel"), and I, he
ıer, was a memoirist. I immediately
need to exonerate myself. What
his discomfort about? In part, no
t, guilt by association with liars:
ames Frey scandal was still in the
. But that can't be the whole of it.
all, there are impostors who write
ls as well. No, the question leads
lirectly down the murky paths of
ıory that give the much abused
e its name.

hen I was a boy, I had a father who
l on another continent, and an-
r father—a stepfather, actually, but
ought of him as my father—with
m I lived. Both were writers. From
ı, in different ways, I received the
of writing as a noble profession.
his vaguely aristocratic notion was
as foreign to the Marxist society I
l in—Communist East Germany—



as American readers might suppose. When I was seventeen, I dropped out of high school and signed up as a bricklayer's apprentice. At the orientation meeting, the master, addressing his students, said: "Masonry is a noble profession." He meant that we would be building homes, schools, and hospitals, not just making a living. But the vocation of writing, as I understood it from the examples of my two fathers and from the hundreds of books in our house, was one of constructing a fit habitation for the mind, and a beautiful one, if my talent allowed it; indeed for the spirit as well as the mind, as the two are denoted in German by the single word "*Geist*." So writing wasn't a trade like other trades, because it was noble in a different sense that everyone, even the unread, acknowledged. Literature mattered supremely.

I was still in school when I read a novella by my American father. Or rather: I cut classes from school and took to the woods to read it. It was about a boy, roughly my age, who played truant from his parochial school on Good Friday, roaming the woods before dawn in the company of some rude classmates instead of keeping a vigil for the betrayed and crucified Jesus. There was a phrase near the beginning—"The night smelled like new milk"—that enchanted me. I knew that delicious smell, because every few days I rode a bike to a farm where you could buy fresh, unpasteurized milk that was sometimes still warm from the cow, so that on the way home, in the winter, steam rose from the can. But that it was "new" milk, not "fresh," and that night in the woods had a scent (which I knew, but did not know I knew till I read it), and that milk could be said to have something of night in its sweetness—all this surprised and excited me as no written words had done before.

My stepfather's writing did not inspire me. His was, for me, a sad fact to

Agee is the author of Twelve Years
more recently, In the House of My
. At present he is working on a novel.

her Year Another House, by Thrush Holmes
tesy Bill Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, and Santa Monica, California

confess, because it must have caused him deep sorrow. It wasn't due to lack of talent on his part; there is much in his books that interests and moves me today. He wrote novels about the German men and women who opposed the Nazis and who kept alive, in that darkest of times, the dream of a better Germany. But by the time I read his books, in the mid-Fifties, that dream had become the myth of the state, and his characters' most sincere thoughts were unpleasantly echoed by the slogans and homilies of officialese. His truth had become a lie, and he knew it, though he couldn't admit it to himself. The expression of his mouth became bitter. He chain-smoked and drank incessantly. Writing became a visible torment to him.

It was when he was younger, and I was a child, that he represented to me the noble idea of the writer. It had nothing to do with the words he wrote, or with his political truth. Nor was it a performance. I was sometimes allowed to read in his study, but I was not to disturb his concentration under any circumstances. This was his work—that quintessentially adult activity. Naturally, I was curious about the difference between that and my own occasional writing, which was always for fun and to show off later, to him and my mother, the poem or fantasy I had written. It was hard to tell what the difference was, since he wrote in German, a foreign language to me at the time. He wrote by hand, as I did, but in a minuscule gothic script, crossing out many words and filling his wastebasket with rejected drafts. For long periods, he didn't write at all but sat with his face slightly raised and his eyes open, as if listening, or waiting. Sometimes he appeared to be smiling. At other times he looked worried, or frowned intensely.

When his texts were ready, he dictated them to a fast-typing secretary. Sometimes he dictated texts without drafting them first, but these were newspaper articles or letters, not the serious writing called "literature."

It amazes me that I am old enough now, and perhaps foreign enough, to remember a time and a place when people still used that word without an ironic or apologetic smile and without grandiosity either. Not long ago, when I proposed to my agent that she champion a book of mine as a work of literature instead of trying to present it as a "Sixties memoir," she told me, with a rueful laugh, that in publishing circles nowadays the "L" word is the kiss of death.

By the time I came to America, at the age of twenty, and had dropped in and out of college a couple of times, I became convinced that if I didn't succeed at writing, I would end my days as a failure. I worked at my stories and poems, honing and polishing and, like my stepfather, crossing out much of what I had written. For years, my wastebasket held all the proof of my labor; there were no finished manuscripts. But I harbored ambitions that matched my self-doubt. For instance, I had a notion, ever since I had seen Goethe's *Faust, Part One* performed in Berlin, that someday I would write a novel on the theme of the philosopher who made a pact with Mephistopheles, the devil's emissary. No matter that Thomas Mann had already done it. Times had changed since then. The new Faust would wear a new countenance and seek a new knowledge. Who would have guessed that instead of inventing that story I would live it?

A chemical substance, lysergic acid diethylamide, became my Mephistopheles, proffering beauty beyond all imagination, and proffering, above all—because I wanted it above all—knowledge of first things, which, I was convinced, could not be attained by accepting the hearsay of either philosophers or prophets, but only by direct experience. In exchange I would forfeit my common humanity, my ordinariness. I was deeply ashamed of being ordinary. It seemed a wager worth making. Not that I knew I was making a wager, but that's what it was.

LSD promised entry, as well, to the terrifying realm into which my younger brother was being drawn by a mental illness for which there appeared to be no cure. Maybe I could walk in there, clear-eyed and unafraid, take him by the hand, and show him the way out. Or, if that was not possible—but this would have been the darkest, least conscious of motives, and I suspect it only now, and can't be sure of it—maybe, by the magic of acid, we could trade places: I would be mad, and he could live out the life of a writer. For he w
giously gifted, especially as a pl
and I was guilty of undeserv
fortune and needed absolutio

I wasn't able to save my bro
died by his own hand at th
twenty-seven. And I, Doctor
who had given up writing to
raids on the unthinkable, fo
self compelled to think myself
creator, an impotent god at th
an endlessly suffering, deathl
infinite universe that was at t
time myself eternal damnati
nal perdition—until, locked
prison cell in East London with
gish Englishman who demand
attention at all hours of the da
gently deposited on the shores
ity, miraculously unscathed, as m
edly ordinary, alwa
visional, everyday s

After the nightmare was
thought: "You must write abo
You will never find better ma
But I couldn't write about i
thought of revealing to anyone
had gone through terrified me. I
be the laughingstock of the neig
hood, and, with any success,
city, the nation, the world. Thes
were aftershocks of the disast
course, but they were also clear
ing signs to desist.

"I could disguise it," I tho
"Make it a novel. The Faust nov
always wanted to write." But eve
tional disguise I could think of m
drove home the realization tha
story I had lived was itself a nov
ready written and perfectly plotte
preverbal language of feeling and m
ory, needing only to be set in word
could I tell it in the third person, a
someone other than myself? It w
possible: the pronoun "I" would n
replaced by any other. And it w
just anyone's "I," it was mine. The
ject of this novel—in both sens
the word "subject"—was my se
dared not write it.

Then one day, as I was read
Robert Lowell's autobiographical
Studies, I came across a sentence
scribing the poet as an eight-year-
"Whenever a girl came near me,
whole person cringed like a spo
wrung dry by a clenching fist."
sentence performed itself in my b

ting me with thrilling imme-
an encounter in the carpeted
a hotel in St. Petersburg, which
time I was remembering—
was still called Leningrad. I was
ars old. A little girl in a sailor
sed me with her parents as I
her with mine. I cringed, she
ut her tongue—impossible to
ch came first. I looked up from
s book and felt a gust of relief
citement: why not write about
lve years in East Germany, be-
with my arrival at the age of
t would be a preamble, an étude,
ory of the time before the
shipwreck, when I was still
trimming my sails.

de a surprising discovery in the
of writing that book. I learned
remember is, at least in part, to
e, and that the act of transpos-
mory into written words is a
e act that transforms the mem-
lf. This troubled me at first, be-
I had only recently obligated
to a documentarist ethos un-
e oddly mixed influence of An-
eton's diatribes against fiction
y father's demand, at the begin-
f *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*,
e artist suspend or destroy imag-
n so as to perceive "the cruel ra-
e of what is." But "is" becomes
in the blink of an eye, and mem-
are shadows. To recapture the
ce that had cast those shadows,
no recourse except to imagine a
f possible and probable details,
antly at first and then with in-
ng confidence and freedom.
day, for that reason, I find it dif-
to disentangle the memories I
efore writing *Twelve Years* from
I created by writing it. Was it
ory or imagination, for instance,
in the first paragraph, dressed a
an harbor pilot in a black rain-
and, in the last one, endowed a
omaniacal friend with "a black
hcoat he has recently stolen"?
eat aesthetic bracketing certainly
s suspicious, but I know I didn't
e that effect on purpose, and it
inly *feels* as if I remember black
s on both occasions—but I'm not
On the other hand, in a scene I
ve I invented in order to depict
dismay of East Germany's intel-

lectual elite as they learned of an imminent ban on nude bathing, there are several details that ring so true in an intimate, déjà vu sort of way that I am half inclined to assume the scene was taken from memory after all.

When *Twelve Years* was finished and approaching publication, I learned that it was going to be called a memoir. The word had a plushy, haute-bourgeois aura. Wasn't this the kind of thing prime ministers wrote? Also, the term would saddle the book with one of those catchpenny subtitles. "Can't we call it a novel?" I asked my editor. He said it wasn't a novel: novels are works of fiction. "But it isn't really non-fiction either," I said. And I began to explain. "Then you'll have to write a disclaimer," he said.

My disclaimer for *Twelve Years* takes up half a page. The first sentence is: "Everything in this book is true, but not everything is precisely factual." One reviewer, Robert Coles, found this line of apology strange:

> Why the distinction between truth and factuality? Mr. Agee is not a journalist, has no intention of documenting the facts of a given news story. He is relying upon a kind of witness —his memory, as it has been shaped by a moral intelligence. Ought we now ask our children to keep tape recorders handy, lest in future years they stumble into the terrible trap of "fiction" as they try to recall a conversation or a moment of action? Subjectivity and imagination have yet to be declared enemies of what is "true."

Those words were written in 1981. Much has happened since then. An army of truth tellers has conquered large numbers of the dwindling faithful who still read books. Confession, in print and on TV, is fast becoming the primary public mode in which human interiority speaks and is heard. The self-avowed lies of fiction are no longer in fashion. Everyone is writing memoirs. Subjectivity and imagination, it seems, are slipping the border into the non-fiction columns, where they live as quasi-illegal aliens, poorly housed among the facts, performing thankless but necessary labors.

In point of fact, some of their labors—the ones performed gratuitously and unbidden, without our



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knowing—are less menial than one might suppose. The simplest acts of remembering, in daily life, are accomplished to a very great extent by the imagination; or, to put it more bluntly, what we think we remember is largely made up. According to Daniel Gilbert, professor of psychology at Harvard University, a great number of experiments in laboratory and field settings have "left most scientists convinced of two things. First, the act of remembering involves 'filling in' details that were not actually stored; and second, we generally cannot tell when we are doing this because filling in happens quickly and unconsciously."

I was recently given a startling demonstration of this when I reread something I had written with the most earnest intention of sticking to the facts.

I have for several years been keeping a journal in which I record moments when the mind, seemingly awake in broad daylight, becomes aware of its dream-weaving activity. Some worry or obsession will rise to consciousness and, seen through as the mind-made thing that it is, evaporate like a mirage. Sometimes this shift results in a blissful state of carefree and effortless presence that may last for seconds or an hour by the clock's measure but has no duration in subjective experience. At other times, instead of dissolving the daydream, the attention follows it in a kind of aesthetic rapture. The mind is lucid and dreaming at the same time. These experiences, too, I describe in writing. The descriptions are not literary efforts. The truth of the matter is all that matters: how this particular awakening happened, what was the sequence of events.

On July 6, 1999, I described in this journal how, sitting on my bed, I had remembered, or thought I remembered, a phrase by Meister Eckhart: "*Jeder Augenblick ist eine neue Geburt*"—Every moment is a new birth. Had he really said that? "*Augenblick*" suggested seeing (the word, meaning "moment," translates literally as "eye-glance"). Was seeing an act?

"At that moment," I wrote, "a bunched part of the sheet took on the appearance of a dramatically shaped iceberg. It wasn't a hallucination. That is, I never lost sight of the sheets and the bed, never forgot where I was. But the iceberg became part of a larger landscape that reminded me of Caspar David Friedrich's painting of a ship sinking among ice floes. It was that real, that magnificent. This happened yesterday morning, I still remember the sight clearly." There follows a lengthy description of the spectacular view as it took shape before my eyes, followed by an attempt to explain my awed sense, after a ringing telephone dispelled the vision, of having partaken "in an order of spontaneous creativity and intelligence to which ordinarily I have only a primitive, rudimentary connection."

Three months later, on October 18, I recalled that experience but forgot that I had already described it. Confident of my powers of recollection, I began as follows:

"Several weeks ago, an astonishing experience looking at a patch of bunched and crumpled sheets on my bed. I was thinking of Blake and the central role he gives the imagination—the contempt he had for conventional perception—which was probably what led me to look at those folds differently. I noticed colors, first of all—shades of blue and gray in the white that reminded me of Cézanne's tablecloths. But the bulges and dips in the sheet recalled Chinese landscapes . . ." And so on. No mention of Friedrich's ice floes or Meister Eckhart. The entry ends like this: "In a deliberate act of regression, I pretended these were tall mountains, deep gorges, and, like a child, walked two fingers into this terrain, with adventurous emotion. Don't recall how I moved out of that state. I believe it was a decision."

How naive of me to suppose that I could track down a past moment of reverie and precisely recover it in words. I find it impossible to determine which of these two records is the more accurate one, because together

> they constitute all the memory that is left of the event.

It took me twenty years to write my second book. When I began it, I assumed I would complete it in two or three years. Since it was already written in memory, all I needed to do, I still was convinced, was translate it into language.

But something other than memory claimed my attention from the beginning. I don't know what to call it because, not being a memory, [illegible] content. It could be described [illegible] tical dimension, a sense of th[illegible] and depth of experience. And [illegible] it is felt, it stands perpendicul[illegible] horizontal plane of time. Per[illegible] right name for it is "I." I ha[illegible] wondered at the regal appeal[illegible] this little word—as tall and p[illegible] as any royal "We"—like [illegible] nouncement, inscribed in wr[illegible] age of the English tongue, th[illegible] man is, in his true "I," a K[illegible] Everywoman a Queen, Everyo[illegible] that matter, a royal person[illegible] this long before revolutions [illegible] ed the bloody enforcement [illegible] truth as a political program.

Writing my memories gave [illegible] appearance of a river. It flowed [illegible] and forward, broad and unhurri[illegible] was because the story started [illegible] stream, when my character, Joe[illegible] times also called "I," was in h[illegible] ties. Where was he going? He[illegible] idea, but I did. He was goi[illegible] downward spiral toward the d[illegible] of the true "I," about which no s[illegible] be told, because it is the wit[illegible] mirror of life, forever unaltere[illegible] scenes that pass through it. Do[illegible] because, in the topography of t[illegible] that is where the hell realms a[illegible] in hell, one can find the jewel [illegible] price. On the way there, he wo[illegible] through relationships, places, [illegible] tures, ordeals, all grist for th[illegible] telling mill. But he would arriv[illegible] destination in a region to whic[illegible] ory could have no access.

To achieve this descent in t[illegible] ing, I would need a guide. He p[illegible] himself as a Mephistopheli[illegible] half trickster, half sage, who[illegible] home with the unspeakable a[illegible] how to talk about it as well. H[illegible] himself my Counterpoint. Fr[illegible] to time he took over the na[illegible] Together we discoursed about t[illegible] tions that concerned Joel, a [illegible] myself, the narrator who was [illegible] the book, sitting at his desk in [illegible] lyn. But was this narrator my[illegible] course not. He, too, was a fict[illegible]

Fictive, as well, was the m[illegible] gave him: to release the ghosts [illegible] terrors—my own and my brothe[illegible] writing his way into the hous[illegible] fear. I experienced no fear whi[illegible]

book, but I needed my nar-
feel some trepidation. I gave
anxieties I had had ten years
when I had been unable to
h this material. There were
ventions as well. When asked
rts of the book are not strict-
ually, "true," I say that's my
I should add that I contrive
robabilities. There are im-
le events in the book, but they
ritten by life. Can I be sure
of that? Yes, to the best of
my recollection.

espite the lesson in taxonomy I
eived with *Twelve Years*, I was
ced that *In the House of My Fear*
ot and should not be published
moir. My publisher didn't agree.
umerated my reasons:
, the book simply wasn't a mem-
ause it didn't confine itself to the
of memory, and because it wove
d inventions together in an im-
ed form that was governed by
tic considerations alone. Sec-
ecause memoirs are invariably
t of as "memoirs of . . .", mine
perforce be a "memoir of the
s"—misleadingly, since in my
that particular carnival, along
he world in which it was per-
d, disappears in the magic the-
f a mind lost in self-referential
on. Third, by 2004, when the
was approaching publication, the
ir had become a subliterary genre,
ublishing equivalent of daytime
But my strongest, most anxiously
objection was that the "non-
n" rubric, to which memoirs are
natically relegated, would exile
ok from the precincts of literature
educe it to a kind of gossipy en-
nment with subsidiary value as a
e of counsel or information about
or mental illness.
n the other hand, how could I call
novel? It was a story about real
le and actual events. Yet it wasn't
on-fiction novel." Maybe "true
l" was a viable term.
poke with a German friend about
He was surprised by the quandary
hich I had been put by two Eng-
words, "fiction" and "non-fiction."
new their meaning, but he won-
d how a work of literature could be
ed by such categories.

"Is Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* non-fiction?" he asked.

"Yes, because it's an autobiographical work," I said.

"But it's a novel," he said.

"In Germany, yes, but here it's a memoir."

"And all the time I thought Germans were rigid."

Only then did I realize what he was getting at: Goethe's full title, *Fiction and Truth from* My *Life*, revealed the artifice of the dichotomy. How could anyone separate imagination from truth in an honest attempt to give a narrative account of a life? And yet the categories into which written works of this nature are pressed, not only in America but throughout the English-speaking world, insist on just such a division.

The German book market (I speak of Germany because I am familiar with that country's culture, but similar arrangements are made elsewhere in Europe) divides books into two different categories, *Belletristik* and *Sachbücher*. *Belletristik* means belles lettres and comprises all works of literary art, including poetry, irrespective of merit. *Sachbücher* is a term for which no English equivalent exists, but if there were one, it would be something like "about-books." There are, of course, about-books that qualify as literature, and there are countless novels that don't, so this arrangement is not fully adequate. But for the discussion of autobiographical writing, it encourages useful distinctions. Edmund Hillary's memoir of climbing Mount Everest is an about-book. Maxim Gorky's *My Childhood* is a work of literature.

I first read Gorky's wonderful book in Germany, where it is commonly referred to as a novel. Novels are not by definition works of fiction. Cordelia Edvardson's *Burned Child Seeks the Fire*, for instance, published here as a Holocaust memoir, appeared in Germany (and earlier in Sweden, where it was first published) as a novel. That was meant to signify not that the contents of the book were invented but that its author was an artist who had shaped her materials as novelists do.

All these deliberations foundered against the fiat of the marketplace, which my publisher delivered to me with a courteous firmness that would brook no argument. Presented as fic-



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tion, my amphibious book risked rejection by at least one of the major book chains. Under cover of "memoir," it would pass. Reluctantly, I agreed to subtitle it "A Memoir." But I came to regret that decision.

A few months ago, through the "Google Alerts" program, I was directed to a notice from MSN Shopping. There was a picture of the cover of *In the House of My Fear* and, beneath it, under "Product details":

Subject: Substance Abuse & Addictions—General

Pages: 00416

Dewey: B

Subject: Mental Illness

For curiosity's sake, I searched MSN Shopping for the title of Jonathan Lethem's *The Fortress of Solitude*, a charming novel that could be crudely described as a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story involving a friendship between a white and a black boy, set in Brooklyn in the 1970s. Under "Product details," it said:

Subject: Literary

From the purgatorial gloom of "nonfiction," this looks like a glimpse of heaven. But it's not in my nature to repine for long, and besides, I can claim that heaven for myself. And it would be peevish of me not to take pleasure in this small miracle: that in a subbasement of the literary enterprise, among Dewey decimals and ISBNs, the "L" word is granted the dignity of its name, and is not asked to answer to any demands for social or commercial utility; that it stands unqualified, as if to say: if you want to know the subject of a literary work, open the book and read it.

But what is this fabled, unnameable beast? "Literature," according to Vladimir Nabokov, "was born not the day when a boy crying wolf, wolf came running out of the Neanderthal valley with a big gray wolf at his heels: literature was born on the day when a boy came crying wolf, wolf and there was no wolf behind him." That is a novelist's definition, and it is still too narrow. It does not take account of the boy who was chased by a wolf and went on to tell stories about it. Also, it equates the skill of invention, or plotting, with the much rarer faculty of imagination. True to the facts or wholly invented, unless the story conjures out of the darkness some magic beyond the familiar frights of a wolf's fangs and a boy's racing heart, it will not enchant and will not be literature. The word for this magic is "art," and part of its nature is that it escapes definition: whatever you say it is, it isn't. Yet it makes itself known by a quality of inexhaustible newness—not "novelty," which is a product of fashion, but the surprise of the unforeseen.

Who, then, speaking of literature, has the organ of perception, the receptive talent, to experience the magic? The reader, of course—the good reader. Here, definition is possible, which is why Nabokov does so much better with this than he did with his trope of the boy who cried wolf. "The good reader," he says, "is one who has imagination, memory, a dictionary, and some artistic sense."

I like the "some." It is a moderate requirement that can be met by many, provided their minds are not warped by too much and the wrong kind of schooling. But that is a subject for another essay.

I just bought a biography of the French writer and aviation pioneer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*. I remember him more for his *Wind, Sand and Stars*, a book that set me on fire with the desire to write when I first read it at the age of sixteen. In the store, I searched the biography's index hoping to find confirmation of a story my stepfather, Bodo Uhse, had told me about how, in his role as political commissar on the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War, he had interrogated a presumed fascist adventurer whose plane had been shot down, and who turned out to be Saint-Exupéry. It seems possible now, even probable, that Bodo indulged in "creative non-fiction" to entertain me, and to make me admire him. It certainly was a colorful story. Should I regret that I retold it in my second book? And did I remember it rightly—that is, as he told it—false though it probably was? I trust that no harm has been done to any significant truth. Do I mind that he (possibly, probably) told me a falsehood in the first place? Not at all; this news fills me with fresh affection for him.

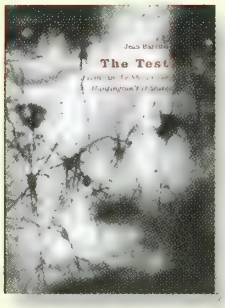
As to my other father, Jame
I have long suspected that he d
here and there from his milita
gram of absolute facticity in *Let l*
Praise Famous Men, especiall
episode titled "At the Forks," w
meets three people who, he says
of a kind not safely to be describ
account claiming to be unimag
or trustworthy," because, he e
"they had too much and too out
beauty not to be legendary," and
he then proceeds to describe
plasticity and immediacy and
supernatural acuity of optic cali
that I find difficult to beli
"unimaginative" reproductions o
ory, and quite possible to concei
dazzling effects of poetic legerd
Here is what I think he did: fru
by the erasures of memory, espec
the clichés it makes of even fa
beloved faces, he took physiog
cues from two, perhaps three of
er Evans's portrait photographs
beginning of the book, disguisin
(as he had to in order to keep h
er) by subtracting from them all
guity of expression and amplifyi
idealizing the hints and withhold
scorn, hurt, pride, and terror th
gest themselves in their features

That, of course, is my imaginir
I have no proof of it, and only sl
idence. But reading the story
way—as a fiction cunningly disgu
documentary garb or as the herc
of documentation that it purp
be—what I find impossible to qu
is these demigods' ferocious cl
existence in my consciousness, w
am sure, barring brain damage
ravages of senility, they will re
their porch for the rest of my lif

Am I making a plea for liars,
No, only for artists, and in part
here, for those who make art o
personal lives and memories.
ously, there are facts that should
juggled or modified with impunit
the beguilements of art are lies o
ferent kind. The ordinary liar b
our trust, his counterfeit truth le
poorer. The artist-magician—eve
who works in the service of a lie—
not help but enrich us with value
is the meaning of Cocteau's cha
statement: "I am a lie that alway
the truth." Art is generous. Th
steals truth; the artist creates it.

HARPER'S BOOKSHELF

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ington's Disease
Baréma • Paper, $14.95
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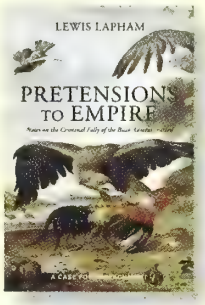
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ecture of Authority
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d Ross (photographs and
ord) Hardcover, $40.00
eral years Richard Ross has been nsettling, thought-provoking of architectural spaces that ower over the individuals in rom a Montessori preschool to es, mosques, and diverse civic these images build to ever manifestations of authority: an gation room at Guantánamo, segregation cells at Abu Ghraib, ally, a capital-punishment death chamber.



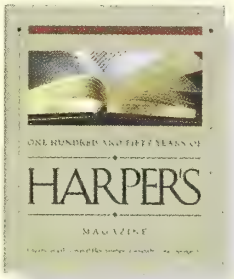
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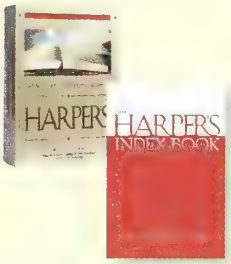




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WELCOME TO THE WORLD

Photographs from Dubai

By Jason Fulford



The World is an artificial archipelago of 300 islands off the coast of Dubai. If seen from a plane, the development loosely resembles a map of Earth. The ship in the picture is a barge carrying boulders for the breakwater.

Opposite Page: A guest worker from Kerala sees his hometown on the way to The World. Developers ask you to imagine your future in Dubai.

Jason Fulford is a photographer, designer, and curator, co-founder of J&L Books, and a contributing editor to *Blind Spot* magazin
His last book, *Raising Frogs for \$\$\$*, was published by The Ice Plant in 2006.









Flies on the beach of a developer's model at the 2007 Arabian Travel Market. Downhill skiing on refrigerated snow is offered inside the Mall of the Emirates.





Construction goes on all night in Dubai, where summer daytime temperatures often reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit.
mels exercising in the off-season at the Nad Al Sheba Racecourse. The power lines above carry electricity from desert power stations into the city.





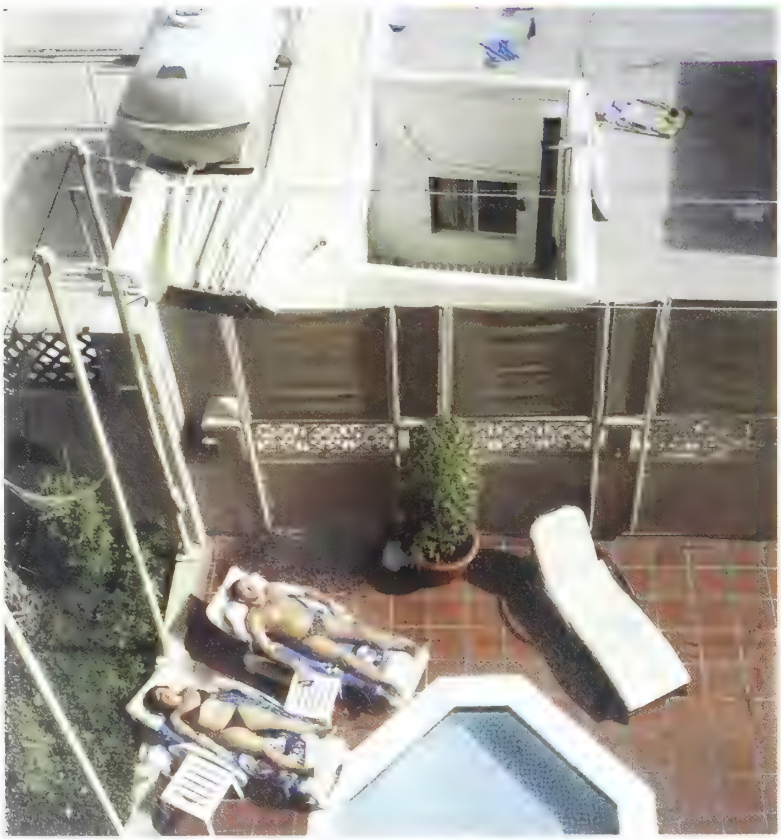
A billboard depicting the Dubai skyline.
Immortalize yourself while you wait for your flight at the Dubai airport. A personalized 3-D laser engraving will last longer than the pyramids.





Emirati royalty greet drivers on the roadside in Ras Al Khaimah. Dunkin' Donuts.





A Pakistani boat worker drinks tea to combat the desert heat.
Tourists sunbathe next to an apartment building rooftop where Indian guest workers sleep at night.





Gold bars are sold in the airport at the Dubai Duty Free complex.
Satellite photograph altered to show The World and two of the Nakheel company's Palm developments as they will appear when complete.

HABITS OF SEEING

The unsettling films of Michael Haneke

By Jennifer Szalai



Once, somebody asked Robert Schumann to explain the meaning of a certain piece he had just played on the piano.

What Robert Schumann did was sit back down at the piano and play the piece of music again.

—David Markson, *Wittgenstein's Mistress*

My father, who would regularly read five or six novels a week, spent the last six weeks of his life in a hospital, watching the miniature television set that dangled from a crane beside his bed. He couldn't concentrate enough to read, he would say, with the surprise of somebody who was used to having a mind that did what he told it to do. Watching television allowed him to stay on the surface of things; without it, his thoughts would invariably turn inward, to what was happening to him, to what the doctors said was going to happen to him. Television was company and comfort; its distraction was welcome.

I would watch him watch television with a certain kind of relief. The eye is restless, eager to take everything in; reading is an activity that would have required a considerable amount of restraint. Television, however, asks for very little. It feeds the voraciousness of our eyes. Whereas print encourages a reader to go further and deeper into the world that an author has created, television encourages a viewer to be an accumulator of impressions, priming us to discard one snippet in o consume another. That there ar when we might choose the ent ment of such images over th mitment of print is understar The trouble begins when we the diversion on-screen is mo found than it is.

A television set appears in one of the nine movies that hav written and directed by M Haneke. In that one film, *Le Te Loup* (*Time of the Wolf*, 2003), named catastrophe has force dwellers into the countryside, w lack of running water and electri put the accoutrements of civili television included, out of rea for those films in which the ve civilization is still intact, a TV s ten turned on, broadcasting its

Jennifer Szalai is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine. *Her last article, "After the Fall," appeared in the July issue.*

Lucas Biscombe as Ben from *Le Temps du loup* (*Time of the Wolf*), 2003, by Michae
© Les Films du Losange. Courtesy Photofest and The Museum of Modern Art, New

ted images into the comfort-
ng rooms of characters whose
s lives are upended when a
that veneer is finally peeled
e presence of the television is
oticeable; the quick cuts of the
—often a parade of clips from
s—jar with Haneke's long
dissonance that manages to
evision, ubiquitous and unre-
e, seem strange again.

doesn't so much watch a
film as one feels it, with an
ess that comes with the sense
estranged from whatever was
tural and familiar. The films
by cracking apart the cocoon
ptions that we build for our-
nd like any artist who owes
itation to talent rather than
, Haneke is especially sensitive
ways in which his chosen
works. Born in Munich in
e started writing for Aus-
evision in the early 1970s.
f his TV work is now be-
wn for the first time in the
States, as part of retro-
es at the Museum of Mod-
in New York City and the
n of Fine Art in Boston,
n if Haneke might have had to
certain (seemingly few) com-
es in order to make, say, *Lem-*
Lemmings, 1979), a miniseries
he generation of Austrians that
o after the Second World War,
was given money and airtime to
Kafka (*The Castle*) and Joseph
The Rebellion) and Ingeborg
ann (*Three Paths to the Lake*),
uthors not generally considered
or-TV.

989, Haneke made his first fea-
m, *Der siebente Kontinent* (*The*
n *Continent*), having learned, as
it in an interview, that "televi-
celerates our habits of seeing"
as "cinema still has the capacity
t us experience the world anew."
ifferences might not seem obvi-
levision and film both use mov-
ages and sound, and Hollywood
s are now crowded with three-
l shots, having been made to en-
n audiences increasingly accus-
l to the frenetic pacing of their
te TV shows. But sitting in a
theater is different from sitting
nt of a television with the rest-
lessness conferred by the remote control. (As for the DVD, it still features a work that, in its original incarnation, was intended for a setting purged of the usual distractions.) Like an imaginative work of literature, an imaginative film can pull us into an experience rather than blithely entertain us with tidy packages fit for our consumption.

I hesitate to bring up the word "consumerism," which has itself become consumable, the digestible slur of choice among those fixated on the evils of walk-in closets and shopping malls, but Haneke takes consumerism and pushes it beyond its usual milieu: consumerism as not just a relationship to objects, to the things we buy, but as a way of life, with its assumption of gratification, of manageable pleasures, and its ultimate inability to equip us when we're confronted with real suffering. His first film is a clear, if somewhat airless, undertaking of this theme; perhaps because it is so tightly focused on a single event, *The Seventh Continent* stands as a meticulously intelligent film that nevertheless lacks the combination of precision and emotional breadth that characterizes much of his later work.

> ONE DOESN'T SO MUCH WATCH A HANEKE FILM AS ONE FEELS IT, WITH THE SENSE OF BEING ESTRANGED FROM THE FAMILIAR

Haneke wrote the script for *The Seventh Continent* after he had read a newspaper article about a well-to-do Austrian family who had demolished all of their possessions before killing themselves. He gives us three days over three years in the lives of Georg and Anna and their young daughter, Eva. A sequence of close-ups conveys the routines the family performs each morning. Feet settling into slippers. Fingers reaching for a toothbrush. Hands putting the filter in a coffeemaker. It is a full eight minutes before we see a face. The close-ups resemble the shots used in television advertising, but we hear the actual noises of those activities, rather than the cheery music that enables commercials to pretend such gestures are more alluring than they are. With its reiteration the following year, the morning routine becomes an ominous ritual, the household objects oppressive. And when the family eventually decides that they've had enough, they destroy their belongings—except for a television, which they keep turned on amid the rubble to the very end—with the same discipline, the same scrupulous adherence to method, that has characterized their relationships to those possessions all along. Wearing gloves in order to perform their tasks, they are still governed by their objects. Anna carefully snaps their vinyl records in half, one by one; Eva systematically cuts up her crayon drawings with scissors.

The chilliness of such scenes, enhanced by the film's cool, subdued colors, makes certain moments all the more startling. While the family carries out their work, we begin to sense the horrible magnitude of what they're about to do; Georg takes a sledgehammer to his daughter's aquarium, and with the explosion of glass and water one starts to shudder as the fish writhe in shallow puddles on the floor. Close to the end of *The Seventh Continent*, as if in recognition that the eye is fed with so many images that it has become oblivious to their power, Haneke allows us only to hear what happens after Anna has swallowed her pills, and what we are listening to is so quietly unbearable that we want to cover our ears.

The Seventh Continent ends without offering any reasons for the family's decision. Georg leaves a note for his parents, but it says little beyond "there is nothing other than you to keep us tied down here." In the interview that accompanies the DVD version of the film, Haneke recalls how he had first tried to write the script as a series of flashbacks but abandoned that approach because each flashback became an explanation. And he didn't want to provide any explanations. Explanations would allow the viewer to protect herself from what she had just seen by ameliorating the experience with words; they would domesticate any visceral response with the harness of "because."

Haneke followed up *The Seventh*

Continent with *Benny's Video*, which was prompted by something he had read in a magazine about a teenager who had committed a murder and explained that he "just wanted to know what it's like." *Benny's Video* was released in 1992, after Haneke had spent a couple of years clipping articles in which young criminals gave similarly meager rationales for similarly brutal atrocities. As the title suggests, fourteen-year-old Benny's reality is a mediated one: he rigs his room with monitors and surveillance cameras, and he obsessively watches a video recording of a pig being slaughtered at his parents' country retreat. He rewinds and fast-forwards the tape, playing it back at different speeds. What happened to the pig becomes something he can play with and manipulate, shifting from life to death and back to life again.

When Benny invites to his room a girl he meets at the video store, they stand in front of his surveillance camera as they examine the butcher gun from the slaughter. The gun goes off. Benny's impassive face registers a brief moment of surprise, and as our perspective shifts to the image displayed on the monitor, the girl falls out of the frame. We no longer see her, but we hear her. The monitor's placid image of the room grates against the desperate immediacy of her voice.

Unlike the sumptuous images of violence that are brandished in certain movies (Quentin Tarantino's gory bravura comes to mind), the understated visuals in *Benny's Video* preclude any possibility of being lulled into amusement or excitement. The shot of the monitor calls attention to our relationship with what is happening on-screen, and we become aware rather than seduced. Haneke has employed the technique in other films. In *La Pianiste* (*The Piano Teacher*), Isabel Huppert plays Erika Kohut, a woman whose seemingly cold, imperturbable demeanor covers up her coarser habits. The steady notes of Schubert's *Piano Trio in E Flat* mark out a tense rhythm as she purposefully walks into the clinical environs of a Viennese porn shop and enters a room at the back. She puts her money into a slot in the wall for the privilege of watching some pornography, and the shot of the pink figures jiggling and moaning on the monitor immediately alienates us from a product that was made to titillate. What we are seeing is not so much obscene, because a genuine obscenity would rattle us in some way; what we are seeing is a polished commercial that just happens to feature genital close-ups. Haneke has said that the "truly scandalous aspect" of pornography is how "it makes into a commodity that which is obscene, makes the unusual consumable." And so he follows the porn images with a genuine obscenity. He gives us a long take of Erika, who has picked up a crumpled tissue from the garbage can and tentatively brings it to her nose.

ONLY AFTER A WHILE DO WE MOVE BEYOND SIMPLY LOOKING AT THE IMAGES AND START TO INTUIT THAT SOMETHING ELSE IS GOING ON

I first saw *The Piano Teacher* in a theater when it was released here five years ago, and at that point in the film several members of the audience got up and left. This, at an art house cinema in Brooklyn, where foreign films featuring conspicuous sexual practices seem to constitute much of the regular programming. But that evening we were being made privy to something much more intimate and troubling than a sex scene's lurid mechanics. The visual image of Isabel Huppert breathing into a tissue is modest; the implications, however, are all the more intense, for they occur in a space that exists beyond the screen. Offscreen, offstage: this is the true meaning of the word "obscene."

The Piano Teacher is based on the novel by Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek, and the adaptation is faithful, insofar as each scene has a corresponding event that takes place in the book. But the film, despite its inherently visual form, keeps much more hidden than Jelinek's novel, whose febrile power derives from the torrent of bile that spills from its pages. The scene in the porn shop, for instance, comes at a point in the novel when we

are accustomed already to th
sion of Erika's thoughts;
somewhat prepared for what
ing to do, whereas in the film
as a revelation, a real upset.
Erika is revealed to us in piec
bit; at the end of the film w
larger collection of these pi
we had at the beginning, but
that there is still more to thi
ter that remains hidden and
main, therefore, unknown.

"In film we often pretend
everything," Haneke has sai
character is this.' A character
just this. It's also that. And
'alsos' are often contradictory
what makes life so rich and als
ing." Conveying that richness, t
tradictoriness, requires
nation of technical mast
philosophical humility on
of the filmmaker; Haneke
with his details but allows
biguity to hover between t
spaces that we are expecte
igate for ourselves. The
craftsmanship—the consi
he pays to cool colors, for instan
the quiet control that chara
much of the dialogue—has ear
a reputation for emotional *froid*
such a description ignores his p
ful omissions, those spaces
which we can sense an entir
that is only imp
the images on-scr

With many other films
bludgeoned with the "truth": t
ages and the narrative are so o
dened by what the filmmaker
to tell us that any emotion is
to the surface, hardening into
crust of sentiment. Even
movies that are supposed
smarter than the usual Holly
fare get mired in this condesce
In *The Constant Gardener*, f
stance, which is based on Jo
Carré's novel about greedy ph
ceutical companies and their m
sance in Africa, the villains
Ralph Fiennes cries, the music
and we feel sorry for him and di
ed with the evildoers. A. O. Sc
the *New York Times*, one of
critics who praised the film for i
telligence, declared that *The*
stant Gardener was "likely to lin

l and may even trouble your
e." I suspect that the only
ho left the theater with
sciences genuinely troubled
they had just seen were ex-
at Pfizer or Roche. If, like
the critics, you had even a
antipathy toward the phar-
al industry going into the
left it feeling that your sus-
ad been confirmed: angry at
d, perhaps, but reassured of
mptions about that world.

none of his films are we offered instructions for how we ought to piece those fragments together. They do not pretend to an easy truth that they cannot have, and neither, by implication, should we.

71 Fragments, which was originally released in 1994, begins with an epigraph about the true story of Maximilian B., a nineteen-year-old Austrian student who walked into a Viennese bank the day before Christmas Eve and shot three people before shooting himself shortly thereafter. We then follow the lives of several characters—a Romanian boy who lives on Vienna's gray streets; a couple looking to adopt a difficult girl; another couple with a newborn baby; an old man who lives alone; a university student—over three days in October and one in November. A few of the lives intersect at several places: some of the characters are watching television when the Romanian boy is interviewed on the news, and the couple that had started the process to adopt the girl from the orphanage decides to adopt the Romanian boy instead. But we are given just excerpts of those lives, all of which will eventually converge at the bank on December 23.

Throughout *71 Fragments*, the student's roommate asks people to play a game in which they are to arrange some pieces of paper into a cross. Only the pieces of paper, like the pieces of the film, don't fit together in the obvious way. "Not so simple, is it?" laughs the roommate as the student tries to solve the puzzle; he knows that the solution lies in a cross, yet he doesn't know how to get there. The situation provides a metaphor for the film itself. Because the epigraph about Maximilian B. appears right at the beginning, we have a sense of where we are going to end up, but Haneke declines to give us the kind of linear, plotted narrative that would make that end point seem inevitable. The film doesn't proceed; it intensifies. Each day it depicts begins in a welter of television news clips and scenes from the characters' lives, and it's only after a while that we m[illegible] beyond simply looking at the im[illegible] and start to intuit th[illegible] is going on.



ke's films operate on the op-
principle, for it is our assump-
hat he is looking to unsettle.
have a hard time securing
elves to a world that is re-
to us in fragments, and he has
at it is "only in fragmentation
e can tell a story honestly." In
f his work, shards of a life are
ed into a story line that fol-
character or a family, though
of his other films—*71 Frag-
einer Chronologie des Zufalls*
ragments of a Chronology of
e) and *Code Inconnu* (*Code*
own)—the shards of several
re arranged in a constellation
s, in which strangers from dif-
parts of society collide. In

Haneke places a generous amount of trust in his audience, for he recognizes that this kind of pacing is an affront to the rush of information to which we've grown inured. One scene in *71 Fragments* consists of the stu-

ait Djoudi as Young Majid from *Cache*, 2005, by Michael Haneke © Sony Pictures
Courtesy Photofest and The Museum of Modern Art, New York City

lent playing Ping Pong against a machine. The scene, which doesn't have any cuts, lasts for nearly three minutes. The length isn't arbitrary. As Haneke explains:

> If we'd done that just as information—"Okay, a young guy is playing against a machine"—it lasts one minute. Everybody gets it. It's over. No, because of the length of this scene, you understand it differently. At the start, I see it: "The boy is playing." Then I think, "Okay, I get it. Next scene." Like we're used to. Then I'm entertained. Then I get angry. Then I get tired. I think, "Let's wait and see." And at a certain point, I start to watch it. And I start to feel the pulse. Then it has the right length.

71 Fragments marked the end of the trilogy that began with *The Seventh Continent* and continued with *Benny's Video*, all of which include unresolved atrocities and a similar sense of disquiet. Haneke once referred to those three films as representative of "emotional glaciation," though he later came to regret saying this, for the "glaciation" label has clung to him ever since. He says that he "always tries to be more complex" with his films; and, indeed, their construction seems to stand in resistance to the immediately gettable kinds of stories that are easily reduced to block letters on movie posters.

The one film of his that skirts perilously close to the gettable mode is *Funny Games* (1997), a horror-flick parody in which two preppy teenagers knock on the door of a family's country home and proceed to torture them. The film is carefully crafted, paced in such a way as to generate anxiety and suspense, but the parody and the violence are both, albeit intentionally, over the top. The opening credits juxtapose the subdued strains of Handel with the exaggerated howls of John Zorn, clueing us into the extremities of genre that are going to follow. The assailants—who call themselves, at various points, Peter and Paul, Beavis and Butthead, Tom and Jerry—start talking to the camera so that the audience is supposed to feel implicated in the bloody pageantry.

By his own admission, Haneke started the project by burdening *Funny Games* with the task of proving a point: "I wanted to make a film about the way violence is dealt with in movies." And so the film sets out to play with our expectations. We don't get any explanatory background for the killers—no "son of a hundred mamas," no childhood spent in a mental hospital; instead, the pair show up at the front door, dressed in white and unfailingly polite, and they begin their games for no apparent reason other than amusement. Haneke says that he conceived of the killers as "archetypes" rather than characters, and that, to my mind, is where the weakness of this movie lies. They become specimens to be watched from a distance, with a certain amount of remove. We cannot feel implicated in the world that Haneke has created, since he is constantly reminding us that it is all an illusion.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Funny Games* is the one film of Haneke's that some enterprising producers have just remade, in English, for an American audience. (As of this writing, the film's release date has been pushed from October of this year to early 2008.) When I first heard that Haneke had agreed to direct it himself, I wondered whether he would be forced into the unfortunate situation of the Dutch filmmaker George Sluizer, who had agreed to remake his 1988 film *Spoorloos* (*The Vanishing*), with Kiefer Sutherland and Sandra Bullock, only to add a happy ending: the original *Vanishing* is utterly terrifying, ending with the realization of a primitive fear, whereas the English-language version ends, appropriately enough, with a book deal. But such an absurdity didn't come to pass for Haneke. His new version of *Funny Games*, which was shot on Long Island and stars Naomi Watts, is almost entirely a shot-by-shot remake of the film from ten years ago. (The one difference I detected was that the American housewife spends inordinately more time in her underwear than the Austrian hausfrau did.) Of the original version, Haneke says, "It's the only film I made to provoke." He believes that those who watched the film to the very end were those who "needed" it; they "needed to be tortured during that time to understand" the critique of mainstream-movie violence [illegible] intended. I watched it to [illegible] end because I kept thinking [illegible] must have had something [illegible] pelling in mind.

Of course one might sup[illegible] American moviegoers—for [illegible] olence in certain kinds of mo[illegible] commonplace that every insta[illegible] *Saw* and *Hostel* promises t[illegible] bloody ante—would const[illegible] ideal audience for *Funny G*[illegible] an interview included w[illegible] German-language DVD, Ha[illegible] calls how he told his produce[illegible] film is a big success, it will be [illegible] due to a misunderstanding. [illegible] then, expecting an American [illegible] stration of both? I suspect that [illegible] moviegoers anticipating a slas[illegible] some of the film's subtleties—[illegible] the extent to which the family [illegible] their gear to save them, culm[illegible] with the husband and wife tr[illegible] thetically to fix a wet cell pho[illegible] a hair dryer—will barely be re[illegible] if at all. And for those movieg[illegible] ticipating subtleties, the stead[illegible] doom that's fed to the audi[illegible] every turn will likely suffocate[illegible] tality of the film's more cunn[illegible] ments. It's as if the force of t[illegible] maker's analytical mind is w[illegible] him in here: the consciousne[illegible] which he tried to map out a fil[illegible] demning the consumerism of v[illegible] has made *Funny Ga*[illegible] most consumable fil[illegible]

After *Funny Games*, H[illegible] started to move away from th[illegible] centrated focus on violenc[illegible] hard center that had given h[illegible] four films both the elegance a[illegible] yieldingness of chiseled stone. [illegible] *Inconnu: Récit incomplet de dive*[illegible] *ages* (*Code Unknown: Incor*[illegible] *Tales of Several Journeys*), relea[illegible] 2000, was Haneke's first Fr[illegible] language movie, and it suggest[illegible] terests beyond his earlier preoc[illegible] tions. Violence is insinuatec[illegible] when a death does occur, it ha[illegible] to a character we never mee[illegible] stead, we see the more familiar [illegible] of cruelty and misunderstandi[illegible] selfishness, miscommunicati[illegible] that accumulate as kindling for [illegible] macy's ruin.

The film begins on a Paris

ere Anne (played by Juliette runs into Jean, the younger of her boyfriend, Georges. tends to pick variations on es George and Anne for his l female protagonists, send- oes through his stories of) In a remarkable, seven- continuous shot, we follow d Jean as they argue about is going to live if he decides the family farm (Anne in- m that he absolutely cannot her and Georges); Jean an- es a piece of garbage into the middle-aged woman who has gging on the sidewalk; a ack man reproaches him for ishness; they start to tussle h other; and the police, who p the fight, cart the black l the panhandler away.

Unknown follows the disparate hese characters after their en- with abrupt cuts to black be- ach scene. The form is similar *ragments of a Chronology of* but whereas the stories in the lm move toward convergence, *nknown* begins from a single d explodes outward, enriching lerstanding while complicat- the same time. The first scene ges us to see the characters as the destitute panhandler, for e, who is defended by the us victim of racism—but when them in other situations the patina of our superficial im- s is worn away. That panhan- ent back to Romania, where, n, she has a family and what o be a happier life; that chival- ung man brings his girlfriend to urant, where he comes across tly domineering. Haneke un- es the sort of cheap pity with we would presume to know eople, who do not even seem to hemselves.

as it is portrayed here gives off f of condescension; it takes as its objects, and it projects its tions onto the surface of situa- Georges, Anne's boyfriend, who s to Paris after a trip to Kosovo ar photographer, has little pa- for the pity Anne shows for his after Jean finally leaves the farm. sorry for him," she says of his father, now alone. "That won't help him," snaps Georges, though he doesn't appear to have any idea of what will. This exchange takes place after they have refused his father when he asks them if they will please stay for dinner. Georges and Anne have been sitting at the table in their coats for the entire time, ready to leave. The sentiment of pity entails nothing more onerous than feeling a particular way about another person's plight. The sacrifices required to do something about it are harder to come by.

That Georges is a photojournalist is telling—he provides images that prompt his First World audience to feel sorry for victims of war, though he admits to wondering how such knowledge helps anyone. He also questions whether that knowledge is really the point. For him, it is about the photograph, "the end result." (The photographs we are shown are actually by Luc Delahaye, whose work transcends the divide between journalism and art.) Georges's reasons for what he does aren't entirely selfless, either; in a letter to a friend, he writes, "I don't think I'm fit for life in peace. What you call 'peace' at least." In another conversation, he finds the trappings of civilized life to be "complicated": "It's all so obvious at first. Then, the crunch comes.... Over there, it's simple.... It's hard at first, but then you get the hang of it."

When Anne tells Georges about a mysterious note she's received, his advice is similarly straightforward. In an earlier scene, while he's still away in Kosovo, Anne is ironing her shirts in front of the television when she suddenly hears screaming. She turns down the volume of the TV and stands there, her brow furrowed with the kind of upset that looks to be genuine, until the screaming stops and she turns the volume back on. She receives the note a few days later, after Georges's return, and it seems to be a plea for help, signed "a defenseless child." Only Anne believes that it looks like "an older person's writing," so while the couple shops for groceries, among the bottled water and the frozen food, Georges tells her how to proceed:

> -It must be the neighbor, then.
> —So?
> —So, either you believe her or not.
> —It's as simple as that?
> —Not simple, inescapable. If you do, call the cops. If not, forget it. Or ask the kid's parents.
> —Ask them what? "Do you hit your child? Torture her ever? Why is she always screaming?" How does that sound to you?

As far as we can tell, Anne ends up calling no one. She later attends a funeral for "little Françoise." Haneke keeps the camera on Anne and her neighbor—the old woman across the hall who may or may not have written the note—as they slowly leave the cemetery. Anne walks with her arms crossed in front of her chest. The old woman looks somewhere at a point on the ground a few feet in front of her, a tear dangling from the tip of her nose. They both say nothing.

The guilt here is rendered but never spoken. The rest of the film, all forty-five minutes of it, continues without mention of the girl or the note. Instead, we carry that knowledge with us until the end, when Georges stands outside their apartment because Anne has changed the code to the front door. The connection between this scene and anything else that has come before it isn't presented as cause and effect; in fact, no connection is presented at all, other than "the end result," the film itself.

Haneke's fascination with secrets, with those elements of our lives that are kept hidden, is given shape by the visual grammar of his films. Like Thomas Bernhard or W. G. Sebald, who were writing at the extremities of language, aware of its limits while pushing toward the point at which words can only allude to the inexpressible, Haneke takes the language of film and allows its limitations to speak to a truth that could be (and often is) covered up by a filmmaker determined to tell us how we ought to feel at every moment, whether announced by the wide-eyed stares of innocence (Spielberg seems particularly enamored of this device) or the maudlin plinking of piano keys. With *Caché* (*Hidden*) Haneke takes the familiar form of the suspense thriller and strips it of

that genre's usual tropes, so that what we're left with is a film that seems to me a continuation of the project he began with *Code Unknown*, in which secrets and the guilt that attends them provide a quiet but discernible refrain.

Caché gives us another Anne and another Georges (Juliette Binoche, again, and Daniel Auteuil), who receive videotapes suggesting that they're being watched. The tapes come wrapped in drawings that are childish and rather grim—a round face with a smear of red ink coming out of its mouth; a doodle of a chicken with a red stain on its neck—which prompt Georges to recall childhood cruelties of his that he has spent more than forty years trying to forget. The tapes and the drawings in *Caché* are like the note in *Code Unknown*: we never find out who sent them, and, to a certain extent, it doesn't matter who did. What matters is the effect these mementos have on the characters, the rattling guilt that these objects elicit. The identity of the sender changes nothing in regard to that guilt.

We eventually learn Georges's secret: when he was six years old, he sabotaged his parents' plans to adopt Majid, the orphaned son of their Arab servants. The servants disappeared after they attended the pro-Algerian demonstration in 1961 that culminated in a massacre by the French police, who drowned up to two hundred protesters in the Seine. Georges will eventually tell Anne that he was so "annoyed" at his parents' decision to adopt Majid that he "told lies about him." This disclosure happens only after Georges, convinced that Majid is the person behind the tapes, has paid a visit to Majid's shabby apartment on Avenue Lenine.

The first encounter between Georges and Majid in forty years suggests the different trajectories of their lives. Georges, snugly ensconced within the smug confines of literary celebrity (he hosts a television talk show called *Books and Images*; Anne, his wife, works at a publishing house), strides into Majid's apartment, demanding whether it is money that Majid wants. Majid, played with exquisite politesse by Maurice Bénichou, almost disappears into the mildewed wallpaper with his beige shirt and placid demeanor. Seemingly surprised by the fact of the drawings and the tapes, he denies sending them while a belligerent Georges insists that he did. Like the first scene in *Code Unknown*, this meeting between Georges and Majid gives us immediate impressions that will be both corroborated and confounded by what follows, as we become increasingly aware of how the camera conceals as much as it reveals.

When *Caché* was released in theaters here the winter before last, certain critics were determined to assume the answers that Haneke so carefully withheld. Writing in *The New Republic*, Stanley Kauffmann confidently declared who sent the tapes and even went so far as to assign a motive: Majid's teenage son "is the person who makes the tapes—for his father, who has some sort of revenge in mind." Stuart Klawans, the film critic for *The Nation*, was so eager to provide an explanation for the events in *Caché*—efficiently dividing the characters along the lines of "bad people" and "good people"—that I began to wonder whether the lazy moralism he attributed to "Haneke the Slasher" wasn't, in fact, his own. Rather than attempt to figure out what it was that Haneke was trying to do, these critics filled in the narrative—badly—and then mistook their projections for the projection on-screen. They were indulging in the same kind of presumptuousness exhibited by Georges in *Caché*, who tells a colleague that Majid "has a pathological hatred of my family," and, "My visit was the consequence of his campaign of terror," even though his actual meeting with Majid does not appear to be amenable to such definitive conclusions.

Indeed, Haneke seems to have little interest in drawing conclusions himself, allowing the questions he poses to linger without providing many answers. The last scene of *Caché*, which takes place on the steps in front of a school, shows us something in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen that I [illegible] terpreted as an answer, th[illegible] variety of theories I've he[illegible] the next generation will be[illegible] and that the next generati[illegible] the same; that the seer[illegible] us who sent the tapes ar[illegible] doesn't—all suggest that th[illegible] opens up even more quest[illegible] it resolves.* If there is anyt[illegible] Haneke does attempt to ar[illegible] at least, begin to) in *Cach*[illegible] question he brings up in [illegible] view, a question that infor[illegible] his films: "What did we [illegible] in order to arri[illegible] we are?"

"Where we are" is the [illegible] relative comfort that Han[illegible] much of his audience, is m[illegible] iar with. Comfort connotes [illegible] mind, and peace of mind l[illegible] room for unpleasant facts th[illegible] threaten to unsettle us f[illegible] agreeable equilibrium. [illegible] Georges hides certain elen[illegible] his past, France has hidden [illegible] elements of its past; the s[illegible] may vary, but the behavior [illegible] tar enough to recognize. A[illegible] have sins that we would pr[illegible] to think about, and I have[illegible] hear of a country with tex[illegible] that have never been rewritt[illegible] chologists have developed ar[illegible] vocabulary around the word[illegible] mation." Freud likened civil[illegible] to soap, with which we try t[illegible] off the muck.

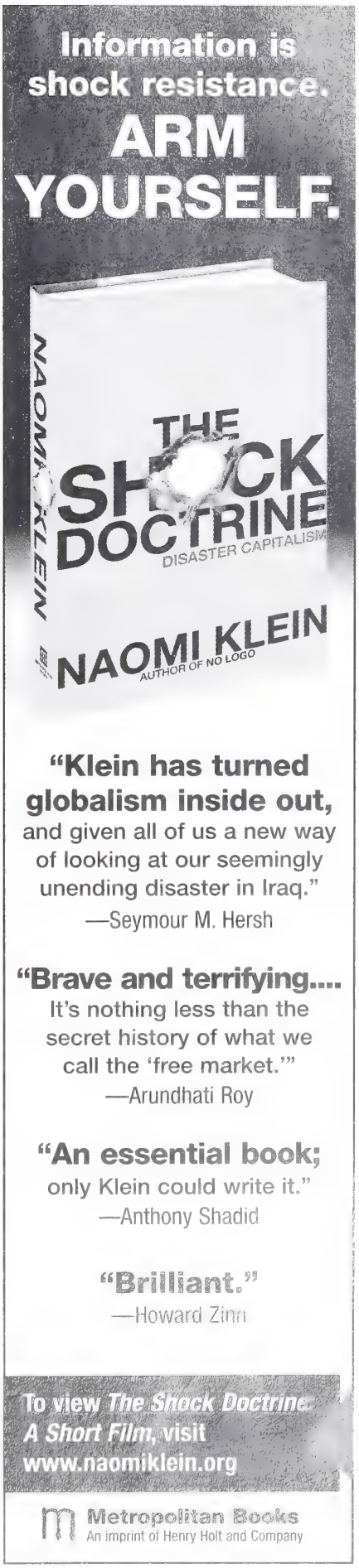
But Haneke does not succ[illegible] the facile response to our p[illegible] ment, the one that believes [illegible] we gave in to our sufferi[illegible] would have a better time o[illegible] *Time of the Wolf*, the film of h[illegible] takes place outside of civiliz[illegible] guarded embrace, a family h[illegible] to the countryside in respo[illegible] something that has happene[illegible] aren't told what it is) in the [illegible] Within the first five minutes [illegible] film, the father, Georges, is

* *I've since heard that Ron Howard [illegible] tor of* The Da Vinci Code *and* H[illegible] Grinch Stole Christmas, *has sh[illegible] lamentable interest in making an Ar[illegible] version of* Caché. Variety *speculat[illegible] the American version "is expected [illegible] up the suspense and consequences."*

atter in their country cot-
l the mother, Anne, along
r two children, Eva and
nust find a way to survive.
ventually happen upon a
people at a train station
trying to organize them-
nto a community, hoping
h an arrangement will sus-
em until a train arrives.
e man who killed Georges
with his wife and child.
nly witnesses to Georges's
are the two families (and
rt of reciprocating the vio-
nne can do nothing to pre-
squatters from joining the
laneke could have presented
ation and left it at that, but
rcuts our understanding of it
parallel situation, that of a
omanian man accused of
and murder by the bigoted
of one of the group's guards.
gh we know what happened
e's family, we know nothing
hat the Romanian did or did
The two scenarios play off
ther like musical counter-
Anne's situation is presented
a way that we side with her,
user; the other situation, in
ll we see is an apparently be-
ed man trying to defend him-
m a monster, is presented in
way that we side with the ac-
Neither situation brings with
asy remedy. We are given a
f the histories that have to be
ssed in order for these people
ble to survive together.
eke has called *Time of the*
is "most optimistic" film.
a genial description might
fanciful for a postapocalyptic
n which everything, including
ure, is uncertain, but *Time of*
olf puts forth the possibility
eople, without the trappings
d by modern comforts, must
ly confront life and experi-
t; they no longer have the op-
f nourishing their indifference
suming whatever distractions
their way. Near the end of the
that same guard, until this
portrayed only as a villain, res-
Benny, who is about to walk
fire because he has overheard
uch a sacrifice could save the
world from whatever mess it has gotten itself into. The tenderness is as moving as it is unexpected; the guard holds the boy and tells him, "You were ready to do it. That's enough," that it is his courage that matters. "You'll see. Everything'll work out. Maybe tomorrow even." We see only the silhouette of the guard's profile against the fire, surrounded by a pool of black. The scene is then followed by the last shot of the film, which shows a blurred landscape, streaked with gray daylight and green trees, from the perspective of a moving train.

The open-endedness means that we do not know if the people in *Time of the Wolf* were saved. Like the people in the film who don't have the usual amenities to cling to, we don't have the usual crutches—the elaborate special effects, the mighty hero who saves the day—that would allow us to watch the film without experiencing what is going on. The open-endedness characterizes Haneke's other films, and accordingly there are traces of a genuine optimism in the Haneke oeuvre. He once told a reporter that he considers himself "a realist. That doesn't mean I'm a pessimist. The pessimists are those who make purely escapist films, because they believe people are so stupid that it's useless to make a film about anything serious. But someone who points to wounds in society is also trying to change things, even just a bit."

The prospect of change comes from introducing possibilities rather than covering up the open wound. A therapeutic mantra of closure has insinuated itself into our expectations of almost everything, including art; we assume that we should be able to walk away from one experience and simply move on to the next. Haneke's films, however, force us to slow down, not just to look but to *see*, and they reverberate in the mind long after one has left the theater. They are a protest against the kind of complacency that would allow us to behave like the family in *The Seventh Continent*, so caught up in their daily rituals that they don't really live. ■



A REPORT ON OUR RECENT TROUBLES

By Steven Millhauser

We have completed our preliminary investigation and hereby submit our report to the Committee.

For nearly six months our town has suffered events that threaten its very existence. Entire families have moved away, in the hope of finding relief in other towns, only to discover that they cannot escape what some have called a curse, others a fatality; we ourselves prefer less colorful forms of speech. Those of us who remain have attempted to go about our business as if nothing had changed, while knowing that everything has changed. The very expressions of our faces have altered. Even the smiles of our children are no longer the old smiles, but betray an air of exaggeration, of willed cheerfulness. On block after block we see the empty houses, the untended lawns. Cats scratch at screen doors that never open. Large groups of townsfolk gather in vacant lots at dusk, as if for a purpose, only to drift away. Under such conditions, who can speak? We who dare to hope, we who are in the thick of things but try to stand apart, in order to grasp the ungraspable—we have taken it upon ourselves to trace the history of these aberrations and to discover their secret cause.



For as long as anyone can remember, our town has been a pleasant place to live in. Situated at the far end of the commuter line, we enjoy the sense of a vital connection to the larger world, as well as a satisfying sense of self-exclusion from that world, of communal separation for the sake of our own way of life. Here, we've preserved touches of an older, more rural America—the north woods, the stream with its railed wooden bridge, the Indian burial ground—which coexist peacefully with our commuter track, our six-lane thruway, our new chemical plar[t] the streets are shady, the houses [in] repair, the back yards bright with [pa]sets, lawn chairs, and round ceda[r] under broad umbre[l]. Sterling Park, our c[hil]play baseball on a dir[t] with real bases, a p[it]mound with a pitcher[']ber, and a chain-link [fe]stop, while our do[g]down, beside slatted [b]es, in stripes of sun [and] shade. Of course, like[all] towns, we have our s[hare] troubles, we're only h[u]But on the whole we'[re] py to be here, where t[he] has always seemed a[little] bluer, the leaves a[re] greener, than in other [p]we know.

Was there a tu[rning] change in the atmos[phere]? To single out a particular momen[t] distort the record, for it suggests a history of cause and effect tha[t] only betray our sense of what [has] happened. We can nevertheless [say] that something began to reveal it[self] March of this year, about six m[onths] ago. At that time three inciden[ts] curred, apparently unrelated, w[hich] made a strong impression on the [town] without seeming to point in a [par]tion. The first was the death by su[icide] of Richard and Suzanne Lowry, o[f] Greenwood Road. The Lowrys we[re]

Steven Millhauser's last story for Harper's Magazine, *"The Wizard of West Orange," appeared in the April 2007 issue. A book of stories,* Dangerous Laughter, *is due out next February.*

Illustration by Hadley [illegible]

y fifties, rich, healthy, happi-
l, with a wide circle of friends.
no note. The police investi-
ıcovered no secret, no mis-
ver, no illness, no problem of
, and it was above all the ab-
ı motive that disturbed and fi-
ered a good many of us, who
the Lowrys not simply for
their lives away but for leav-
th an impenetrable mystery.
s some unpleasant talk among
ıey did it in order to spite us,
us that they needed no one
ıing; although this explana-
:k most of us as petty and ma-
ve took it as a sign of the dis-
on we all felt, a sign of our
unforgiveness.

veeks later came the death of
ıneider, a seventy-four-year-
red high school geometry
who had been diagnosed with
f the liver. His death, by his
d, attracted less attention than
ry deaths, though we were all
it and felt secretly thankful to
neider for providing us with a
le suicide, some would say an
le suicide, one that we could
understand. In this sense the
idents, which had nothing to
each other, were connected
ınds. We also noted that in an
w in *The Town Ledger*, Schnei-
rty-six-year-old daughter said
r father had read about the
and had mentioned them dur-
sit. In a small town, someone
d at the time, it's difficult to kill
without word getting around.
days after the death of Carl
der, two high school juniors,
Vhittaker and Diane Grabow-
e discovered dead in the base-
layroom of the Whittaker
where they lay side by side on
bed near the Ping-Pong table.
use of death was bullet wounds
ead from two handguns, both
by the boy's father. A note was
pinned to the young man's
ırt, written in his hand but
by both teenagers and addressed
ı sets of parents. In it they apol-
for any distress their action
cause and stated that they died
ly by their own hand as a way of
ng their love and celebrating it
r in death. The note had a self-conscious, literary tone that we found exasperating and touching in equal measure, but what stuck in our throats was the fact that our town had experienced five suicides in less than a month.

It might have been left at that—a dark month, a run of bad luck—if it hadn't been for an incident that took place in early April. George Sabol, a high school sophomore, and Nancy Martins, a ninth-grader, were found by police on a blanket in the woods behind the Sabol house. This time there was a single gun—a .38 Smith & Wesson semiautomatic—but the suicide note revealed that the plan was for Nancy Martins to fire the first shot, into her left temple, after which George Sabol would fire a shot into his own left temple. The note, printed from Sabol's computer and signed in ink by both students, spoke of their undying love and the eternal bond of death. The written statement and the weapon made it evident that Sabol and Martins had patterned their deaths after the double suicide of Whittaker and Grabowski, and it was this unmistakable connection that first sent a ripple of alarm through our town. Fathers began to lock their guns away, mothers followed their sons and daughters anxiously from room to room; the high school expanded its counseling program and urged people to come forward with any information concerning unusual behavior; in the night we began to wake suddenly, our hands tense against the sheets.

Scarcely had we had a chance to absorb the deaths of George Sabol and Nancy Martins when we were confronted with another incident, more troubling still. The morning paper reported that three groups of high school students—two, two, and three—had been found dead, in three different homes; all three groups left suicide notes modeled on the ones we knew. It was also reported that five of the seven students belonged to The Black Rose, a secret association devoted to the cause of Meaningful Death. A stapled handbook, printed on purple Xerox paper, was discovered in the bedroom of one dead boy; from it we learned that members of The Black Rose were encouraged to give meaning to their lives by choosing their own deaths. Suicide was praised as a celebratory act, which transformed the drift and emptiness of ordinary life into the certainty of choice: to choose death was to impose a design on randomness. What disturbed us wasn't so much the danger or incoherence of such ideas as their very existence. The next day two more deaths were reported, in different neighborhoods; a page torn from a handbook of The Black Rose was found in the pocketbook of one victim. It was now that we began to take the car keys away, to impose strict curfews, to keep our cell phones on at all times; in the houses of our town, unease drifted like smoke.

At this period we felt that if only we could put an end to The Black Rose, we could also put an end to the sickly fashion for death that had seized our sons and daughters. In this sense, though we hated and feared The Black Rose, we also clung to it, in a way were grateful to it, since it provided us with the hidden reason we desperately sought. Our teenagers were in the grip of a morbid philosophy—a decadent dogma—which had inspired a fatal game. We would fight a battle to win back the minds of our children, we would hurl ourselves against the forces of darkness with weapons of the sun. It was true that not every death could be traced to The Black Rose; there was even some evidence that membership was confined to a small circle of fanatics. But just as we felt we were getting to the heart of things, a new turn unsettled us—for it seemed that The Black Rose had already been left behind, while new seductions emerged with disquieting ease.

A passion for spectacular suicide now seized our sons and daughters. It was as if they had begun to vie with one another for the most memorable death. One group of [illegible] high school students, visiting [illegible] by amusement park, rode the [illegible] coaster and were found dead at the end of the ride. [illegible] themselves on the way up. [illegible] with a solution [illegible] ride. [illegible] connected with The Black Rose. [illegible] with a passion for [illegible] up to her attic one night and filled

herself as she raised a bone-handled hunting knife and plunged it into her throat. Lorraine Keating hanged herself at dusk from the branch of a hickory tree in front of a group of admiring friends. The fad for suicide notes had already been replaced by a taste for terse, obscure messages, such as "Never Enough" and "Evermore," while the act of dying became an increasingly elaborate art, discussed and evaluated in high school hallways and behind the locked doors of bedrooms bathed in afternoon sunlight.

Young teenage girls were especially susceptible to the new trend for eye-catching death, for it was seen as a way of drawing the right kind of attention to yourself, of making yourself stand out from the crowd. A popular girl, by means of a well-staged death, could become more popular still; an unpopular girl could break free from her isolation and loneliness in the short space of a single magnificent gesture. Jane Franklin was a quiet girl who walked the halls alone. On the night of the spring dance, she pulled on a pair of black jeans and a black hooded sweatshirt, climbed to the top of the water tower behind the chemical plant, and set herself on fire. Two days later Christine Jacobson, a blonde cheerleader and co-captain of the girls' swim team, walked to the front of her English class, raised a dark object slowly with both hands, and shot herself in the center of the forehead.

Even as the epidemic of suicide raged through our high school, we noticed that its effects were being felt in two opposite directions: upward, in the colleges where our older sons and daughters were finishing their spring semester, and downward, in the William Barnes Middle School and our six elementary schools. A college junior who had graduated from our high school fastened a pair of satin-covered foam angel-wings to his shoulders and leaped to his death from the top of the astronomy building; a college sophomore painted the word "luminosity" in neon-green letters on the side of her car, drove through a guardrail on the outskirts of her rural campus, and sailed into the air above a much photographed ravine. Four seventh-graders were found in a stand of spruce between two back yards after they had swallowed rat poison dissolved in cherry Kool-Aid; Howard Dietz, a fourth-grader, pried open his father's gun cabinet one day after school and, sitting on the edge of his bed, opened his mouth, placed the barrel of a twenty-gauge shotgun between his teeth, which had recently been fitted with braces decorated with metallic-blue brackets, and pulled the trigger. One group of sixth-grade girls initiated a brief vogue: wearing jean shorts, bathing-suit tops, and bright red lipstick, they dragged a barbecue grill into a backyard toolshed, shut the door, and inhaled the fatal fumes of charcoal briquettes. We held town meetings, consulted with crisis counselors and family therapists, engaged in lengthy discussions with our children, and dreaded opening the morning paper.

What haunted us, apart from the deaths themselves, was the spirit in which the perpetrators appeared to seek their own destruction. For it was difficult to deny that a majority of deaths were chosen in a spirit of adventure, of high daring, even of exhilaration. Here and there, to be sure, an adolescent boy rejected by his girlfriend swallowed a fistful of barbiturates, a depressed girl who felt unloved slipped into a tub of warm water and slit her wrists. These deaths were in some sense comforting, they were almost pleasing, for we could imagine ourselves, under similar circumstances, arriving at the same decision. But what were we to make of the atmosphere of excitement evident among the others, their sense of embracing the unknown with something like fervor? Death as a spirited game, death as a challenge, as an intriguing art form, an expression of originality—this death was something we knew nothing about, we who understood what it meant to wake in the night with dread in our hearts.

Excitements falter. Fads fade away. Although we were dazed with exhaustion and anxiety, we remained stubbornly hopeful, for we knew that crises of adolescence do not last. And in fact the school suicides began to diminish, without actually coming to an end. At the same time we were unable [illegible] new signs of trouble. It [illegible] here and there a marriage [illegible] the suicide of a young mo[illegible] understood, with a kind of [illegible] the same parents who li[illegible] their sons' rock bands and [illegible] their daughters' styles in h[illegible] jeans and spaghetti-strap [illegible] were not immune to the la[illegible] As the deaths spread an[illegible] adults of our town, we bega[illegible] talk of The Blue Iris, an as[illegible] all too clearly inspired by T[illegible] Rose but with a crucial di[illegible] Whereas The Black Rose [illegible] suicide as a method of im[illegible] design on the randomnes[illegible] The Blue Iris spoke of deat[illegible] culminating moment of exi[illegible] the climactic event to whi[illegible] life aspired. Precisely for thi[illegible] death should be chosen at a [illegible] of fulfillment. We began to [illegible] sexual suicides, ingeniously [illegible] at the height of lovemaking; [illegible] began to look to death as a [illegible] stimulus, a mechanism for u[illegible] release, as if they were seek[illegible] the act of self-murder, a [illegible] orgasm. Others chose differe[illegible] ments of heightened feeling: [illegible] ding ceremony, a longed-for [illegible] tion, a sudden eruption of ir[illegible] happiness. We took note o[illegible] suicides with a certain disd[illegible] they seemed too closely mod[illegible] a fading teenage fashion, w[illegible] the same time they shook us, [illegible] new suicides were our neig[illegible] they were ourselves.

Frank and Rita Sorensen [illegible] handsome couple in their late t[illegible] with the sort of marriage many o[illegible] vied. He was a real estate dev[illegible] who had brought a new recrea[illegible] center to the west end of tow[illegible] was an interior decorator who h[illegible] proved many of our kitchens and[illegible] They seemed a happier, more tal[illegible] more successful version of our [illegible] They lived with their two young d[illegible] ters, Sigrid and Belle, in a big [illegible] on Roland Terrace, where we we[illegible] sent at their summer barbecue[illegible] winter dinner parties. We kne[illegible] sound of their laughter, the ene[illegible] their glances, we could feel the[illegible] flow of affection between them[illegible] though they were happy, in a wa[illegible]

sible to doubt, it's true that
eel in them, at times, a shad-
ppointment, a ripple of dis-
ient, of a kind that struck us
r, for their lives, like ours,
certain manner complete;
l look forward to years of plea-
success and laudable accom-
but to nothing more—it was
ewhere along the way, they'd
a youthful sense of discovery,
nat life is an adventure that
d to anything on earth. Like
ccepted their happiness with-
ing much about it; like ours,
piness was complicated by an-
ling that wasn't sorrow but
ed in on them from time to
ne day they joined The Blue
noticed at once their new zest,
v seriousness. They attended
, invited us to lakeshore cook-
l Friday night pool parties,
ard, laughed with their heads
back, passed the crab dip. One
ey retired to their bedroom,
n on their bed fully clothed,
eir matching pistols with ivory-
sewood grips, and shot them-
the head. A typed note in a
nvelope explained that they
ly conscious of what they were
nd, more in love than ever,
complete their lives on a crest
ness. They urged others to join
this act of fulfillment.
accused the Sorensens of har-
dark secret, but for most of us
e of the note was all too famil-
Others blamed The Blue Iris,
hey attacked as a false religion,
c cult dedicated to the corrup-
the will to live. Those of us
d laughed late into the night
e Sorensens said nothing, for we
their deaths still another sign
r town had lost its way.
ed, it's sometimes difficult to re-
nore innocent time, when we
lly planned birthday parties for
ildren and looked forward to
picnics on shady redwood ta-
side the stream. We've grown
med to the daily suicide reports,
ekly death counts—sometimes
metimes low—now a lull, now
-up—here a bachelor in his
r recliner in front of the flat-
TV, there a group of close-knit
s in cushioned chaises around

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SOLUTION TO THE OCTOBER PUZZLE

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NOTES FOR "MORE SPLIT PERSONALITIES":

*Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov. Note: * indicates an anagram.*

The answers to the EXTRA CLUES combine in pairs to make new words: LA-UNDRESSES, FOREST-ALL, TEA-SINGLY, DOMES-TIC, CONS-PIRACY, CURT-AILMENT, FLEE-TINGLY, LITE-RACY

ACROSS: 8. homonym, doll; 10. un(f)it; 11. (din)Ner-f; 12. hidden; 14. t(i)rade; 15. Eden; 16. a-lan(d); 17. o(verso)ld; 20. ed(G)es*; 21. st-utter; 23. I'd-l; 24. a-CE(O); 25. moonset*-S; 28. t(ree-fr*)og; 30. r(e.g.)is (rev.); 31. *; 32. la(c[oats])es*.

DOWN: 1. * ; 2. str(an-Gen.)ess; 3. p-ledgers; 4. inse(c)ts; 5. *; 6. *; 7. two mngs.; 9. a(r)id; 13. sele(C)tive*; 18. ruder-Al; 19. *; 22. two mngs.; 26. 0-toe; 27. homonym; 29. fe(r)n, rev

EXTRA CLUES: a. la, two mngs.; b. all, awl; c. tea*; d. ti-c, C-it, rev.); e. co-n(egotiations)s; f. curt(ain); g. flee, flea; h. ra(c[oral])y; i. l(it)e; j. do-me-S; k. p-l-rac-Y, (rev.); l. sin-g(l)y, [g(a)y]; m. forest*; n. t-ingly*; o. ailment*; p. under*-sses(rev.)

the swimming pool. On nearly every block, a house has been struck. People approaching one another on the sidewalk shift their eyes suddenly, thinking: What has become of us? Despite it all, we manage to carry on, as if we don't know what else there might be to do. The daily paper continues to land on front porches, even on abandoned houses. Children skip rope. Hedge-trimmers buzz. Lawn mowers sound in the air of summer.

In such a world, people seek answers. Some say we're being punished for the way we live—the casual adulteries, the heavy drinking, the high divorce rate, the sexual promiscuity among our teenagers, the violent visual culture among our children. Others, while rejecting the punishment hypothesis as a throwback to moribund theological systems, nevertheless claim that our town has carried certain forms of behavior to their logical conclusion, for a culture based on material pleasures must necessarily lead to an embrace of the ultimate material fact, which is death. Still others, dismissing this argument as a secular version of the theological critique, insist that our town represents a new, healthy attitude toward the conduct of life: disdaining evasion, we bravely face the truth of our mortality.

For our part, while honoring the sincerity of these explanations, we believe the truth lies elsewhere. The behavior of our citizens, though far from perfect, is surely no worse than what one finds in other suburban towns. And we've always taken special pride in seeing to it that our town is an ideal place for raising children. Our school system is first-rate, our three parks well cared for, our neighborhoods safe. Visitors from other towns praise our shady residential streets, lined with sugar maples, lindens, and sycamores; they comment on our friendly and welcoming Main Street with its outdoor cafés, its array of ice-cream shops and exotic restaurants housed in carefully preserved nineteenth-century buildings with arched windows outlined by stone moldings. Even the older houses in our blue-collar neighborhoods, south of the railroad tracks, display well-mowed lawns and fresh-painted shingles on streets lined with broad porches. How then do we explain this eruption of wished-for death, this plague of self-annihilation?

The answer, we feel, lies not in our failure to live up to a high code of conduct—not in the realm of failure at all—but in the very qualities of our town that we think of as deserving praise. By this we don't mean to suggest that our town is a sham, that beneath our well-groomed surface is a hidden darkness, a rot at the heart of things. Such an explanation we find naive, even childish. It suggests that by the simple act of tearing off a mask we can expose the hideous truth beneath—a truth that, once revealed, will no longer have the power to harm us. Such an analysis strikes us as banal and consoling. Our town, we maintain, is in fact the excellent place we've always found it to be. It's precisely the nature of this excellence that we wish to examine more closely.

Those who admire our town speak of it as pleasant, safe, comfortable, attractive, friendly. It is all these things. But such qualities, however worthwhile, contain an element of the questionable. At their heart lies an absence. It's an absence of all that is not pleasant, all that is uncomfortable, dangerous, unknown. By its very nature, that is to say, our town represents a banishment. But the act of banishment implies an awareness of the very thing that is banished. It is this awareness, we maintain, that breeds a secret sympathy for all that is not reassuring. Surfeited with contentment, weighed down by happiness, our citizens feel, now and then, a sudden desire: for the unseen, for the forbidden. Beneath or within our town, a counter-town arises—a dark town devoted to the disruption of limits, a town in love with death.

Severe illnesses demand severe remedies. We propose that the Committee insert into our town the things we have kept out. We suggest a return to public hangings, on the hill behind the high school; we support gladiatorial contests between men and maddened pit bulls, the restoration of outlawed forms of public punishment, such as st[o]ning, flaying. We recommend a [r]evival of the stake, to fire and blood [s]acrifice. We propose that once a year a chi[l]d be chosen by lot and ritually mu[r]dered on the town green before the t[o]wn as a reminder to our citizen[s] that we walk on the bones of the de[a]d.

Our town has been en[v]eloped in darkness, robbed of death. [W]e have nothing left for us but br[i]ghtness, clarity, and order. Our cit[i]zens are killing themselves because [o]f a confusion for what's missing has [n]owhere else to go.

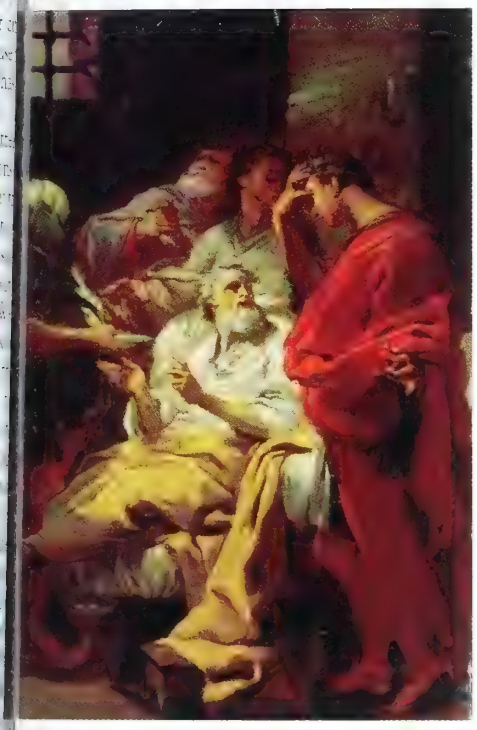
We urge the Committee [t]o consider our recommendations [w]ith the utmost seriousness. Anythi[n]g other than a violent response to [t]his crisis will certainly fail. Some say [i]t's already too late, that our [t]own is heading for extinction. We [o]n the contrary, hold out an anxio[u]s hope. But we must act. Already the [d]isease has begun to spread to [o]ther towns—here and there, in [s]cattered places, we read of extravag[a]nt suicides, of deaths that canno[t] be accounted for in the usual way.

We who have studied the [m]atters, we who have pursued ou[r] investigations into the darkest co[r]ners of our minds, are not ourselves [s]afe from stray imaginings. O[n] spring evenings, when dusk [s]ettles over our houses like a pro[m]ise of something we dare not remem[b]er, on blue summer nights when [w]e step from the shadows of porches i[n]to the brightness of the moon, we [f]eel a stirring, a restless desire, a [s]ense that we were missing something w[e] had thought would be there. Th[e]n we take firm hold of ourselves, [c]lench our jaws and turn back, for we [k]now where these flickers of feelin[g] can take us. And perhaps what i[s] happening in our town is simpl[y] this: that a familiar flicker, of no h[e]at in itself, has been allowed to de[v]elop without impediment, that ou[r] citizens have become gifted in th[e] ancient art of not holding back. For a [f]ew moment, before we turn awa[y], we too have seen the distant f[i]re beckon, we too have heard the [d]ark wings beating in the brain.

Respectfully submitted to the [C]ommittee by the undersigned, this [t]he day of September.

W BOOKS

hn Leonard



en had they existed at the same me in the same Vonnegutturl chrono-synclastic infundibucrates and Studs Terkel would ave occupied the same agora, um, syllogism, or canoe. The tic philosopher, condemned to n 399 B.C.E. for not believing ods of Athens and for corruptyouth of the city-state, scorned acy and popular assembly, inrors at his own trial, nattered tically forever about absolute ions of such universals as ," and never asked a question to he hadn't already some vulpine tucked away in his boxer shorts. he help of wealthy friends, he ave finessed drinking the hemt chose instead to star in Plato's play. For certain, he was sus. Maybe, like Wittgenstein, he o bored.

Whereas an equally peripatetic Studs, the twentieth-century oral historian still going strong at age ninety-five with his cranky tape recorder and his magic hearing aid, is genuinely interested in what other people tell him about work, war, race, age, neighborhood, justice, fame, grace, and faith. As Charles Kuralt once explained on CBS, "When Studs Terkel listens, everybody talks"—miners, teachers, nurses, cops, and cabbies; teamsters, ministers, pilots, and dentists; firefighters, software salesmen, carpenters, and paramedics; farmworkers, birdwatchers, jazz musicians, street vendors, and homicide detectives; ex-Communists, ex-priests, recovering alcoholics, retired domestics, black separatists, and Ku Klux Klansmen. Nothing could be less scornful or more democratic than these open-ended conversations.

Emily Wilson, an assistant professor of classical studies at the University of Pennsylvania, goes back to anxious Athens once again in THE DEATH OF SOCRATES (Harvard, $19.95), with elegant sidebars on Xenophon, whose acquaintance with Socrates differed some from Plato's, and on Aristophanes, who made merciless fun of the old man in *The Clouds*. She addresses at length the charges against him and the harm done to Athens by his two most famous students—Critias, one of the Thirty Tyrants, and Alcibiades, who not only fought for Sparta and Persia but also profaned the Eleusinian Mysteries. But Wilson's larger ambition is "a kind of archaeology in the history of ideas." With wit as well as scholarship, she follows the idea of the death of Socrates to Rome and beyond, in literature, philosophy, music, and art; from Caravaggio and Rubens to Erik Satie and John Cage; from Cicero, Dante, Erasmus, Milton, Voltaire, John Stuart Mill, and Dostoevsky to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Strindberg, Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and Monty Python—all the way up through I. F. Stone's *The Trial of Socrates* (1988), which deserves more than the two paragraphs it gets here, considering that Stone was just as exasperated as Wilson seems at Socrates' one-upmanship, not to mention the routine misogyny of Plato and his backroom boys. In brief: each generation confabulates the Socrates it thinks it needs, as if he were Cleopatra.



Studs, on the contrary, reverses field from the historical to the personal—turning his tape recorder and magnifying glass on himself at last. For years we have wanted to know how someone as victimized as he was by the 1950s blacklists—losing first his sponsors and then his TV program to McCarthyites—remained so doggedly cheerful down through the mean decades. Now he tells us, sort of. TOUCH AND GO: A MEMOIR (New Press, $24.95) finishes off many of the sentences left dangling in *The Spectator* (2000), his collection of interviews with stage and screen actors and directors. There we first met the Studs who grew up in Chicago hotel lobbies, identifying with the gangster he played [illegible] radio serial and the sportswriter he played in the John Sayles Black Sox movie, *Eight Men Out*, the only graduate of the University of Chicago's law school ever to appear on *Ma Perkins*, and probably the only member of the human race ever to start smoking cigars because he liked the way they looked in the insolent mouths of

of Socrates, by Gaetano Gandolfi © Private Collection. Photograph © Bonhams, London/Bridgeman
cy; Chicago, by Ben Shahn © Estate of Ben Shahn/Scala/Art Resource and VAGA, New York City

[illegible] in the Red Army [illegible] into [illegible].

In the marvelous *Touch and Go*, we meet his father, the tailor; the Black-[illegible] Chicago, where the tenor [illegible] used to sleep, Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow, Al Capone, Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Wright, Carl Sandburg, and Richard Daley; a nine-year-old Studs among feminists and Wobblies; a sixteen-year-old Studs at Dreamland for the black jazz of Lottie Hightower and her High Steppers; the Scopes Trial and Eugene V. Debs; "Bread and Roses" and the Protocols of Zion; Bughouse Square and Emma Goldman; the FBI and anti-Semitism; poll-watching and vote-stealing; the Radio Division of the WPA Writer's Project; Billie Holiday singing "Strange Fruit"; Ida, who "was nothing but pig meat" and whom he would marry forever; the actor (*Waiting for Lefty*!), disc jockey, jazz critic, and political opinionizer who stopped talking to himself only when he started interviewing everybody else. Of course, he made the wrong friends, from Henry Wallace to Woody Guthrie. But of those Red Scare years Studs says: "I'm like a rubber ball. Nelson Algren called me the India Rubber Man." And that's as introspective as he lets himself get. Then he's off telling us about somebody, everybody, *anybody* else—Paul Robeson, Virginia Durr, Buckminster Fuller (had you known he was Margaret Fuller's grandnephew?), even Einstein and Goya. If I'm choosing up sides for a game of philosophy, he's my first pick. Instead of bored, scornful, supercilious, and smug, he is curious, generous, fraternal, and respectful, with a life-giving heartfelt Whitmanesque yawp.

Peter Høeg, on the other hand, has despised philosophy since at least the Enlightenment. It's been ten years between novels from the author of *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, and he's just as brilliantly fretful now as he was then. Still, one Høeg novel never seems to prepare us for the next. *Smilla*, for those of you who missed the movie, gave us a thirty-seven-year-old glacial morphologist, feminist, and troublemaking private eye investigating dead bodies in the Arctic, corrupt science and corporate hugger-mugger in Copenhagen, and the murder on a snowy night of a six-year-old Eskimo boy. She in no way prepared us for the next Høeg published here, *Borderliners*, in which a twelve-year-old orphan named Peter graduated from reform schools and outpatient clinics to an elite private academy where the professors secretly experimented on children no one cared about. Nor did Peter prepare us for *The History of Danish Dreams*, actually Høeg's first book in Denmark, an all-or-nothing young man's novel about the very rich and very poor, capitalism and feudalism, bastard children, juvenile delinquents, military cadets, money, journalism, religion, the theater, and the circus. Looking back, we see that all three novels were about lost children at the mercy of sinister ministries, dreaming of escape from panopticons, penal colonies, and loony bins. He would follow, in *The Woman and the Ape*, with a zoo, from which a talking ape escaped to embark with a lonely Danish woman on a quest over the rooftops of London—from zoological garden to veterinary clinic to behavioral-research lab to animal-welfare foundation to game reserve to slaughterhouse. Not a page went by that wasn't superscribed with the indebtedness of language and literature to animal-kingdom metaphors and analogies. It's as if the wounded child in Peter Høeg had grown up from a Copenhagen of Little Mermaids and Ugly Ducklings to turn into a D. H. Lawrence writing King Kong.



THE QUIET GIRL (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $26) sends a forty-two-year-old circus clown named Kasper Krone, who listens to too much Bach and loses too much at poker, in search of a little girl named Klara-Maria who may have been abused but is most assuredly possessed of paranormal powers. Kasper, who can hear all of Copenhagen in his head as if he were a global-positioning satellite, is still the helpless tool of others—his ex-girlfriend, who does terrible things in a lab; the tax authorities, intelligence services, and military police, who want to throw Kasper in prison or extradite him to Spain; and a convent of Russian Orthodox nuns, whose purpose may not be malign but neither is it cuddly. I won't go into [illegible] quakes, the DAMP syndrom[illegible] perimental birth environm[illegible] quantum numerology, the [illegible] variations, or the Kierke[illegible] slivovitz, much less the swe[illegible] shamans. But Kasper eventu[illegible] from a tribe of lost children [illegible] der rainbow signs, that th[illegible] thing in the world is silence [illegible].

And silence, in spite [illegible] Freeman's best effort [illegible] Cissy Chandler ste[illegible] maintains throughout TH[illegible] EMBRACE: RAYMOND CH[illegible] AND THE WOMAN HE [illegible] (Pantheon, $25.95). Freeman[illegible] elist herself and a fierce fan [illegible] dler's detective stories, want[illegible] derstand his relationship wit[illegible] almost eighteen years older [illegible] was. Had he merely married [illegible] mother, after the first one[illegible] died? For all her stalking [illegible] ghosts, from every scrap of [illegible] every forlorn address in S[illegible] California where the nomadi[illegible] dlers ever lived, Freeman is [illegible] at the end of her quest than [illegible] at the start. And the reader [illegible] mystified. Why does Freeman [illegible] much? She never explains. [illegible] quotations from Chandler el[illegible] and *The Long Embrace* is an ex[illegible] mention his great [illegible] and successor, Ros[illegible] donald, two of who[illegible] Archer detective [illegible] *The Ivory Grin* an[illegible] *Way Some People Di*[illegible] just been reissued i[illegible] tage Crime/Black Liz[illegible] perback. And Tom [illegible] the author of a Mac[illegible] biography, has edite[illegible] ARCHER FILES (C[illegible] & Landru, $25), which in[illegible] every short story ever w[illegible] featuring Archer.

The best thing about *The A[illegible] Files* is Nolan's intro, a twenty[illegible] page tour de force treating the fi[illegible] detective as if he were an hist[illegible] figure, recovered by scholarship[illegible] archives that are actually novels[illegible] that I think of it, *The Chill*, Ma[illegible] ald's Freudian masterwork, coul[illegible] well have been an imaginary ac[illegible] of Raymond and Cissy.

Dancer with Drum, by Walt Kuhn © Terra Founda[illegible] American Art, Chicago Art Resource, New Yo[illegible]

DERNISM A LA MODE

architecture went from radical to chic

ark Kingwell

n this essay:

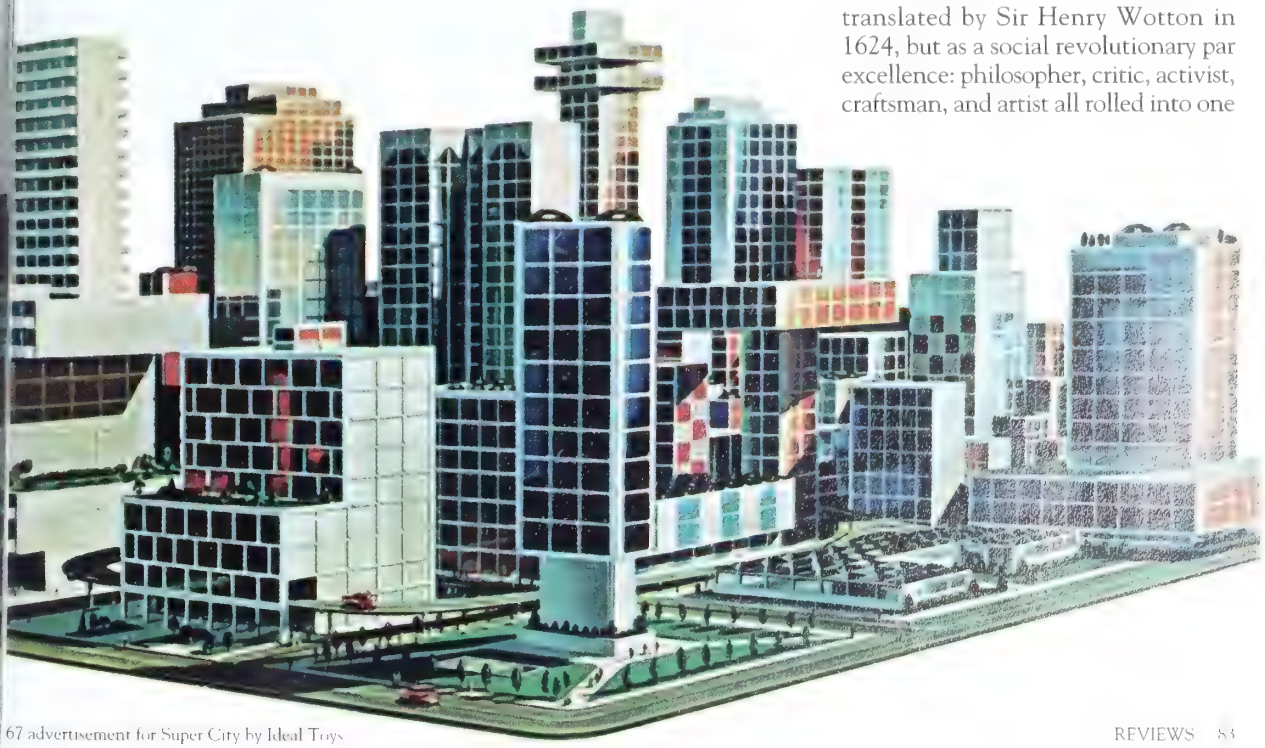
Cause to a Style: Modernist Architecture's Encounter with the American y Nathan Glazer. Princeton University Press. 300 pages. $24.95.
Modern Architecture, by Martin Filler. New York Review Books. 323 $27.95.

57, Ideal Toy Company of York introduced a building lled Super City that was in- a high-end rival to Mecca- o, offering polystyrene plas- es and triangular struts, plus kylights and sleek cladding, ng miniature slabs and towers. building kit ever made," the nd artist Douglas Coupland n 2005, "Super City was the ely modernist building kit. ng made from Super City like a Craig Elwood or a Richard Neutra or a Wallace K. Harrison." Riffing on what he saw as the kit's space-age high-modern coolness, Coupland added annotations that mocked the sophisticated style of the designs. "Karen Carpenter's apartment," he suggested in one corner of a Super City ad. Opposite that, "Jarvik heart transplant centre." Nearby, "Henry Kissinger and Jill St. John having sex" and "Parking lots that only accept vehicles with gull-wing doors."

When a style of architecture is so familiar as to be rendered in toy blocks, a sort of loopy apotheosis has been realized. Mark 1967 as the year in which modern architecture reached the pinnacle of its pervasive influence, when even the world's children were being indoctrinated into its program of modular construction, uniform steel-and-glass structure, and straight unadorned lines. In a few short years some of those kids would undoubtedly be in a position to commission full-scale versions for a new corporate headquarters project in Berlin, or a new capital city planned for somewhere in the jungles of the developing world.

This style of building was, to be sure, a very particular version of modern architecture, and one with a specific devolution: what sociologist Nathan Glazer calls in his new book a move "from a cause to a style." The standard story goes something like this. In the beginning, a beginning dated more or less to the start of the twentieth century, a handful of visionary architects, inspired by the potential of new materials such as concrete and steel, imagined a world of urban living free from spurious ornament, cluttered gemütlich interiors, and status-defining stylistic tropes. Built forms, always the bedrock of social interaction, could be planned and executed not in the haphazard, follow-the-money manner of yesteryear but in progressive waves of ever-improving, even utopian, design. New buildings for a new age! And in back of it all, a heroic commitment to social justice via the building art. The architect emerges not as a mere purveyor of "commodity, firmness, and delight," to cite the ancient Vitruvian desiderata as translated by Sir Henry Wotton in 1624, but as a social revolutionary par excellence: philosopher, critic, activist, craftsman, and artist all rolled into one

well is Professor of Philosophy at the of Toronto and a contributing ed- rper's Magazine. His book Con- eries: Consciousness and the City *blished next year by Viking.*



67 advertisement for Super City by Ideal Toys

egomaniacal package. "We are in a diseased state," Le Corbusier wrote in 1923, "because we mix up art with a respectful attitude towards mere decoration." The received styles are dead, and the "great epoch" and "new spirit" of the age demand innovation. Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye and his chapel at Ronchamp, plus his ambitious schemes for workers' housing and his city plans, show what could be done with such a bold vision.

In the event—so this standard story goes—reality proved, as ever, a resistant medium. The grand schemes and social visions were dashed by the exigencies of financing and construction and the dirty-hands business of actual clients, not to mention the wider influence of economic downturns, war, and technological innovation. In a small but telling irony, Le Corbusier, perhaps the most exemplary of modernist architects within this narrative, had to improvise expensive handmade components for his early buildings in order to give them the machined look that mass production was not yet capable of achieving—a sort of reverse techno-effect, foreshadowing the faux-authenticity of more recent machine nostalgia, with the current proliferation of false rivets in sports-car interiors and exposed, load-free girders in restaurants. When large projects, or even specific buildings, were realized, there was a visible hollowing out of modernist dreams by dismal reality. Le Corbusier's "Radiant City" design, with its lithe residential towers surrounded by parkland and curving superhighways, became the model for dead-zone tower-block projects of the 1950s and '60s, many of them now either abandoned to vertical-slum anarchy or torn down in favor of low-rise alternatives.

The standard form of the modernist movement, meanwhile, the glass-curtain-slab skyscraper, moved effortlessly from bravura gesture—Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building in Manhattan, a masterpiece of matte-black volume and generous public space—to become the favored building block of corporate globalization. Imitation becomes the sincerest, which is to say the cheapest, form of theft. As Martin Filler insists in his entertaining and informative survey of modern masters, *Makers of Modern Architecture*,







Mies cannot be held responsible for the bad iterations of his style any more than Palladio can be indicted for all the hideous neoclassical arches and p mented columns that festoon ev thing from skyscrapers in Shangh

Pedro Guerrero: TWA Terminal at Idlewild JFK Airport, N.Y.C. © Ezra Stoller/Esto. D. by Le Cor © Erich Lessing/Art Resource/ARS/FLC/ADAGP, Paris; Frank Lloyd Wright's Solom Guggenheim Museum, N.Y.C., by David Heald © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, N





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Nathan Glazer accepts uncrit-
cally, is far too simple, but mak-
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irst. His list of makers of mod-
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lictum that "form ever follows
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tiago Calatrava, two disparate
oners with only an attenuated
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ism. This capaciousness then
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ically from a wide swath of
for his raves and pans. Along
, the classic statements of Le
er and Mies are acknowledged,
re various forms of organicism
nt, Alvar Aalto), techno-
ism (Norman Foster), and post-
ism (Robert Venturi, Renzo Pi-
ano). Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Charles and Ray Eames, designers known for furniture rather than buildings, earn respectful chapters of their own. At no point is a larger narrative of modernism offered; Filler resolves the definition issue by ignoring it.

This approach has its virtues. Filler is right to blast the rhetoric of ism and counter-ism that has vexed architecture since the Second World War, with new stylistic trends set up every few years to oppose whatever has become fashionable (postmodern succeeding modern, deconstruction succeeding that, and so on). He challenges the superficial theoretical pretensions of the various after-modern "schools," with their cheap pronouncements cribbed from works of philosophy or literary theory. Architecture, like art, enjoys an oedipal energy in which creation is always destruction, usually of one's most intimate influences. But architecture's story is really one of repetition, not progress. New materials, new styles, and new techniques arise, but the problems of rendering built forms in a physical universe remain ever the same. There may be dialectic conflict in architecture's forward march, but there is no absolute standpoint at its end.

Nevertheless, Filler's inclusiveness creates as many problems as it solves. If we abandon the standard progress-of-styles narrative, what arises in its place? Despite some effort to remain cool and focused on the work itself, Filler cannot resist a bit of alternative myth-making and some of the insider's arrogance that is unfortunately typical of the architecture profession (though as a critic he already occupies an outer circle). For him, the chief fallacy in laypersons' talk about architecture is the identification of modernism *tout court* with one of its less fortunate offshoots, the familiar International Style—which happens to be the very identification that Glazer accepts as a premise of social critique.

The term "International Style" was coined by Alfred Barr, founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, but it was made popular, and eventually canonical, by a 1932 exhibition at MoMA organized by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. More than just the talk of the town, the show established the agenda of modern architecture for decades to come, including both masterworks and disasters. Mies, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright were all included (Wright later withdrew, allegedly claiming his work was not featured prominently enough), and because there was little attempt to reconcile the differences between the European vision, especially Le Corbusier's expansive social conscience, and the American emphasis on practicality, the emergent style was a volatile distillate of divergent programs.

Style has always been a bad word in architecture, suggesting either a lack of imagination or a susceptibility to replication, or both. In the MoMA exhibition, style was boldly celebrated as the essence of the art, and modern architecture was instantly reduced to a single branch of its family tree. Revolutionary modernism had been born in 1923 with the publication of Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*, the most innovative book on architecture since the Renaissance, which defined a hu-

all, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe © The Museum of Modern Art, New
/Art Resource/ARS/SCALA; La Cité Radieuse, by Le Corbusier
on/ADAGP, Paris/FLC/Art Resource/ARS

to the rationalism far more subtle than the boxy sameness to come, deftly defending the idea of the "regulating line" in all great buildings, ancient and modern. Le Corbusier praised the timeless geometric beauty of the golden section, the same proportions that had excited everyone from Vitruvius to the realist landscape painters of the Italian Renaissance. "There exists one thing which can ravish us, and this is measure or scale," Le Corbusier wrote. "To achieve scale! To map out in rhythmical quantities, animated by an even impulse, to bring life into the whole by means of a unifying and subtle relationship, to balance, to *resolve the equation*." But thanks to Johnson and his opportunistic cronies, Filler suggests, this beautiful vision was defiled less than a decade later—indeed, just a year after the English translation was published—reduced from grand longing to empty template.

To be fair, Le Corbusier himself was somewhat vague about style. He at once declared it dead and demanded it be reborn along the functional lines of the airplanes, automobiles, and steamliners he so admired. But with the International Style now conflated with modernism, soon set to colonize the planet's urban spaces, confusion reigned among architects. Thus, instead of a teleological model of creative progress, Filler offers a chaotic mind map of modernism, with the International Style an immovable blob (or slab) at the center and, around it, a constellation of reactive satellites—biomorphism, neo-ornamental kitsch, computer-generated anti-building, sculptural overstatement, and so on—fighting for the recognition, and the money, that allows the architect to practice his art. Whereas Glazer is concerned with a political narrative, Filler is a devoted aesthete in search of creative heroes and copycat knaves.

Johnson emerges as the archvillain of the drama, an unrepentant scoundrel with early ties to Father Coughlin and the Nazis ("all those blond boys in black leather," to quote Johnson's comments to his biographer), followed by a stint coattailing the far more talented Mies, and then a long toxic endgame in which Johnson naughtily championed whatever style or counter-style seemed to have the biggest wind behind it. MoMA is, moreover, the wicked pavilion in which Johnson was able to exert his poisonous influence, first as a curator and later as an influential trustee. The 1932 exhibition was just the beginning of a series of group shows and retrospectives that, in Filler's view, allowed Johnson to continue defining the trajectory of American architecture through the rest of the twentieth century. Johnson died in 2005 at the age of ninety-eight, an evil magician finally brought down by a neglectful reaper, who, Filler comes close to suggesting, ought to have attended to the business sooner.

According to Filler, Johnson was "a born salesman and glib improviser," "deeply superficial" and "bored easily," who produced designs that were, variously, "sorry," "hollow," "offensive," "appalling," and "bordered on outright thievery." His "undisguised pleasure in perversity" is the one constant in a fad-following life spent switching styles at whim, making Johnson "the magpie of Modernism," a man "symptomatic of the poverty of American civic culture in the late twentieth century." A few others get similar, smoothly phrased drubbings: Richard Meier ("limited powers of invention"), WTC designer Minoru Yamasaki ("fleetingly fashionable"), MoMA renovator Yoshio Taniguchi ("much-disparaged"), not to mention *New Yorker* architecture critic Paul Goldberger, whose book on the Ground Zero reconstruction "lacked a discernible moral character," continuing the "maddening equivocation" of his reviews and revealing his "essential complicity" with the financial heavyweights dominating the project.

Aside from the demonizing and score-settling, Filler wants ardently to avoid the reductionism so typical of discussions of modern architecture. His refusal to endorse the standard view that modernism is synonymous with the brief moment of the International Style, as if modern art were reducible to abstract expressionism, immediately disarms common criticisms, such as Glazer's, that modernist architecture is cold and inhumane. More important, it invites a larger aesthetic embrace of the past century's building innovations. And yet, the refusal fails to account for the loss of political charge in architecture that is a main concern even among frien
ernism. How did style—of
kind, by whatever name—
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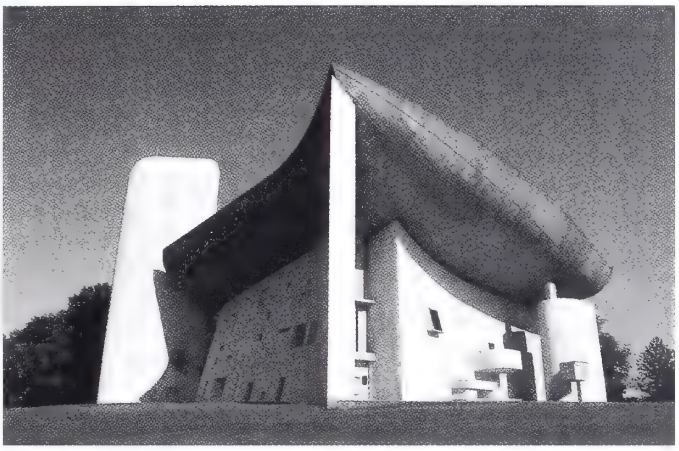
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ty, has yet to produce a work
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tional Airport in Chantilly, V
(A planned Calatrava spire
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and, in any event, the design is
pointing, being little more than
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er.) The architect-as-sculptor
the logical outcome of one reac
modernism's doldrums, but it is
all clear who the beneficiaries are
from the architects themselves.

Whom, then, should arc
ture serve? Hannah A
rare among political
rists for her interest in the built
ronment, called architecture "the
of appearances" and argued pla
that, because it provided the c
for all social life, it was essential
litical. Certainly no other fact of

as inescapable. You can turn vision or a computer, avoid sactions, even stifle advertis- stant blare; but you cannot ng in the fabric of your place. ture, alone among the arts, is ble. It is also persistent, ex- time more than in space. And t of us have little, nfluence on how e. It is no wonder most common pe- verb used about cture is "foist." choice awards and nity review boards ost of the archi- that surrounds us there whether we r not.

artist Frank Stella ously rejected the t architecture is an , since it includes nality among its ut it is hard to n that position when so much novement of architecture pre- nirrors that of the art world. nd stars come and go, trends ounced and denounced, some- multaneously, and the sublime es of aesthetic genius are every- celebrated. The upside is a po- for great civic beauty and even, nes, the social change craved early modernist reformers. The de is ugliness, clutter, enerva- nd heedless destruction of the avor of the novel. Great cities, nts of planning like to say, are rather than built, implying that a kind of mystery in the process; ly it is true that big plans have lone more harm than good.

er wrings his hands about these touching down here and there to nce the elitism of modern archi- and modern art, which he tends p together. Richard Serra's con- ial *Tilted Arc*, which dominated among federal buildings in low- hattan, comes in for particular- vy fire, presumably because it is a of the two: installation art as a f architecture. Glazer favors the ves "far out," "wild," and "radical" emes that seem to him to defy hu- cale or the accepted urban ver- ar. He would surely be baffled by the warm reception given to Serra's recent MoMA retrospective, which shows the artist to possess a command of space and materials that any classical architect would envy. Like Jane Jacobs before him, Glazer holds a thoroughly normative position about city life that masquerades as mere common



sense; it is not so much defended as revealed through counter-punching. What he likes is what the people like, whether the people know it or not, and what the people don't like is modern architecture.

Glazer is a sociologist, not an architect or even an architecture critic, so his aesthetic judgments will provide easy targets for dismissive professionals. But that fact is actually part of the problem he is trying gamely, if awkwardly, to address. When arrogant architects insulate themselves from criticism by adopting the refined disdain of conceptual artists, what hope is there for an architecture of social change? The trouble is that neither Filler, with his combination of quasi-academic detachment and critical savagery, nor Glazer, with his activist's righteous anger and hearty lack of pretension, can resolve the complex of paradoxes that wreathe the issue.

Why is it, Glazer wonders, that it took Prince Charles, the very embodiment of elitism by birth, to speak up for the people of England against the depredations of modern architecture? This is not a mystery to anyone who has lived in Britain and felt the deep consonance between "ordinary" subjects and the Barbour-and-wellies banality of the Windsors. High and low alike fear the intellectual challenge of genuine innovation, especially anything experimental. Verdict: the familiar (neo-Gothic, Victorian red brick) is good; the unfamiliar (aggressive modernism) is bad.

On occasion, however, it does take a prince. Many if not most of the world's best buildings have been erected not through popular choice but by central power, sometimes concentrated in a single man. Architecture is the most collaborative of the applied arts, but it cannot be done, or done well, by committee (see the ongoing fiasco of the WTC reconstruction). Success often comes from ignoring public desires in favor of a singular vision that just might benefit the public. The people, meanwhile, simply want what they want. That is, their desires are their desires; in themselves they mean nothing, and mostly they cannot be predicted or, still less likely, programmed. Great architecture educates desires; it does not pander to existing ones.

Thus the vision trap. Even modestly talented practitioners such as Libeskind can, with a few lucky commissions, find themselves on top of the media world—only to be dropped just as fast. Filler notes that Libeskind's 2004 autobiography, *Breaking Ground*, with its "unmitigated self-regard coupled with a stunning lack of self-awareness" is likely to be "an enduring camp classic." Rem Koolhaas, the most mercurial of the current star crop, has repeatedly denounced the West, in particular New York, for its petty constraints on his vision. He prefers to build in the hyper-capitalist hothouse of China, where a combination of central authority, deep pockets, and no regard for environmental niceties made possible his interesting CCTV Building in Beijing, a structure impossible to imagine in North America.

The more urgent question is whether architecture should be part of a larger urban vision. Early modernist planners thought they

Notre-Dame-du-Haut, by Le Corbusier © AKG Images/Stefan Drechsel

whole cities, that would hasten demo- and improve the quality of life. The results, when attempted, often had the opposite effect: for every park created by Robert Moses, that much derided draconian master-planner of New York, there is a brutal concrete overpass. And planners are frequently just wrong. The ambitious 1969 Manhattan city plan, with its laudable hatred of car traffic and machined-slab office towers, now reads like an old issue of *Amazing Stories*: "It is assumed that new technology will be enlisted in this improved transportation system, including transit powered by gravity and vacuum and mechanical aids to pedestrian movement, such as moving belts or quick-access shuttle vehicles. These devices almost surely will become available by the end of the century to meet the demand of the most influential business center in the world." While we're at it, where the hell is my jetpack? Nor are planners always on the people's side. Baron Haussmann's beloved redesign of Paris, with the spiraling *arrondissement* system and broad boulevards, was also a comprehensive military plan to level guerrilla-friendly warrens in favor of the state's cavalry. He could not have predicted that, after a hundred years of de facto racial segregation, the expansive *banlieues* at the edge of the same city would prove the best place to riot in 2005.

Glazer, like many citizens, wants architecture to enhance urban life and, ultimately, the democratic practices of the nation. Grand public buildings, restful and lively public spaces, a balance of privacy and the common good—architecture can provide all of these. But the more it tries, the greater the risk that the project will backfire. Architects, moved by innovative design and the new liberty of materials, lose the social ambitions of their forebears and become ensnared in thickets of individual self-expression and competing styles. They strive for signature buildings, the kind that elevate a modest practitioner from mere servant of his clients' wishes into an international celebrity and Pritzker Prize laureate. At that point, the architect really is an artist—everyone tells him so—and the notion of social service is unthinkable because it is directly contradicted by the outsider ambitions and tortured-genius mythology of all modern art. The affairs, alcoholism, and trademark clothing all follow, with Issey Miyake black and kooky eyeglasses "as carefully thought out," to use Filler's words, "as Wright's anachronistic presentation of himself as a caped Aesthetic Movement dandy or Le Corbusier's droll impersonation of a bowler-hatted Magrittian bourgeois."

In this sense, Glazer is right to link modernism in architecture with modernism in art, though his insights on the subject are clunky. He laments the decline "from meaning to muteness" in public monuments, noting sadly that Lewis Mumford's pronouncement has come true: "If it is a monument it is not modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument." Mocking Serra's far-out desire to "subvert the context" of a public installation, he denounces the tendency of modern art to become self-referential, elitist, theoretical, rebarbative, and antidemocratic. Serra's "is an understandable point of view," Glazer writes, clearly thinking the opposite, "but it is not, I would argue, legitimate for public art, whose very point is to symbolize common values, common concerns, yes, a common political system." Late modern architecture, taking its cue from the art world and the academy, retains the alienation effect of Marxist theory but loses the commitment to social reform. "The theories in favor today among advanced architectural theorists and students are those that emphasize, indeed celebrate, breakdown in society and meaning, often in obscure and contradictory language." Glazer, lonely coauthor of *The Lonely Crowd*, is pained that failures in urban planning should have driven architects into this cul-de-sac. Stay the course, form-makers! The people's utopia still beckons!

For better or worse, this is a call that will likely go unheeded. These writers ultimately agree, Filler with qualified aesthetic admiration and Glazer with dismay, that recent architecture has become both a star-making machine and a forum for massive signature sculptures: tourist-friendly monuments that too often leach funds away from other, less spectacular projects such as public housing.

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posed, it is still the right one.

RIED IN THE LIFE

nas Hardy and the limits of biographies

erry Eagleton

l in this essay:

Hardy, by Claire Tomalin. The Penguin Press. 486 pages. $35.
Hardy: The Guarded Life, by Ralph Pite. Yale University Press. 522 . $35.



here is a paradox about biographies. We read them to savor the shape and texture of vidual life, yet few literary forms be more predictable. Everyone be born, and almost everyone be educated, oppressed by parlagued by siblings, and launched ne world; they then enter upon and sexual relationships of their own, produce children, and finally expire. The structure of biography is biology. For all its tribute to the individual spirit, it is our animal life that underpins it.

This paradox is compounded by another. We are interested in what Jane Austen had for breakfast because we are interested in her fiction; but what she had for breakfast throws exceedingly little light on the fiction. When Claire Tomalin tells us in her recent life of Thomas Hardy that the clergyman who took on his mother as a servant published a commentary on the Book of Enoch, it is hard not to feel that this is a little more information than we need. A good biographer works like a realist novelist, delicately touching on stray details to generate what Henry James called the air of reality, though what exactly all this is supposed to illuminate is rather more obvious in *The Ambassadors* than in volumes like these.

It certainly isn't the writer's literary works. Both Claire Tomalin and Ralph Pite are perceptive literary critics, yet what they have to say about Hardy's novels and poems, for all its occasional astuteness, is thin and impressionistic. If you are going to record, as Tomalin dutifully does, that Hardy's mother hailed from a part of Dorset well endowed with apple orchards, there simply isn't enough space left to come to grips with narrative structure in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In a sense, the whole point of the writer's enterprise—the writing itself—is consigned to secondary status. It becomes a peg on which to hang the life—a life that often has scant bearing on the literature. Even in his superb biography of W. B. Yeats, the historian R. F. Foster plays down his own abundant critical abilities, since this isn't thought to be the main task of a literary biographer. A good many literary biographies, then, are *Hamlet* without the prince. Or, in the case of the books discussed here, Hardy without much compelling evidence as to why he was enough of a towering figure to spend five hundred pages on.

Paul Valéry proposed the wise dictum that there are many things involved in the production of a work of art other than the author. Shakespeare, as far as we know, was never crazed and naked in a storm, but *Lear* has an authentic enough ring to it even so. It is doubtful that the Bard ever ran into a group of witches who numbered among their possessions the finger of a baby strangled at birth, but the first scene of *Macbeth* manages to retain its uncanny power. Tomalin, by contrast, assumes that the bleakness of Hardy's vision springs from his sensitive constitution, in which case there must have been an extraordinary rash of sensitive constitutions in gloom-ridden *fin-de-siècle* Europe. Like the view that poor potty training lay behind the student militancy of the 1960s, this kind of reductionism conveniently sidesteps history—another context that biographers, intent on describing their subject's high-domed forehead or immaculate fingernails, tend to squeeze out for lack of space. Neither of these studies really embeds the author in a historical context. Instead, history is reduced to snatches of generalization ("London was a filthy city," Tomalin tells us; "The overcrowding was terrible, especially in the East End," writes Pite). One suspects that both biographers would react strongly to the idea

Eagleton is the John Edward Taylor or of English Literature at the Uni- of Manchester. His most recent book Meaning of Life *(Oxford Universi- s).*

aph © The Art Archive/Private Collection MD

of reducing works of literature to their economic circumstances; reducing them to an author's waking life, however, seems entirely acceptable. "His sex drive, judging from his writings," Pite writes of Hardy, "was strong and straightforwardly heterosexual." If one were to judge Proust from the "straightforwardly heterosexual" protagonist of *Remembrance of Things Past*, one would never suspect that he was gay. Was the author of *Lolita* a pedophile? We haven't the slightest reason to think so, any more than to think the author of *The Sound and the Fury* was of unsound mind.

Critics tend to stand back and discern patterns; biographers, engaged in the blow-by-blow business of recording what happened just after noon on July 21, 1889, and then what took place two hours later, can only fitfully allow themselves this luxury. It is as though the art gets buried in the life. Among those general patterns are broad intellectual currents, but literary life-histories tend to skimp on ideas, just as they do on historical context. Indeed, there is a case to be made that biography is a rather philistine genre. If it is so phenomenally successful in England, perhaps that is because Anglo-Saxons in particular tend to prefer persons to concepts. It is Ludwig Wittgenstein's waving a poker in the face of a fellow philosopher that lingers in the mind, not his demonstration of how a private language cannot exist. England is the home of the wayward and idiosyncratic, of amiable freaks, lovable rogues, and charming eccentrics. It is no surprise that the greatest English literary biography of all, James Boswell's life of Samuel Johnson, takes as its subject a man quirky to the point of moderate insanity.

The fact that a genre may be somewhat overrated does not mean that it cannot give birth to some resplendent pieces of work. Restoration tragedy is generally dull, but there are some fine individual specimens. Eighteenth-century pastoral verse is not the most exciting kind of poetic art on record, yet it threw up the occasional masterpiece. The same goes for literary biography. The maestros of the form—Saint Augustine on himself, Boswell on Johnson, Fiona McCarthy on Byron or William Morris—are able to create works with all the imaginative flair and substance of major art. They evoke not just a single life but the climate of a whole age. Richard Ellmann's life history of Yeats is a vital record of the Irish Literary Revival, not merely an account of the poet. Richard Holmes's record of Coleridge's blighted existence tells us about Romanticism, not merely Coleridge's drug habit. No general history of the early Soviet Union could dispense with Isaac Deutscher's magisterial biographies of Stalin and Trotsky. Claire Tomalin's own earlier magnificent biography of Samuel Pepys is a sensitive record of late-seventeenth-century England, not just an account of the great diarist himself.

Biographers edit and interpret the facts, but, unlike historical novelists, they cannot alter them. Their room for creative maneuver is notably meager. They have to spend an inordinate amount of time recounting facts about their subject that have been sketched a hundred times before. It is carved in stone that Thomas Hardy was born in Dorset in the west of England in 1840, of a mother who was, as we have seen, a servant and a father who was a small-time builder. (When Hardy was invited in distinguished old age to inspect a new college building in Cambridge, he put his hand on the stone and smelled it.) We know that he attended local schools and was articled to a local architect, then worked in another architect's office in London. After a faltering start, he launched the succession of novels (some of them serialized in *Harper's*) that would bring this boy from darkest Dorset into the company of Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Henry James, and a glittering array of politicians and aristocrats.

Hardy, however, was a kind of internal émigré within the Establishment, a spiritual fifth-columnist who was flattered to hobnob with a set of patricians he sometimes secretly despised. His first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, was turned down by publishers who deemed it [illegible] ly socialist. Proud to be [illegible] dinner by some Dorset gen[illegible] covered that the butler se[illegible] at table was the father of [illegible] girl he had once flirted wit[illegible] similar experience when [illegible] lunch at All Souls Colle[illegible] ford. The senior common [illegible] ler turned out to be a Dul[illegible] whom I regularly played I h[illegible] in a pub and whose day [illegible] never inquired about. He [illegible] fired for sinking more of [illegible] than he served.) Hardy an[illegible] Emma ensconced themsely[illegible] the walls of Max Gate, the [illegible] ly cramped home near D[illegible] The couple steadily grew m[illegible] able together: the uppity E[illegible] missed her husband's family[illegible] ants" and took to the [illegible] suffrage movement, while[illegible] chased women young enou[illegible] his granddaughters around [illegible] try. One of these, Florence [illegible] became the second Mrs. H[illegible] Emma's death. Hardy hi[illegible] buried in Westminster Abb[illegible] Corner in 1928, having li[illegible] enough to attend the we[illegible] Harold Macmillan, later to [illegible] prime minister in the 19[illegible] prime minister of the day [illegible] Hardy's funeral, along with[illegible] Kipling, George Bernard Sh[illegible] throng of other celebriti[illegible] George V and the Prince [illegible] telegraphed their condole[illegible] lad from Dorchester was ca[illegible] feet first as one of the Immort[illegible]

There is a well-est[illegible] myth surrounding [illegible] thor, which runs s[illegible] like this: Hardy was a self-[illegible] man who struggled his way [illegible] the ranks of the people a[illegible] gloomily fatalistic novels ab[illegible] a timeless peasant society w[illegible] undermined by urban force[illegible] word of this account is in f[illegible] and Hardy commentators a[illegible] to be judged by how effectiv[illegible] demolish it. To begin with [illegible] was not of the common pe[illegible] was the son of a reasonably [illegible] builder, and, after attendin[illegible] utable high school, he quali[illegible] professional architect. Far f[illegible]

ught (a term that for some
al English critics simply
t he didn't go to Oxford or
e), he received a better ed-
an most of his compatriots

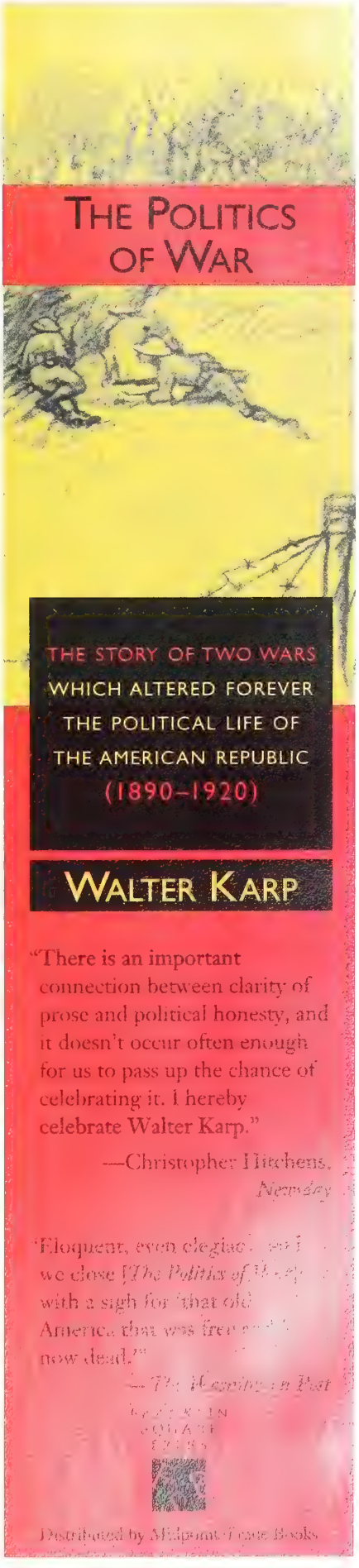
many major nineteenth-
ovelists, Hardy sprang nei-
he people nor the patricians
he lower middle class. Most
or characters are caught be-
shing social worlds, and sev-
m perish in the struggle. It is
aspire beyond their imme-
ironments, while being de-
the resources available to
em altogether, who are par-
ulnerable and exposed. This
most poignantly illustrated by
e characters: Hardy, though
eral rather than radical in his
d a special sensitivity to the
women. Again and again, he
his writings to the paradox of
who is superior to the men
ier by virtue of social class
onsidered inferior to them on
f her gender. (Hardy also mar-
e himself, though not exor-
o. As the English say, he liked
osh.)

had his eye not on "peasants"
craftsmen, carriers, traders,
opkeepers, skilled rural work-
women, like Tess Durbeyfield,
e received a decent education
far from being idyllic milk-
he predicament of this de-
ural class, marooned between
and landowner, spoke elo-
of wider social contradictions.
ne class to which Hardy him-
nged: in childhood he some-
oke the local dialect at home
etimes standard English. What
ng about his prose is how it
om one idiom to another. It
farm laborers close up and
ulling the camera away for a
ot, frames them impersonally
Olympian distance. This is a
who ranges from speaking of
esident of the Immortals" to
ng a woman as having "squir-
ured" hair. Hardy was close
to the common people to re-
patronizing stereotype of them
els and country bumpkins,
sufficiently remote to write
hem at times in a "high," ex-

cessively self-conscious literary style. Tomalin sees the ambiguity very well. She is also right to point out that his output is highly uneven. The critic John Bayley has noted that Hardy often allows quite incongruous elements to lie together in his fictions, as though each were innocently unaware of the other's presence. He can swerve in the space of a paragraph from social realism to homespun philosophizing, from poetic cameo to dramatic action. He is not afraid of ideas, as most English novels are, and he does not go out of his way to make them sound natural and spontaneous. According to Tomalin, the eminent Victorian Leslie Stephen solemnly recorded after a visit to the writer that they spoke of "theologies decayed and defunct, the origin of things, the constitution of matter, the unreality of time and kindred subjects." And that, one suspects, was just over the soup.

Nor is Hardy afraid to suggest that tragedy can be found down country lanes as well as in palaces, but he is also tempted to dredge up some rather creaky literary devices in order to imbue his low-born protagonists with heroic status. *The Return of the Native*, for example, is full of rather portentous imagery from ancient Greek tragedy, which clashes with the "low" rural life of the novel. Such methods earned him the enormous condescension of his social superiors. "The good little Thomas Hardy," wrote Henry James, who also remarked with droll patronage that the sheep and the dogs were the only convincing characters in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Somerset Maugham considered that Hardy had "a strange look of the soil," but probably thought the same of anyone who lived more than twenty miles from the British Museum.

Hardy did not write about peasants, for the excellent reason that hardly any existed in the England of his time. The agrarian enclosures of eighteenth-century England had put an end to that precarious class of self-employed small farmers. Farming had long been a capitalist, profit-oriented enterprise, and the changes in the countryside that Hardy recorded, by no means always nostalgically, were for the most part the result of internal factors rather than the impact of the wicked city. In



Far from the Madding Crowd, the farm laborers are so inept they cannot even put out a fire. The rural England of Hardy's day was a place not of maypoles and Morris dancers but of poverty, falling profits, unemployment, uncertain harvests, cutthroat overseas competition, trade-union militancy, the loss of traditional skills, and the steady hemorrhaging of the population to the industrial towns. Although Hardy experiments with pastoral forms and traditional rustic scenarios, he is keenly aware of the sweated labor, social isolation, and economic instability of agricultural England.

Nor is it true that Hardy was a fatalist, a charge he was quick to rebuff. (He described himself as an "evolutionary meliorist.") He was not, to be sure, much of a rib-tickling optimist either. He did not believe that the universe was spontaneously on our side; but this is known as realism, not pessimism. Those who come a cropper in his fiction tend to do so because they fail to adapt to circumstance or are trapped between aspiration and frustration, not because they are the victims of a malevolent universe. When Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*, seeing her children dead, cries out that we must submit to providence, Jude himself ripostes that the cause of the catastrophe is "man and senseless circumstance." Blaming fate is far too convenient an excuse for the society that hounds Jude to his lonely death.

Claire Tomalin makes the usual mistake of quoting the last clause of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as evidence of its author's perennial pessimism, but the sentence in its entirety suggests just the opposite:

> And in being forced to class herself among the fortunate she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen, when the one to whom such unbroken tranquillity had been accorded in the adult stage was she whose youth had seemed to teach that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain.

At every turn in his novels, Hardy is aiming to demonstrate how things could have fallen out differently. Indeed, it is those characters striking fatalistic postures who tend to come to grief. What seizes Hardy's imagination is not some iron determinism but the irony by which things fail to chime, the tragicomedy of missed opportunities and fatal incongruities. His is a Darwinist world of chance and contingency, not one of dire necessity. If Hardy was an atheist, it was because he did not think the universe added up to an integrated scheme any more than his own novels did. There was no grand narrative to the world, just a web of mini-narratives that randomly intersected. And this meant that some human damage was unavoidable.

Hardy's great novels are not resigned but tragic, a very different state of affairs. In fact, he is the first genuinely tragic novelist of English literature since the eighteenth-century Samuel Richardson, who wrote the astonishingly anti-patriarchal *Clarissa*. On the whole, the Victorians preferred their art to edify rather than to dispirit. An era badly rattled by everything from geological revelations of the unbiblical age of the universe to the threat of political revolution looked to its literature for consolation, not subversion. The function of art was to generate sweetness and light, not to breed truculence and disaffection. The later Dickens and George Eliot press disenchantment as far as they dare, but they are constrained even so to pull off a happy ending. Novels were supposed to end with marriage, the felicitous discovery of a long-lost, well-heeled relative, the worsting of the villains and the prospect of rosy-cheeked grandchildren, not with a young woman hanged by the state (Tess) and a man on his deathbed cursing the day he was born (Jude). If Hardy proved so offensive to his audience, it was not only his lack of religious faith that scandalized them ("the village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot," as G. K. Chesterton memorably phrased it), or even his sexual candor, but his refusal to offer anodyne comfort.

Jude the Obscure, a book that one English bishop threw indignantly into the fire, takes a cool look at the three main ideological institutions of Victorian England—education, sexuality, and religion—and concludes that they are almost entirely worthless. This is a work that pushes literary
the very brink, and one that
ally have to break with such
together to be able to arti
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response to *Jude* cured him
writing altogether, turni
poetry instead. But it is dou
a writer as magnificent as H
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bad reviews. He had had,
plenty of them before. What
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it is Hardy who brings the
lish heritage of classical re
somber close.

How do Tomalin
square up to these is
is more perceptive th
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Pite is also a touch more pr
with ideas, in which Toma
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Although Tomalin writes fin
in reading the young Hard
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lating words, entranced by th
their sounds and richness,
them up like a bee storing po
ther she nor Pite has much to
the audacious way he mixes g
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great fetish of literary art, u
works are deliberately loose
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ing up the narrative for a whi
some self-conscious set piece.
is right to see that the nove
of quirky, arresting moments
which are properly indifferer
ism. One thinks of Jude d
reciting the Nicene Creed i
ford pub, Tess stretching out
of Stonehenge, or Sue Brideh
ing from the bedroom wind
cape the erotic attention
middle-aged husband.

Tomalin's study has alre
lected its quota of admiring
and as biographies go, this o

Continued

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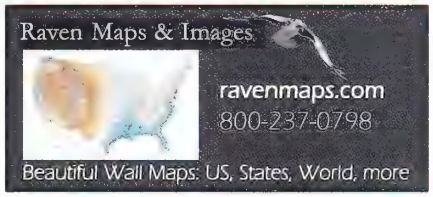


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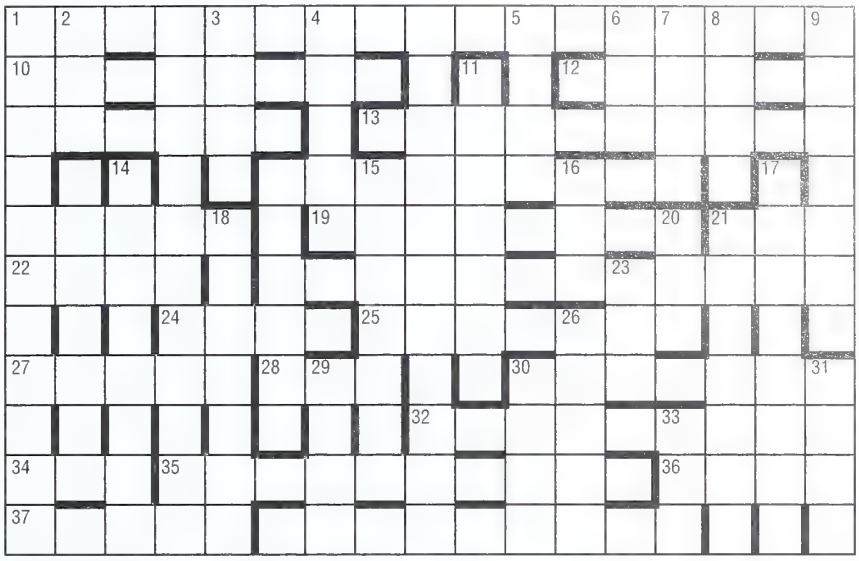
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dite and finely written. P
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and his study has received
attention. Pite, a relativ
academic, is more ready or
to chance his arm, whereas
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ways seemed unwilling to e
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dom of that sphere. Neith
pher adds much to our und
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better, since it has for so
misread. In some years' time,
dust of these studies has sett
we can no doubt expect a fr
of Hardy biographies to app
porting the same immutable
arranging them in slightly
patterns, and all convinced t
garded the universe as the
work of a malicious fate.

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PUZZLE



JLL CIRCLE

Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Eleven diagram entries are un-
d. Together they compose a lit-
y group, the designation and
ce of the group, and the author associated with it. One of the elements in the group is two words long. These two words are
red separately but can be located because they cross each other.
ix answers are capitalized words. One is a common foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its
tion. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.

OSS

0. Matches are often made with these lookers, traditionally (8)
2. Dolphin of gold for Louis XIV: trouble (6)
3. "They suck up liquid"—p.s. NYC has to (10)
9. Place in France to lose sounds (8)
1. Queen, has-been, nameless (3)
2. Being a nonstarter, flies off, lands in French waters (4)
4. Get together, circle back (4)
5. Raiser's out of range (7)
7. They might give you bad ideas! (5)
8. Turner who was black comes back less so! (3)
2. Ivy leaves entwined so as not to be straight (9)
4. Our times are retro! (3)
5. Released from crimes (about 504), one is tending to commit more! (10)
6. State in which crazy shouter is decapitated (4)
7. Tailor making practical use of piping? (5)

WN

1. More than doubles peristaltic disorders (11)
2. Subsequently ripping the head off a chicken (3)
3. Word that first comes to mind in choosing excellent English all over New York (4)
4. Word that suggests one in Delaware going north to Connecticut (5)
5. Word for single that turns up as compound (4)
6. Word that appears when teddy bear isn't soft? Or is! (3)
7. Fight material deterioration (4)
8. It's said to be primary source of horsehair (4)
9. After finishing off Spain and Prado, the rest of Madrid is endless and supremely intrusive (7)
11. Coddles rowdy, gets reprimanded (7)
14. Sketch in too much? Or take out too much! (8)
15. Pulled up to side ground beneath hospital (7)
16. Transport with an endless kiss (3)
17. Less vice cured blisters (8)
18. Nothing in the list makes you cock-of-the-walk (7)
20. Types that come from three directions (3)
21. Suppose you hear buzzer go off (7)
23. Is afflicted with laughs (3)
26. Sours on traveling in a huge country for starters (5)
29. Song coming from the center of a spinning rope (4)
30. Can planes from Japan take one in (4)
31. Heroine's name in *The Sound of Music* (4)
33. Military might, without finishing, upset the Fro[illegible] (5)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Full Circle," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 2012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 8. enders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will e printed in the January issue. Winners of the September puzzle, "ABECEDARIAN JIGSAW," are Barbara and P. K. Ackermann, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Gentry Lovett, Pacific Palisades, California; and Phil Potter, Coralville, Iowa.



FINDINGS

Scientists announced that conservatives and liberals have different patterns of neuronal impulses when confronted with unexpected circumstances. Self-described conservatives pressed the wrong button in response to a new stimulus 47 percent of the time, whereas avowed liberals had a 37 percent error rate; liberals had double the activity of conservatives in the anterior cingulate cortex, a deep region of the brain that helps people recognize "no-go" situations, but the study's authors emphasized that the results do not mean that liberals are smarter or better than conservatives. Sperm cells carrying the mutation for Apert syndrome—an abnormal formation of the skull, fingers, and toes—are unusually common, scientists theorized, because the cells that make such mutant sperm are unusually selfish and competitive. Agricultural scientists, concerned about shortages of illegal farmhands, were working to develop viable robotic alternatives for picking fruit and vegetables, and scientists found that increased ethnic diversity leads to higher levels of social distrust.

A new study concluded that the first kiss can be decisive in a new relationship; the research also showed that women place a greater emphasis on kisses, using them to assess their partners and test the relationship, whereas men, who in general prefer wet tongue kisses, are less worried about kiss quality and are thus more willing to have sex with someone without kissing. Researchers in Indiana concluded from a study of speed-dating behavior that men tend to seek beauty in a mate and that women look for signs of financial security. A study found that a third of women who meet men online have sex on the first dat those women, 75 percent did not use condoms. entists discovered that modern women are exce hunter-gatherers and are better than men at rem bering the location of foods in a supermarket. Stu found that women are more likely to prefer the c pink, that live-in boyfriends are more likely t married men to do housework, and that some fer beetles have sex simply because they're thirsty the males produce large ejaculates, sometimes 10 cent of their body weight. Scientists confirr that old people still have sex.

Researchers at Harvard came up with a techni for creating "muscular thin films," elastic polyr sheets coated with living muscle; applying electri to the films can make them bend, roll up, and wig One device made from the material, a simple trian lar sheet, was able to swim by undulating one corr another was able to push itself along by expand and contracting a single leg. The British governm approved the creation of human-animal hybrid e bryos made by injecting human DNA into empty a mal egg-cells. A lake in Alaska was observed to boiling with methane, and gray whales were reporte ly starving in the Pacific Ocean. Scientists used a sp cial breed of transgenic mouse to show that neuro in the basolateral amygdala that were activated d ing "fear conditioning" are also used in memory r trieval. The researchers said they used fear in th experiment because they don't know whether mi experience joy but they definitely feel fear. A salm couple gave birth to a trout.

Photograph from A Calm Blind Sight series, by Tang HaiTao
Courtesy LEE Ka-sing Gallery, Toronto



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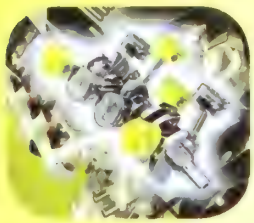
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Inside Iraq's Oil Machine

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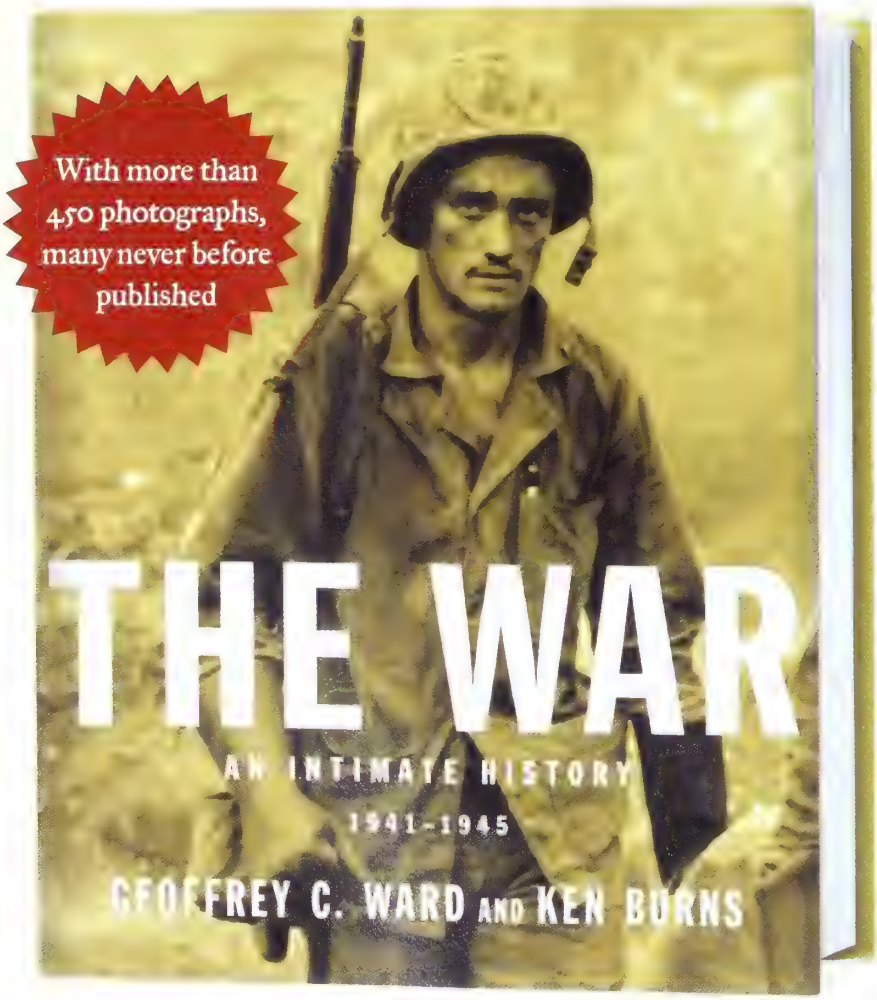

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there was a pool. Then a waiter and masseur emerged. What follow
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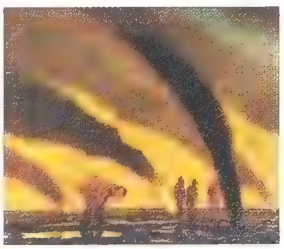
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LETTERS

Aftermath

Naomi Klein's theory about the economy of catastrophe falls apart in her reporting on post-Katrina New Orleans public charter schools ["Disaster Capitalism," Essay, October]. Charter schools existed in New Orleans before the flood. When disaster struck, educators, not contractors, used the charter process to get their schools reopened, after the Orleans Parish School Board announced that it would not resurrect the city's school system for that school year. The ensuing state takeover envisioned using chartering authority to create a larger system of independent public schools. But because state officials took the judicious step of creating a rigorous process for approving new charter operators, the supply of charters could not accommodate the large numbers of students who returned to the city. Hence, the state found itself hastily opening and running its own Recovery District schools. The district's new superintendent, Paul Vallas, is moving quickly to create an effective management structure for these schools—while also supporting a vital role for charters.

Klein implies that public schools in New Orleans are a gated educational commu schooling the city's elite. To trary, they are open to all and e same, mostly disadvantaged, American student population public schools. "Capitalism"? it managers are running just thr eighty-one schools current "Boutique charters"? Many of ters are the very same public that operated pre-Katrina, bu empowered with authority to m decisions at the school site.

More than 50 percent of N leans public schools are no tered—and they have made a ing learning gains in the first of state testing with kids who v ging academically even before ma of the flood. That is the sin important fact in the New school story, and Klein shou reported it.

Nelson Smith
President
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Washington, D.C.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or email us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

Naomi Klein responds:

I never claimed that there charter schools in New Orle fore the levees broke. I argu the disaster was seized upon Bush Administration and its tank ideologues to ram throu of their pet policies.

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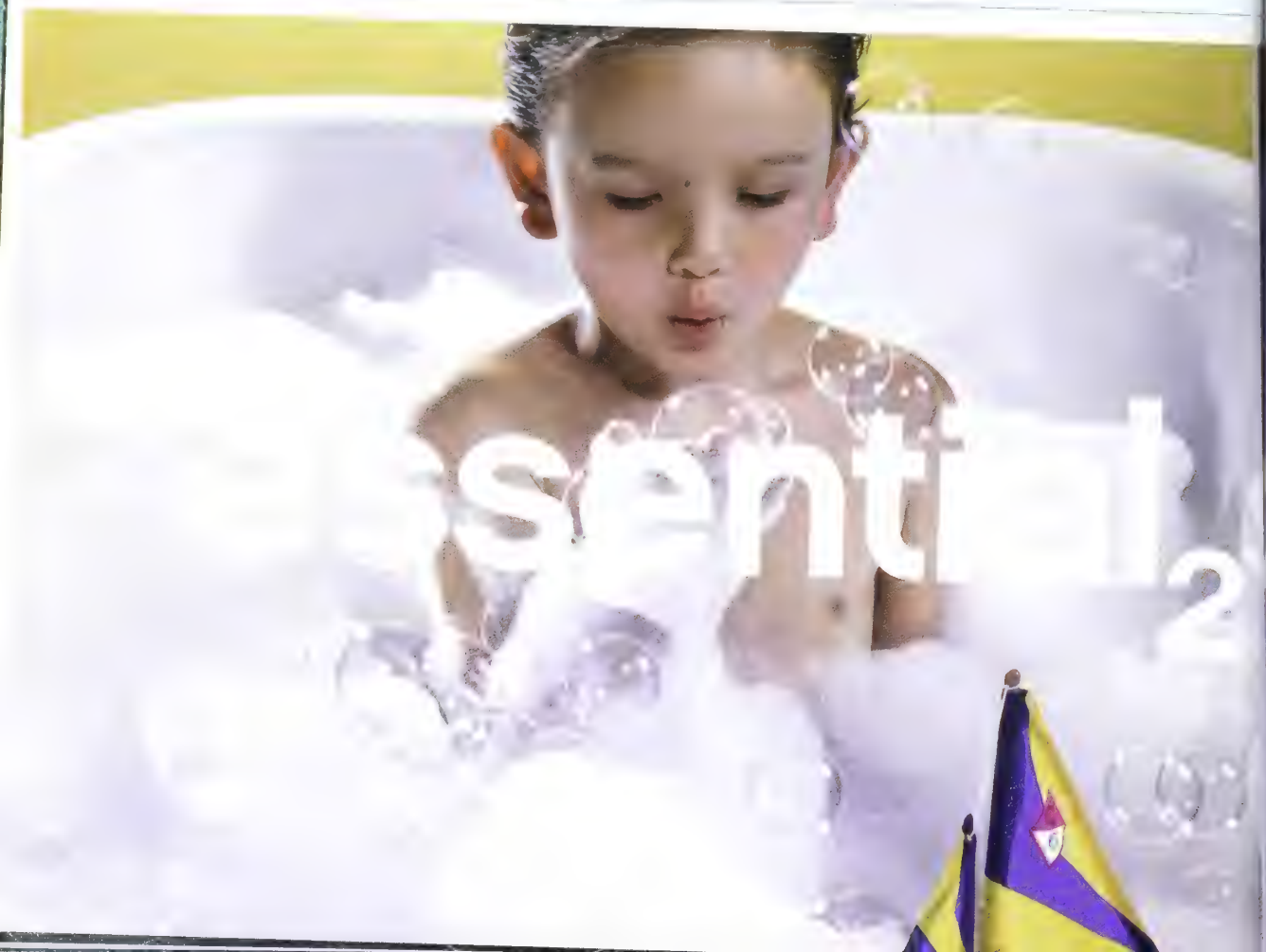
The facts speak for themselves. According to the United Teachers of New Orleans, before the flood there were at most seven public charter schools in the city. Today, according to Smith, there are eighty-one.

Charter-school advocates sell their model by insisting that because those schools are driven by parents and teachers, they are more accountable. New Orleans makes a mockery of this claim. The first conversion of a public school to a charter school took place on September 15, 2005, with much of the city still under water. Just weeks later, Governor Kathleen Blanco waived the laws that required approval from parents and teachers in these conversions. At the end of March 2006, all 4,000 public-school teachers were fired. Some of the younger teachers were rehired by the charters, at reduced salaries with less or no job security.

Smith wants me to report on the "astonishing learning gains" in the charter schools, claiming it is "the single most important fact" in this story. It certainly is important for the national charter school movement that he represents. After all, the New Orleans school system has been deliberately rebuilt to be the movement's laboratory, a showcase to sell charter schools to the rest of the state and the country. According to a study being touted by the Hoover Institution, "Katrina accomplished in a day...what Louisiana school reformers couldn't do after years of trying."

The problem with this experiment is that the results were rigged from the start. Not only do charter schools often cherry-pick the best students; one month after the levees broke, the U.S. Department of Education committed $20.9 million to charter schools in New Orleans. Public schools have not been so blessed. Here is an account by *Times-Picayune* reporter Darran Simon about how the experiment's results are being skewed: "The [state-run] Recovery District schools faced obstacles [that] not. The charters, to [which] were allowed to limit t[heir] ments, while the Recov[ery] schools took in a steady [stream] late-arriving students, [many] experienced trauma [associated] with Katrina. Charters l[ost] ers much sooner as well [from] the talent pool. The Rec[overy] trict administration, by [contrast] scrambled to fill classroom[s] last minute, creating [more] school chaos."

In national studies, th[e charter] school movement has [failed to] prove that its students [perform] their public-school cou[nterparts]. In New Orleans, howeve[r, the] sults will no doubt be m[ore] friendly to advocates lik[e Smith]. These orchestrated ra[ces in the] public sphere in the wak[e of] strophic events are precise[ly] mean by "disaster capitali[sm]" for this barbaric process—[not] for creative educationa[l] tives—that today's New [Orleans] stands as a living laborator[y].



Secret

pent sixteen years in pub-
on and nonprofit organi-
I was dismayed when I
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an Kozol's August Note-
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ol notes, sometime during
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rs, each promising a simple
lete solution to the com-
blems of learning. Why
t people want to believe that charter schools are a neutral solution and corporations are a viable option (despite contrary evidence in Philadelphia and New Orleans) for the complicated, creative work of education? If we as a society support democracy, we must, as Kozol believes, provide a full participatory public-education system in which our citizens can learn and grow together.

Despite the good intentions in each letter, I disagree with all of them. Each is based on a delusion. Geoffrey Hall believes our current politicians have the will to ban for-profit EMOs (when they can't even control private contractors in Iraq or on the Gulf Coast) and that taxpayers will allow flat rates of school funding (an idea promoted for twenty years to no avail). Stuart Margulies seems not to know the statistical research on EMOs or the reality of using profit margins to determine services for children. Paul Stephens promotes the ideas of Thomas Paine and Adam Smith, who wrote at a time when the education system primarily served boys of certain means, as the basis for a twenty-first-century system. And Tunya Audain believes we can create a society in which all parents have the same effectiveness in maneuvering through political and educational bureaucracies—despite centuries of poverty, migration, and discrimination. That is, indeed, a valued goal, but often we have to be satisfied with the constant, ongoing struggle to reach it.

Aimee Loiselle
St. Paul

Running Amok

In his October Notebook, "Specific Suggestion: General Strike," Garret Keizer correctly labels as "retro" his incitement to mass protest by general strike on the upcoming Election Day for the purpose of removing the Bush-Cheney Administration. Regressive to pre-Constitution times, I'd say. We already have a mechanism: impeachment. Demonstrations are a valid way to get the attention of Con-

lishsplash
It is what makes people, places and things squeaky clean and springtime fresh. It is chemistry.

lents
f do-
equires of us. How is denying one another that value for America, or any better than an email to a senator? Keizer's silliest proposal is reminiscent of rabid socialists heaving Molotov cocktails. We all know how well that turned out.

La Jolla, Calif.

I was invigorated when I read Garret Keizer's call to action, but I also found myself lumped in with the demographic that he derides—the one that asks itself, "What good will all this do?" I remember when a restaurant manager for whom I used to work quipped, "In the Sixties we had quite a bit to fight for, and we acted. But we had leaders. Where are your leaders now?" Although many Americans know things are not right, we have little guidance. A general strike is a good idea, but until there are real leaders, we will remain cattle run amok in the pasture. Regardless, I thank Keizer for his words.

Tyler Jenich
Los Angeles

Bring the Ruckus

As a former camper and a current outdoor schools coordinator for the YMCA, I have seen the ways summer camp has evolved. In his September memoir, "The Summer of Our Discontent," Rich Cohen correctly notes that camps have become large businesses that cater to the wills and whims of parents. Th
camp remains pers
group development, but a
camp experience Cohen so
ly evokes has been hampere

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while reading Cohen's
thought back to all thos
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Canmore, Alberta
Canada



We saved some of our best ideas for a rainy day.

NOTEBOOK

Hot Air Gods

By Curtis White

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over abortion, evolution, gay
ge, and school prayer illustrate
clearly.

cessful though efforts to en-
private belief in public policy
een in certain regions of the
l States, in the larger frame of
al life such orthodoxies have
ıre and very little past. What
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uralistic assumption that you
right to your cockeyed belief
ıat it is something I am com-
pelled to respect and even admire in you, even though what you believe may have very little to do with what I believe. Yahweh and Baal—my God and yours—stroll arm-in-arm, as if to do so were the model of virtue itself.

What we require of belief is not that it make sense but that it be *sincere*. This is so even for our more secular convictions. Recently, for example, National Public Radio revived Edward R. Murrow's "This I Believe" program, thus driving the idea of belief to its trite extreme. Here we can learn that belief is about the little things in life, like Jell-O. Colin Powell, waxing banal, tells us that America is an immigrant country and a land of opportunity. Clearly, this is not the spirituality of a centralized orthodoxy. It is a sort of workshop spirituality that you can get with a cereal-box top and five dollars. And yet in our culture, to suggest that such belief is not deserving of respect makes people *anxious*, an anxiety that expresses itself in the desperate sincerity with which we deliver life's little lessons. This sincerity is surely one part ardor, but it is also a warning. It says, "I've invested a lot of emotional energy in this belief, and in a way I've staked the credibility of my life on it. So if you ridicule it, you can expect a fight."

There is an obvious problem with this form of spirituality: it takes place in isolation. Each of us sits at our computer terminal tapping out our convictions. It's as if we were each our own foreign country and we wanted to know what the people in the land of Ken or Brenda or Eduardo believe. How quaint their curious customs! How fascinating their rituals!

Consequently, it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that our truest belief is the credo of heresy itself. It is heresy without an orthodoxy. It is heresy *as* an orthodoxy. The entitlement to belief is the right of each to his own heresy. Religious freedom has come to this: where everyone is free to believe whatever she likes, there is no real shared conviction at all, and hence no church and certainly no community. Strangely, our freedom to believe has achieved the condition that Nietzsche called nihilism, but by a route he never imagined. For Nietzsche, European nihilism was the failure of any form of belief (a condition that church attendance in Europe presently testifies to). But American nihilism is something different. Our nihilism is our capacity to believe in everything and anything all at once. It's all good!

Ultimately, our beliefs become just another form of what the media call "content." A book is a sales unit. What's in the book is content, which is a matter of utter indifference to the people who are responsible for moving product. Our religious content soon becomes indistinguishable from our financial content and our entertainment content and our sports content, just as the [illegible] your local newspaper attest [illegible] belief becomes a culture-commodity. We shop among competing options for belief.

Once reduced to [illegible] commodity, our anxieties go, do we [illegible] self-[illegible] they cannot have very much to say about the more directly nihilis-

t White's most recent book is The f Disobedience.

the conviction that we should all be free to *do* whatever we like as well, each of us pursuing our right to our isolated happinesses. Worse yet: for that form of legal individual known as the corporation, the pursuit of happiness can mean fishing with factory trawlers, clear-cutting forests, and spreading toxins across the countryside with all the zeal of a child sprinkling candies on a cupcake.

In short, the best spiritual environment for free-market corporate malfeasance is one that is as anarchic as its own form of economic reason. After all, we are not accustomed to saying "no" to anyone who proceeds in sincerity, and oh boy is corporate capitalism ever sincere. So we are called upon to respect the businessman's right to pursue his company's "happiness" just as we are called upon to respect all forms of personal belief. Ken and his personal convictions out in Omaha have very little to say about the convictions of Monsanto even if he is fated to die from their expression.

As Jean-Paul Sartre understood, the sincerity of belief is mostly about the anxiety that one may not be what one thinks one is. "I am a Christian," someone says, eyeing uneasily all those others, other Christians especially, who plainly think something very different from what he thinks. As Sartre argued, "every belief is a belief that falls short," which is also a way of saying that each of the little affirmations of personal belief that are so common in our culture are unwitting confessions of despair. But it is exactly this despair that dares not speak its name, dares not *confess* itself.

To speak this way of American belief—since *no one* speaks this way about American belief—is to suggest that we are strangers to ourselves. But of course the idea that we are in need of a period of self-reflection and self-criticism is welcomed by no one and seems only to stimulate more heat, more *fervor*, more desperate sincerity. We would prefer to be left alone, warmed by our beliefs-that-make-no-sense, whether they are the quotidian platitudes of ordinary Americans, the magical thinking of evangelicals, the mystical thinking of New Age Gnostics, the teary-eyed patriotism of social conservatives, or the perfervid loyalty of the rich to their free-market Mammon. We are thus the congregation of the Church of the Infinitely Fractured, splendidly alone together. And apparently that's how we like it. Our pluralism of belief says both to ourselves and to others, "Keep your distance."

And yet isn't this all strangely familiar? Aren't these the false gods that Isaiah and Jeremiah confronted, the cults of the "hot air gods"? The gods that couldn't scare birds from a cucumber patch? Belief of every kind and cult, self-indulgence and self-aggrandizement of every degree, all flourish. And yet God is abandoned. For first and foremost, "the Lord is a God of justice" (Isaiah 30:18). And that is the problem that we ought to have at heart: our richness of belief masks a culture that is grotesquely unjust.

Western Europeans look with astonishment upon the things that we are willing to say we believe (for instance, our pie-eyed confidence—shared by more than one recent president—that Jesus is coming back and that our Middle East policy can help him on his way), but even more astonishing is what we are willing to do in spite of our beliefs. Several years ago, Norway began identifying corporations with which it had ethical concerns and removing its investments from those firms. It was an international list, but a great number of the businesses were from the United States (including Wal-Mart, most prominently, but also the mining industry and military contractors). Our ambassador to Norway, Benson Whitney (a venture capitalist), noted astutely that Norway's actions were "an accusation of bad ethics." He also complained that American companies were being unfairly excluded from Norway's investment portfolio through unfair screening and "lack of rigor." But I think it is safe to say that Norway's pleas for justice have fallen on deaf ears.

And yet those who have ears ought to hear. But hear what? Or perhaps it would be better to say "hear how?" Shall we turn against pluralism and relativism in the name of obedience to a single a
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less dangerous, as both our
and our internat
tagonisms testify.

A more positive way
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and idolatry. If it has not p
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than the pragmatism of
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in this regard. The Persian
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managed to remain above th
culture war, and restricted th
ue systems that might compe
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short, culture war is a great
to capitalism.

Capitalism has been so su

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Americans persist in believ-
n all the obliviousness of
Dr. Pangloss) that our eco-
tem is "the best of all possi-
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belief that a statue of the
can cry.

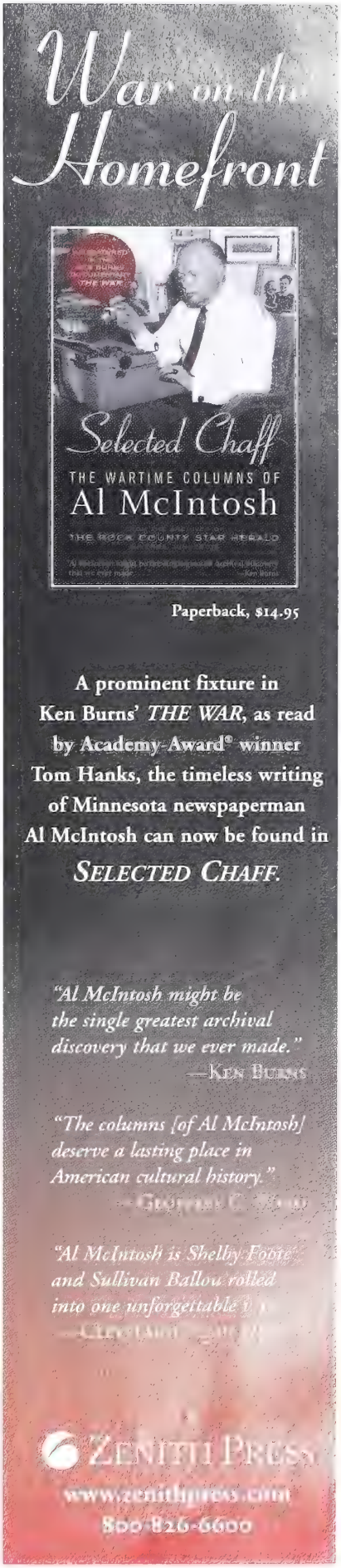
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obscures is complex and ex-
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old War, in which every in-
so an outsider and all neigh-
potential enemies. The
of American culture in this
as been its failure to provide
igious scholar Jan Assmann
tercultural translation": the
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ave very little interest in the
e of translation, largely be-
very much wish to remain
at one another's throats.

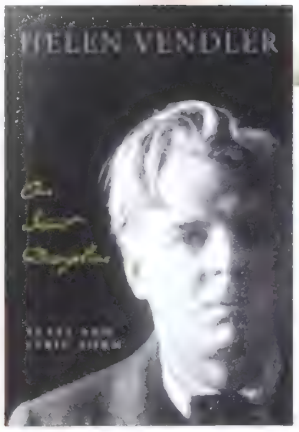
econd reality that needs to be
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r essential structure of capi-
a system of values. We need
to an honest acknowledg-
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n made very clear for us in re-
nths by the Chinese entre-
s who fill our pet food, tooth-
animal feed, and even our
with toxic filler. For the en-
eur, such filler is poison only if
e dies; otherwise it's just a prof-
n. The game is to take profit as
the poison line as possible.
on occasion profit spills over
ison and someone dies, there is
vringing of hands (and, in Chi-
th sentences), but soon back
n search of that ideal balance
n profit and death. We see very
he same principle at work in
ial agriculture. Just how much
ide and pesticide can we put
efore it starts killing something
nan bugs and pigweed? Here we
see the creed of "cost/benefit analysis" presided over with loving-kindness by accountants and legions of liability lawyers.

What's called for, then, is an enormous project of translation on two fronts. First, the translation that must take place between groups of believers, and second, the translation that will transform capitalism from a state of nature to an ethical system that must defend its values in, if you'll forgive me this phrase, a competing market of values. In fact, this process of translation can be seen at work already. For example, the recent turn of Christian evangelicals to a politics that includes environmentalism ("Creation care") has "translated" their beliefs into something that they can now share with mainstream environmentalists, pantheists, ecological scientists, and even outdoorsmen. For all these groups, the world is, if not something holy, then something that ought to be the object of great and abiding Care.

To borrow again from the work of Jan Assmann, the process of translation tends toward the abolition of what he calls the "Mosaic distinction": the opposition of the idolatrous and the true. Assmann's project is "part of the general humanist quest for overarching ideas that would help to destroy the boundaries between nations, confessions, religions, and classes and to 'deconstruct' ideological distinctions characterized by hatred, incomprehension, and persecution."

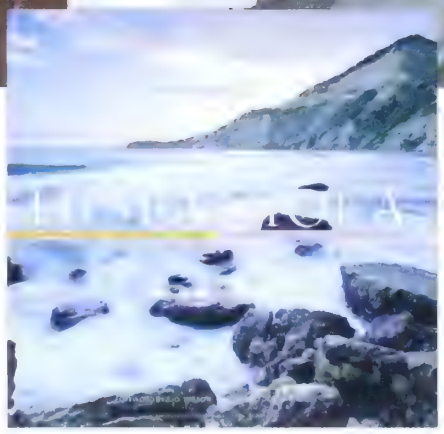
What I would add to Assmann's project is the idea that beyond the Mosaic distinction lies another distinction and another antagonism. This opposition is between those—whether religious or humanist—who see nature and humanity as a culture of *life* and those who see nature and humanity "instrumentally," as *things* to be manipulated rationally and technically in a culture of *profit*. For when at last the evangelical advocate of "Creation care" and the pantheist "nature lover" come together as one, they will see that what stands opposite them is something unmoored from any meaning other than its own relentless internal procedures: the Market God. ■







SLICING
THE SILENCE





OUR SECRET DISCIPLINE

Yeats and Lyric Form

HELEN VENDLER

"This new monumental study of the technical (and, ultimately, emotional) accomplishment in Yeats's poems represents something close to a life's work: it will surely attract international attention—Vendler's careful book will likely advance the way experts see Yeats, but she also speaks to all the readers who care about the Irish Nobelist's body of poetry, which looks more complex, and more delightful, through Vendler's lens."

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HISPANIOLA

A Photographic Journey through Island Biodiversity

Biodiversidad a Través de un Recorrido Fotográfico

ELADIO FERNANDEZ

FOREWORD BY EDWARD O. WILSON

INTRODUCTION BY PHILIPPE BAYARD, SOCIETE AUDUBON HAITI

At 40 million years, Hispaniola is far older than the Galápagos and is one of the most spectacular troves of biota on the planet. The extraordinary richness of species is showcased here in nearly 400 spectacular images by photographer and conservationist Eladio Fernández. The photos are accompanied by essays—in both English and Spanish—on Hispaniolan fungi, plants, and animals by the experts who know them best.

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—Robert Harris, author of *Imperium*

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SLICING THE SILENCE

Voyaging to Antarctica

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HARPER'S INDEX

ntage of Americans this year who say they are Democrat-leaning and Republican-leaning, respectively : 50, 36
Number of years since this poll began in 1990 in which the gap favoring either party was so large : 0
l contributions to 2008 presidential campaigns so far that have come from the oil and gas industry : $1,727,000
Total from the education industry : $6,406,000
rcentage of contributions from members of the U.S. military for 2002 campaigns that went to Democrats : 23
Percentage for 2008 campaigns so far : 35
Ron Paul among Republican candidates who have received the most in contributions from U.S. service members : 1
ber of bills, amendments, and resolutions sponsored by Fred Thompson during his eight years in the Senate : 167
Number of the sixty-five other senators serving those same years who sponsored more : 60
ge of Democrats who think that Hillary Clinton is proposing to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq within a year : 76
Minimum number of edits to Wikipedia since June 2004 that have been traced back to the CIA : 310
f all private insurance companies participating in Medicare that were audited in 2001 and 2006, respectively : 1/4, 1/7
Number of the forty-nine companies audited in 2003 that were found to have made major errors : 41
Number of these companies that Medicare took any action against : 0
that an American under the age of 65 went without health insurance at some point during the past two years : 1 in 3
Percentage change since 1990 in the number of pawn shops in New York City : +523
Estimated total annual revenue of panhandlers in the Las Vegas metropolitan area : $24,000,000
Percentage of U.S. CEOs who believed this spring that the economy was either "good" or "excellent" : 84
Percentage of Americans overall who believed this : 37
age change so far this year in the value of the S&P 500 and the major defense-company stocks, respectively : +7, +41
Number of the world's five most valuable companies last year that were Chinese : 0
Number this year : 3
Percentage change since 2000 in the value of China's private security and surveillance industry : +265
Estimated percentage of the world's male smokers who live in the United States and China, respectively : 3, 31
Estimated percentage of the world's female smokers : 8, 7
Portion of the world's supply of morphine that is consumed in six of the world's wealthiest countries : 4/5
Average number of sexual partners a person in a wealthy country has in his or her lifetime : 10
Average number in a poor country : 6
Number of separate human-trafficking task forces that the Department of Justice has set up since 2000 : 42
Number of trafficked people these task forces have identified : 1,362
mber of lap dancers whose tips and menstrual cycles were tracked by a recent University of New Mexico study : 18
Percentage by which a dancer's tips during fertile days exceeded those during menstruation : 92
Estimated number of stripper poles sold in the U.S. last year for home or gym use : 59,000
age amount that men spent in a store that used a "masculine" fragrance, in a Washington State University study : $81
Average amount they spent when the store used a "feminine" fragrance : $24
Estimated amount that Americans lose every year by not redeeming gift cards : $8,000,000,000
ercentage of shopping-mall and party Santas who believe that children "lie when they say they've been g
er of golf clubs a Phoenix tourism group is sending to troops overseas as part of its "Operation Wh
Number of Christmas trees FedExed last year to U.S. troops : 11,854
Number of seconds it takes a synthetic Christmas tree to burn : 32

Figures cited are the latest available as of October 2007. Sources are
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FLEXFUEL E85 ETHANOL

fuel source made from U.S.-grown biomaterial, such as corn and other grain products. fuel that can help decrease our dependence on petroleum and burns cleaner than gas E85 fuel generally has a higher octane rating than gasoline, which can result in slightly higher horsepower and torque l That's why Chevy has over 2 million E85 FlexFuel vehicles on the road today. And we offer more vehicle choices than any brand. Here's our lineup: Avalanche,™ Express,™ select models of Impala™ and Monte Carlo,® Silverado,® Suburban,® Tahoe, Uplander.®† Availability of E85 ethanol varies by state. That's why we have been instrumental in bringing an additiona E85 pumps across the nation. But don't worry if there isn't an E85 station near you. These FlexFuel vehicles can run on gasoline or E85 or a combination of both. Find out more at chevy.com

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION



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READINGS

[Fragments]

THE MENTAL KITCHEN

By W. H. Auden, from "De Droite et de Gauche," published in 1952 in the French monthly Preuves *and included in* The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Volume III, 1949–1955, *edited by Edward Mendelson, to be published next month by Princeton University Press. The original English text of the essay, which was translated into French by Christine Lalou, has been lost. Translated from the French by Richard Howard.*

Criticism is tradition defending itself against the three armies of the Goddess Stupidity: the army of amateurs who are ignorant of tradition; the army of conceited eccentrics who believe tradition should be suppressed by a stroke of the pen in order that true art may begin with them; and the army of academicians who believe they maintain tradition by a servile imitation of the past.

The desire to link art to life, beauty to truth, justice to goodness, almost infallibly leads criticism to utter a host of stupidities; a critic who ignores or represses this concern and contents himself with being no more than an amateur or an historian of art avoids covering himself with ridicule, but at what cost. No one reads him.

Judging a work of art is virtually the same mental operation as judging human beings, and requires the same aptitudes: first, a real love of works of art, an inclination to praise rather than blame, and regret when a complete rejection is required; second, a vast experience of all artistic activities; and last, an awareness, openly and happily accepted, of one's own prejudices. Some critics fail because they are pedants whose ideal of perfection is always offended by a concrete realization. Others fail because they are insular and hostile to what is alien to them; these critics, yielding to their prejudices without knowing they have them and sincerely offering judgments they believe to be objective, are more excusable than those who, aware of their prejudices, lack the courage to enter the lists to defend their personal tastes.

The best literary critic is not the one whose judgments are always right but the one whose essays compel you to read and reread the works he discusses; even when he is hostile, you feel that the work attacked is important enough to be worth the effort. There are other critics who, even when they praise a book, cancel any desire you might have to read it.

The terms "young" and "old" can be applied only within a closed system. In all matters subject to historical development, such as art or civilization, only the terms "before" and "after" may be applied. The *Iliad* precedes the *Aeneid*, but it is meaningless to say that it is older. Furthermore, it is no less absurd to say that works of art are immortal; the persistence of the work of art is not in the object's material duration but in its life-giving quality for a spectator or a

reader living in a particular historical period. The *Iliad* in 1950 is not identical to the *Iliad* in 1750, but it is not older. It can be said that a poem ages only when the language it is written in undergoes certain transformations while evidently remaining the same language. Strictly speaking, "Old English" should be called "Young English."

In the course of many centuries a few labor-saving devices have been introduced into the mental kitchen—alcohol, coffee, tobacco, Benzedrine, etc.—but these mechanisms are very crude, liable to affect the health of the cook, and constantly breaking down. Artistic composition in the twentieth century A.D. is pretty much the same as it was in the twentieth century B.C.: nearly everything has still to be done by hand.

Sincerity is like sleep. Normally, we should assume that, of course, we will be sincere, and not give it a second thought. Most of us, however, suffer from bouts of hypocrisy as we suffer from bouts of insomnia. In both cases, the remedy is generally quite simple: in the case of insomnia, a change of diet; in the case of hypocrisy, a change of company.

What English-language poet has not at times rebelled against a language in which the suffix -s makes a noun plural and a verb singular?

Art requires not only conventions of form but also conventions of rhetoric.

There can be no art without a convention which emphasizes certain aspects of experience as important and dismisses others to the background. A new convention is a revolution in sensibility. It appeals to and is adopted by a generation because it makes sense of experiences which had hitherto been ignored. Every convention, in its turn, when it has done its work, becomes reactionary and needs to be replaced. Its effects, however, do not disappear. Its successor embodies them.

When a reviewer declares a book to be "sincere," we know immediately: A. that it is not sincere, and B. that it is badly written.

A mannered style is like an eccentric garment. Very few writers can carry it off, but if they do, we are enchanted.

Rhymes, meters, stanzas, etc., are like servants. If the master is just enough to win their affection and firm enough to command their respect, the result is an orderly, happy household. If he is too tyrannical, the servants give notice; if he is too weak, they turn slovenly, impertinent, drunk, and dishonest.

The poet who writes "free verse" is like Robinson Crusoe on his island: he must do all his cooking, laundry, darning, etc. In a few exceptional cases, this manly independence produces something original and impressive, but more often the result is squalor: empty bottles on the unswept floor, dirty sheets on the unmade bed.

There is much to be said in favor of an established form, whether blank verse, heroic couplet, or any other. Instead of striving for an original personal form, at the risk of achieving no such thing, the poet employs a given form; he may then devote all his efforts to making it express everything he has to say. With rare exceptions, the more original a poet is, the less he considers it a limitation to employ a given form; furthermore, by continually working with the same form, he will exercise his mind to think easily and naturally within it and will become sensitive to the subtlest variations of which this form is capable.

If it were true that the purest poetry is the poetry that most closely approaches music, then the purest of all would be tea-table conversation; for in such conversation words have no meaning in themselves; their meaning depends entirely on the vocal modulations of those who are speaking. "What a lovely day!" can mean, according to the tone of voice, "And what do

[Conversation]

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

From a previously unaired portion of a 1982 radio interview with Graham Greene by Nigel Lewis, included on The Spoken Word: Graham Greene, *released in October by the British Library.*

NIGEL LEWIS: Let me ask you a stock question. If you had a wish, what would it be?

GRAHAM GREENE: The death of a certain individual.

LEWIS: [*Pause*] Do- does ... do you think about that all the time?

GREENE: No, no. I have a hope that he might suffer the fate many men in the media suffer.

LEWIS: Is that something that is constantly there?

GREENE: Not constantly, no. I'd say a Mass for his soul. [*Laughs*]

LEWIS: You'd say a Mass for his soul, but the man himself is evil?

GREENE: Yes!



/s in the Clearing, *by Michael Harrington, was exhibited in March at Galerie St-Laurent + Hill, in Ottawa.*

you think?" or "Admire me!" or else "Help me!" or even "Blah-blah-blah!" or "Bah!"

Poe's theory about the necessity of writing short poems is in accord with the Industrial Revolution. As societies grow, their poems tend to grow shorter. A peasant will listen to interminable epic poems in the village square; the literary man in big cities reads sonnets in his bath.

It is sometimes easier to enjoy wholeheartedly a fine poem that expresses convictions we do not share than a fine poem that expresses our own convictions, for the skepticism assignable to poetic form in itself disturbs us only insofar as the subject treated is really important to us.

Poetry in primitive societies—more static in their structure and more immediately governed by ritual practices—expresses simple things in a contorted manner; the sentiments are direct, the poetic form is complicated and complex. The poetry of our disintegrated society, which has little respect for ritual, seeks a direct expression for complicated things; the sentiments are subtle and ambiguous, the poetic form is "everyday language."

If art were magic, if the purpose of a love song were to incite the Cruel Fair to entrust the poet with the key to her bedroom, a magnum of champagne would be more beautiful than a sonnet.

Propaganda is the use of magic by those who no longer believe in it against those who still do.

Catharsis is properly effected not by [illegible] but by religious rites. It is also effected, less properly, by bullfights, professional football matches,

bad movies, military bands, and [illegible] at which ten thousand Girl Guides form themselves into a living flag.

In a photograph, differences between a crag, a marble column, an oak, a frog, and a human face are merely differences in shape and texture.

From the height of ten thousand feet, the earth appears to the human eye as it appears to [illegible] (that is to say, all history is reduced to the accidents of nature. This has the salutary effect of making historical evils, like national divisions and political hatreds, seem absurd.

I look down from an airplane upon a stretch of land which is obviously continuous. That, across it, marked by a tiny ridge or river or even by no topographical sign whatever, there should run a frontier, and that the human beings living on one side should hate or refuse to trade with or be forbidden to visit those on the other side, is, from the height where I find myself, revealed to me as ridiculous. Unfortunately, I cannot have this revelation without having the illusion that there are no historical values.

From this same height I cannot distinguish between an outcrop of rock and a magnificent cathedral, or between a happy family playing in a back yard and a flock of sheep; so that I am unable to feel any difference between dropping a bomb to destroy the cathedral, the happy family, or even the rocks or the flock. If the effects of distance between the observer and the observed were mutual, so that as the objects on the ground shrank in size and lost their uniqueness, the observer in the airplane felt himself shrinking and becoming more and more generalized, we should either give up flying or create a heaven on earth.

Those who accuse the movies of having a deleterious moral effect, of dividing families and increasing youthful crime, may well be right, but not for the reasons they usually give. It is not what movies are about—gangsters or adultery—which does the damage but the naturalistic nature of the medium itself which encourages a fantastic conception of time. In all narrative art, the narration of the action takes less time than it would take in real life; but in the novel or drama, even [illegible], the passage of time is abridged, i.e., placed in perspective. For example, a man woos a woman; in the theater this scene [illegible] minutes; but the audience will [illegible] knows took place over a period of [illegible] years. The absolute naturalism of the [illegible] creates the illusion of real life [illegible] so strong that the audience begin to be con[illegible] by what is on the screen, the continuity [illegible] forty minutes. When, [illegible] they become aware [illegible] and lose patience. Make movies as moral as you like, in their subject matter [illegible] still be harmful; because, if they seek to medicate a taste for virtue, they can[illegible] waiting witness that [illegible] few minutes. [illegible] the movie addict does

[Verse]

THREE POEMS

By Geoffrey Hill, from his collection A Treatise of Civil Power, *to be published next month by Yale University Press. Hill's poem "In Memoriam: Gillian Rose" appeared in the February issue of* Harper's Magazine.

AN EMBLEM

Among the slag remonstrances of this land
memory reinterprets us, as with
a Heraclitean emblem. On a sudden,
sunslanting rain intensifies, the roses
twitch more rapidly, flights
of invisible wing-roots lift
from the lighter branches; a purple sky
ushering a rainbow. Now it is gone.

LYRIC FRAGMENT

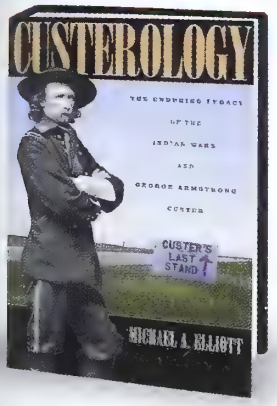
I hear an invisible
source of light skirling
off objects round about me—the granite portal,
women's hair also, and a deer's antlers.
In February a solitary oak leaf
dominates recognition. Are there
ancient coins wreathed with Medusa's head?

NACHWORT

Somehow, with a near-helpless cry, I shall
wrench out of this. I don't much [illegible]
the patience, now, of the [illegible]
that so enthralls itself, impels
mass, energy, deep, the stubborn [illegible]
the line that is that quickens to delay.

[illegible]
all wrought finalities, become a bab'bler
in the crowd's face.

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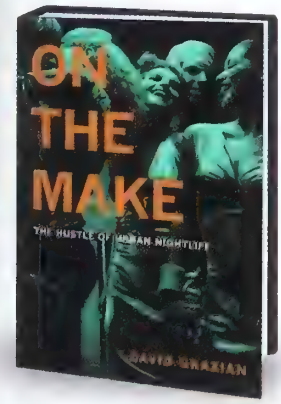
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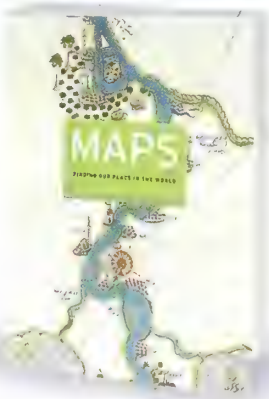
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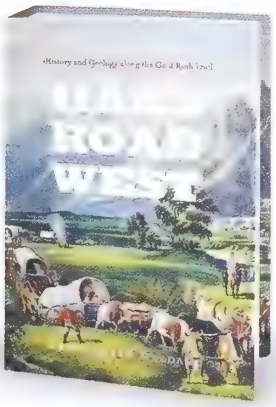
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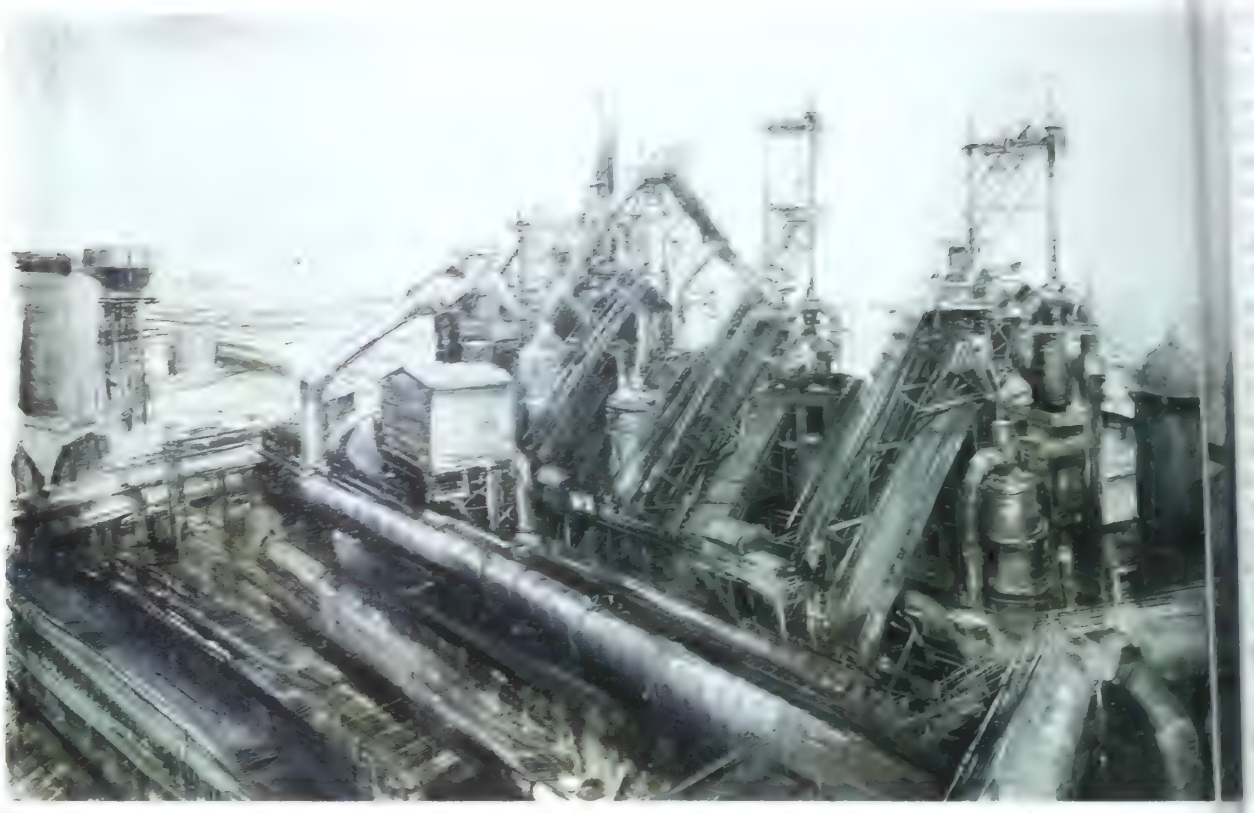
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[Dial]

A TSAR IS BORN

seph Stalin, Soviet Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov, Secretary of the Central

released in

banned it. The transcript is included in Soviet Cul-

Translate

SERGEI

like Hamlet. Ev

low foreigners

ally and opened the gates too wide, allowing the Germanizing of Russia. Catherine even more. Was the court of Alexander I really a Russian court? Was the ? No. They were German

the Terrible's remarkable enter-

ce a state monopoly on for-

n the Terrible was the first to

t: Lenin was the second.

ur Ivan the Terrible came out

nic.

torical figures correctly. For instance, it's wrong that Ivan the Terrible kisses his wife for so long. In those days,

And Ivan the Terrible was

wiped them out,

Time of Trou-

ng. God

tter. He should have

aren't very

tain stage of

ing around to close ranks with the West instead of orienting itself with the East.

ZHDANOV: The film has too much misuse of religious rituals.

VIACHESLAV MOLOTOV: This lends a patina of mysticism to the film, which should not be emphasized so strongly.

STALIN: Historical images have to be depicted truthfully. A director can retreat from history—he has to work with his imagination—but he can vary only within the limits of the style of the historical era. The portrayal of Vladimir Staritsky is very fine. He was very good at catching flies. What a man! A future tsar, and he catches flies with his hands! You have to give details like that. They reveal the essence of a man.

NIKOLAI CHERKASOV: Can the killing of Staritsky be left in the screenplay?

STALIN: You can leave it. There were killings.

MOLOTOV: Repressions in general can and should be shown, but it has to be shown why they were committed, in the name of what.

EISENSTEIN: Several moments succeeded, and that gives me confidence that we can do the second part, too.

STALIN: We're not talking about what succeeded and what was good. Right now, we're talking only about the movie's shortcomings.

EISENSTEIN: Are there going to be any other special instructions for the movie?

STALIN: I'm not giving you instructions, I'm expressing a viewer's thoughts.

[Correspondence]

GUANTANAMO BAYWATCH

From an August exchange between Lieutenant Colonel Edward M. Bush, an attorney for the Navy, and Clive A. Stafford Smith, a lawyer representing detainees held by the United States at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and the director of the nonprofit organization Reprieve.

RE: DISCOVERY OF CONTRABAND CLOTHING

Dear Mr. Stafford Smith,

Your client, Shaker Aamer, was recently discovered to be wearing Under Armor briefs and a Speedo bathing suit. Coincidentally, Mohammed el-Gharani, who is represented by Zachary Katznelson of Reprieve, was also recently discovered to be wearing Under Armor briefs. The items were not issued to the detainees by Guantánamo personnel, nor did they enter the camp through regular mail.

We are investigating this matter to determine the origins of the above contraband and ensure that parties who may have been involved understand the seriousness of this transgression. As I am sure you understand, we cannot tolerate contraband being surreptitiously brought into the camp. Such activities threaten the safety of the staff, the detainees, and visiting counsel.

In furtherance of our investigation, we would like to know whether the contraband material, or any portion thereof, was provided by you or anyone else on your legal team. We are compelled to ask these questions in light of the coincidence that two detainees represented by counsel associated with Reprieve were found wearing the same contraband underwear.

Thank you as always for your cooperation.

RE: THE ISSUE OF UNDERWEAR

Dear Commander,

Thank you very much for your letter, which I received yesterday. I will confess that I have never received such an extraordinary letter in my entire career. Knowing you as I do, I do not attribute this allegation to you personally. Obviously, however, I take accusations that I may have committed a criminal act very seriously. In this case, I hope you understand how patently absurd it is, and how easily it could be disproved by the records in your possession. I also hope you understand my frustration at yet another unfounded accusation against lawyers who are simply trying to do their job—a job that involves legal briefs, not the other sort.

Let me briefly respond: First, neither I, nor Mr. Katznelson, nor anyone else associated with us has had anything to do with smuggling "unmentionables" to these men, nor would we ever do so. Second, the idea that we could smuggle in underwear is far-fetched. As you know, anything we bring in is searched, and there is a camera in the room when we visit the client. Does someone seriously suggest that Mr. Katznelson or I have been stripping off to deliver underwear to our clients?

Third, your own records prove that nobody associated with my office has seen Mr. Aamer for a full year. Thus, it is physically impossible for us to have delivered anything to him that recently surfaced on his person. Surely you do not suggest that in your maximum-security prison, where Mr. Aamer has been held in solitary confinement almost continuously since September 24, 2005, and where he has been more closely monitored than virtually any prisoner on the base, your staff have missed the fact that he has been wearing both Speedos and "Under Armor" for twelve months?

It was therefore patently clear that my office had nothing to do with this question of lingerie. However, I am unwilling to allow the issue of underwear to drop there. It seems, I would suggest, the same people delivered these items to both men, and it



Tanker sans titre, *by Stephane Joannes, was on display last month at Stephane Hoppenot in London*

does not take Sherlock Holmes to figure out that members of your staff (either the military or the interrogators) did it. Getting to the bottom of this would help ensure that in future there is no shadow of suspicion cast on the lawyers who are simply trying to do their job, so I have done a little research to help you in your investigations.

I had never heard of "Under Armor briefs" until you mentioned them, and my Internet research has advanced my knowledge in two ways—first, Under Armour apparently sports a *u* in its name, which is significant only because it helps with the research. Second, and rather more important, this line of underpants is very popular among the military. One article stated: "A specialty clothing maker is winning over soldiers and cashing in on war. . . . Founded in 1996, Under Armour makes a line of tops, pants, shorts, underwear and other 'performance apparel' designed for a simple purpose: to keep you warm in the cold and cool in the heat." This stuff is obviously good for the men and women stationed in the sweaty climate of Guantánamo. As one soldier attests, "The only thing that would make them better is if the Army would issue them."

I don't mean to say that it is an open-and-shut case proving that your military provided the underwear, as I understand that other people use Under Armour. One group I noticed is amateur weight lifters, who seem confused as to whether Under Armour gave them a competitive advantage. In the grand scheme of things, however, I would like to think we can all agree that interrogators or military officers are more likely to have had access to Messrs. Aamer and el-Gharani than the U.S.A. Powerlifting Collegiate Committee.

On the issue of the Speedo swimming trunks, my research really does not help very much. I cannot imagine who would want to give my client Speedos, or why. Mr. Aamer is hardly in a position to go swimming, since the only available water is in the toilet in his cell. I should say that your letter brought to mind a sign in the changing room of a local swimming pool that showed someone diving into a lavatory and bore the caption, "We don't swim in your toilet, so please don't pee in our pool." I presume that nobody thinks that Mr. Aamer wears Speedos while paddling in his privy.

I [illegible] assure me that you are satisfied that neither I nor my colleagues had anything to do with this. In light of the fact that you felt it necessary to question whether we had violated [illegible] rules, I look forward to hearing the conclusion of your investigation.

Yours sincerely,
Clive A. Stafford Smith

[Fantasy]

MY ORC PROBLEM—AND OURS

By James P. Pinkerton, from "The Once & Future Christendom," in the September 10 issue of The American Conservative. *Pinkerton, a columnist for* Newsday, *served in the White House under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.*

With apologies to the Frankenfood-fearers and polar bear–sentimentalizers, the biggest danger we face is the clash of civilizations, especially as we rub against the bloody borders of Islam. What if, in the coming century, we lose that clash, and "Eurabia" indeed comes to pass? If Muslimization befalls Europe, the consequences would be catastrophic for Americans as well. Although some neoconservatives, bitter about Old European "surrender monkeys," might be quietly pleased at the prospect, a Salafist surge into the heart of Europe would be a wound that would never heal, not across the great sward of America, not even in the carpeted think-warrens of the American Enterprise Institute. A dolorous bell would toll for all of us scattered in the European Diaspora.

For better ideas, we might turn to J.R.R. Tolkien, whose vision of self-preservation embraces a realistic view of human nature, including its limitations. He counsels robust self-defense of the homeland, which he calls the Shire, even as he advocates an overall modesty of heroic ambition—not a bad approach for true conservatives, who appreciate the value of lumpy hodgepodge as opposed to artificially imposed universalisms. So with Tolkien in mind, we might speak of "the Shire strategy": the Shire is ours, we want to keep it, and so we must defend it. Yet by the same principle, since others have their homelands, we should leave them alone, as long as they leave us alone. Live and let live. Such an outlook is not world-historical but merely practical.

After our recent spasm of universalism, it is time for a healthy respite, an each-to-his-own particularism. Tolkien comes to the particular through the peculiar, creating his Bosch-like wonderland of exotic beings: Elves, Orcs, Trolls, Wargs, Ents, Easterlings, Southrons. To audiences tutored in the P.C. pieties of skin-deep multiculturalism, Tolkien offers a different sort of diversity—of genuine difference, with no pretense of similarity, let alone universal equality. In his world, it is perfectly natural that all creatures great and small—the Hobbits are indeed small, around three feet high—have their own place in the chain of being. So the Hobbits, low down on that chain, mind their own business. Of all those in

[Black box]

NO FUN ALLOWED

From the National Transportation and Safety Board cockpit recording of a November 27, 2004, flight taken by Blackwater contractors in the mountains of Afghanistan. Pilot Noel English, copilot Loren Hammer, flight mechanic Melvin Rowe, and two U.S. Army soldiers died when the light cargo plane hit a cliff side. Army Specialist Harley Miller survived the crash but froze to death before rescue teams could locate him. The crew detoured from their regular route to take a joyride through a canyon. The recording was played during an October congressional hearing on Blackwater's performance in Iraq and Afghanistan.

LOREN HAMMER: Twenty-seven million people in this country and, boy, you wouldn't guess that. Everybody's scattered.

NOEL ENGLISH: Yeah, but I'm surprised at how you can almost always look down and see somebody.

HAMMER: Yeah, there seem to be dwellings just about everywhere you go. This is fun!

ENGLISH: We're not supposed to be having fun, though. No fun allowed, goddamnit.

HAMMER: It's supposed to be all work. We can't enjoy any of it. 'Cause we're getting paid too much to be having fun.

MELVIN ROWE: I don't know what we're gonna see—we don't normally go this route. Get yourself a drink.

ENGLISH: All we want is to avoid seeing a rock at twelve o'clock.

HAMMER: Yeah, you're an X-wing-fighter *Star Wars* man!

ENGLISH: I do believe it's about time we're gonna start climbing. This valley might peter out, but it was good while it lasted. It'd be nice to get a real good sound through my MP3 player in here. Philip Glass or something suitably New Agey.

HAMMER: No, we gotta have butt-rock—that's the only way to go. Quiet Riot, Twisted Sister.

ENGLISH: Let's look and see if we've got anywhere we can pick our way through. It's gonna spit us out down at the bottom anyway. We can always turn around up here.

HAMMER: Yeah, we could do a one-eighty here if we had to.

ROWE: Okay, you guys gonna make this right?

HAMMER: Let's turn around.

ROWE: Yeah, you need to, uh, [illegible]

ENGLISH: Goddamnit!

ROWE: Hundred, ninety knots, call [illegible]

ENGLISH: Ah, fuck. Fuck! Oh, God.

ROWE: We're going down.

Tolkien's bestiary, the Hobbits are his favorite[illegible]ly good peasants that they [illegible] hunger for martial fabulation or Riefenstahlian dramatization; one of their aphorisms is that [illegible] should avoid "trouble too big for you."

The Hobbits' mission is the destruction of the One Ring, which leads first to temptation and then to evil, and if the dreaded Sauron obtains it, all hope for freedom and difference will be lost under his world-flattening tyranny. Hobbits, unlike other sentient beings, seem relatively immune to the Ring's seduction. Hobbits like to smoke and drink, but all grander forms of world-girdling intoxication are lost on these simple folk. Ring-lust is felt by men, not the lesser beings. The Hobbits just want their Shire to return to normalcy.

"It does not do," Tolkien wrote, "to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him." The dragon, red in tooth and crescent, is lurking and cannot be ignored. As European birthrates plummet, the continent faces demographic desiccation. A civilization-saving alternative to Muslimization must be found. Eastern Europeans are needed where they are, to defend against the New Tatars farther east. A better solution would be to bring poor children from such countries as Argentina home to Europe, allowing the New World to help rescue the Old World.

To keep the peace, the West shall stay the West, while the East can do as it wishes on its side of the frontier, and only on its side. The Western political alliance must be bigger than just a few relatively friendly countries along either side of the Atlantic. In Tolkien's world, it was the Council of Elrond; perhaps in our world it could be the Council of the West. The immediate mission is to delineate a Christian Zone and a Muslim Zone, dividing countries if need be. The Christian countries of Africa are part of the Shire and need to be embraced with tough love, but what of Israel? After all, the entire Middle East is looking more and more Mordorlike. What ever possessed us to think we could remake Muslims in our own image? Was it the Ring that lured us?

Some say the solution to Middle Eastern problems is a preemptive strike: Get them before they get us. That is exactly the sort of beautiful[illegible] that Tolkien warned against—the frenzy to solve a problem through one hubristic stroke, to wield the Ring of power for oneself, even if that grab guarantees one's fall into darkness. Having agreed that Israel must survive within the protective ambit of Christendom, the [illegible] Muslims—who are in the [illegible] Caliphate—in a grand summit. Only then, when West meets East in diplomatic twain, might a chance exist for an endurable [illegible] Shire is ours now, but the way things [illegible] might not be ours forever. We must vow to defend the Shire always, for future epics await us.

[Analysis]

AND LEAD US NOT

By David Lewis and Philip Kitcher, from "Divine Evil" in Philosophers Without Gods, *published in August by Oxford University Press. Lewis, a professor of philosophy at Princeton, was the author of several books, including* Counterfactuals *and* On the Plurality of Worlds. *The essay is based on an outline he wrote before his death in 2001. Kitcher is a professor of philosophy at Columbia.*

Standard versions of the Argument from Evil concern the evils God fails to prevent: the pain and suffering of human beings and the sins people commit. The most ambitious versions of the argument claim that the existence of evil is logically incompatible with the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and completely benevolent deity. In my view, this version succeeds conclusively. But I think the usual philosophical discussions of the problem of evil are a sideshow. What interests me here is a simpler argument, one that has been strangely neglected.

We might start instead from the evils God himself perpetrates. In duration and intensity, these dwarf the kinds of suffering and sin to which the standard versions allude. For God has prescribed torment for insubordination. The punishment is to go on forever, and the agonies to be endured by the damned intensify, in unimaginable ways, the sufferings we undergo in our earthly lives. In both dimensions, time and intensity, the torment is infinitely worse than all the suffering and sin that will have occurred during the history of life in the universe. What God does is thus infinitely worse than what the worst of tyrants have done.

Many Christians appear to be good people, worthy of the admiration of those of us who are non-Christians. From now on let us suppose, for simplicity's sake, that these Christians accept a God who inflicts infinite torment on those who do not accept Him. Appearances notwithstanding, are those who worship the perpetrator of divine evil themselves evil?

Consider Fritz. Fritz is a neo-Nazi. He admires Hitler. Fritz's admiration for an evil man suffices, we might think, to make Fritz evil. But perhaps this is too quick. Fritz's evil character, we might say, arises not from his admiration for Hitler but from his willingness to behave in the same way. Simply admiring Hitler isn't enough. One must also be disposed to emulate Hitler's deeds; and if this disposition is present, one is evil, whether or not the admiration remains.

Modest Fritz is not so disposed. He thinks himself unworthy. "Great deeds are reserved for

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TORT REFORMATION

From a petition for permanent injunction filed September 14 in Douglas County, Nebraska, in the case of State Senator Ernie Chambers *v.* God.

COMES NOW the Plaintiff and alleges for his claim for relief against the Defendant:

NATURE OF THE CASE

This action seeks a permanent injunction ordering Defendant to cease certain harmful activities and the making of terroristic threats. This Honorable Court has jurisdiction by virtue of the fact that Defendant, being omnipresent, is personally present in Douglas County. Plaintiff requests this Honorable Court to take judicial notice that Defendant is also omniscient.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

Defendant has made and continues to make terroristic threats of grave harm to innumerable persons, including constituents of Plaintiff whom Plaintiff has the duty to represent. Defendant has directly and proximately caused, *inter alia*, fearsome floods, egregious earthquakes, horrendous hurricanes, terrifying tornadoes, pestilential plagues, ferocious famines, devastating droughts, genocidal wars, birth defects, and the like. Defendant has made admissions against Defendant's own interests to various handpicked, trusted chroniclers of yore regarding the causing of calamitous catastrophes resulting in the widespread death, destruction, and terrorization of millions upon millions of the earth's inhabitants, including innocent babes, children, the aged, and the infirm, without mercy or distinction. Defendant has directed said chroniclers to assemble and disseminate in written form said admissions throughout the earth in order to inspire fear, dread, anxiety, terror, and uncertainty, so as to coerce obedience to Defendant's will. Defendant has manifested neither compassion nor remorse, proclaiming that Defendant "will laugh" when calamity comes.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff respectfully prays this Honorable Court to set a date for a hearing as expeditiously as possible if the Court deems such a hearing not to be a futile act.

great men," he says. (Compare: Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.) Fritz wouldn't even beat up a defenseless weakling—not even with a dozen of his mates at his side. "This is the Führer's work, not ours," he argues. In this case, Fritz is evil, it seems, simply because it is evil to admire someone evil in full recognition of the characteristics and actions that express his evil. Evil is contagious, transmitted by clear-eyed admiration.

Some worshippers of the perpetrator of divine evil are obviously evil. Some of them even think that delight in the eternal sufferings of worldly sinners will be a component of the bliss of the saved. Many other Christians genuinely forgive their enemies. Yet they knowingly worship the perpetrator of divine evil. Perhaps they do not like to think about it, but they firmly believe that their God will consign people they know, some of whom they love, to an eternity of unimaginable agony. They do whatever they can to urge others to join them in their faith, but they are well aware that many will not fall into line, and they think that, if that happens, the perpetrator will be right to start the eternal torture. They endorse the divine evil.

Of course, our friends do not see this as divine evil. Instead, they talk of divine justice and the fitting damnation of sinners. If Fritz is clear about Hitler's actual deeds, he will tend to use similar locutions. Again, modest Fritz isn't disposed to persecute the Jews in his neighborhood. Yet Fritz would approve of the persecution being carried out by the proper authorities. So too with the Christians. Perhaps they would grieve that the punishment was prescribed for *us*; perhaps they would blame themselves for not having done more. But, in the end, they would worship the perpetrator.

Among those of us who do not worship the perpetrator, there are many who admire worshippers of the perpetrator. We admire some of our neighbors; we admire religious people famed for their selflessness, their courage, or their scholarship—Mother Teresa, Father Murphy, Jean Buridan. Yet we also know that the perpetrator's evil extends to them. They admire evil and are tainted by it. In admiring them, we too admire evil. Does the evil spread by contagion to us? What of those who admire those who admire those who worship the perpetrator? If admiration transmits evil, then eventually almost every living person will be infected. The more we are prepared to be tolerant in religious matters, the more the contagion will spread. The only ones to escape will be the committed misanthropes. Leaving aside those who find nothing admirable in humanity, everyone will be tainted with divine evil.



cy Lift," by Anthony Goicolea, was on view this spring at Postmasters Gallery, in New York City.

[Transcript]

LONESOME DOVES

From the audio recording of a December 1990 meeting of Saddam Hussein, former Texas Governor John Connally, and Oscar S. Wyatt Jr., founder of the Coastal Corporation. Iraq then occupied Kuwait, and Saddam was holding American oil workers as hostages in Iraq; he released them soon thereafter. Wyatt, accused of funneling millions of dollars in illegal kickbacks to Saddam's regime in exchange for oil contracts under the United Nations Oil for Food Programme, pleaded guilty in October to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. The recording was presented as evidence during his trial.

OSCAR S. WYATT JR.: Mr. President, you set in motion what I consider the best application of oil revenues by any government. I've seen the improvements and the infrastructure—developments of which you can justly be proud.

JOHN CONNALLY: You understand, I'm sure, that we're here as private citizens, speaking only for ourselves. We are not here representing this American administration. As a matter of fact, we are certain that President Bush will be very displeased that we are here at all.

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Our problem is not with any individual. It is with the U.S. government.

CONNALLY: And we are not in sympathy with the hard-line views our president has been expressing. We don't fully understand why he takes the hard line. But, Mr. President, it is our view that the American people are not going to be happy to go to war over oil.

SADDAM: Mr. Wyatt, you have visited Baghdad more than once over the past fifteen years.

WYATT: Oh, many times. Thirty or forty times.

SADDAM: So you would be in the best position to describe our effort fairly.

WYATT: Absolutely. I've done that.

SADDAM: Until even 1972, Baghdad was a derelict village with nothing to show for itself except two buildings that were under construction: this palace and the National Assembly. Everything outstanding that you see here was built by us. So we know what building means, the value of it, and we are good at building. Those who are keen to build [illegible] to achieve stability and therefore [illegible] not war. I am confident that the people of the United States want peace.

WYATT: I have a great affinity for your country, and I have many friends here. We [illegible]

SADDAM: Mr. Connally, [illegible]

people are not prepared to die for oil. I [illegible] the issue of oil, Mr. Bush is incorrect. When will the Arabs go with their oil? You know, Mr. Wyatt, that the Libyans [illegible] their oil exports to the U.S. until August.

WYATT: I was responsible for a lot of those sales.

SADDAM: So we don't know why Mr. Bush [illegible] connected things in this way.

CONNALLY: He's trying to leave the impression that the supply of oil to the free world will be jeopardized with Iraq in control of Kuwait, but he doesn't explain how. And the American people don't buy it. Nor are they willing to fight to restore the al-Sabah family to power in Kuwait. They couldn't care less.

SADDAM: Is it right for the values of freedom and democracy in the United States to be aligned with the autocratic systems of the chieftains in Kuwait who have been oppressing people?

CONNALLY: No, Mr. President. But if you study American history, you know that, unfortunately, we're all too often inconsistent in our foreign policy, supporting despotic governments against democracy.

WYATT: A very small suggestion: Turn the lights and water on in Kuwait, and have the army commanders share their food with the people in the embassy. If the troops have a little food, the people can have a little food too. Your people have conducted themselves excellently. I want to compliment you for the way you all have avoided confrontation on many occasions.

CONNALLY: The president is trying to paint you with a very dark brush. As you well know, he's called you a Hitler, and he's talked about you torturing people. We believe the release of the hostages will give us a chance to prove that you have the compassionate instincts we know you have. We try to say that you are a rich country, rich in oil, and that you have used those riches not for yourself, not for your family, but for your country.

SADDAM: I am pleased that you came to Baghdad. We cannot forget friends. All we want is for civility and peace to prevail in the region. But we are people that have as much dignity to cherish as do the American people. Iraq has always been eager to [illegible] with American businessmen and to [illegible] the volume of trade between the two countries. But President Bush has created a quagmire. I don't know who it was who advised him, wrongly, that if he were to push Iraqis with [illegible] Iraqis would succumb. This is wrong. Mr. Bush should have remembered that the people of Iraq fought Iran for eight years to keep their heads up before the Iranians. We do not [illegible] at the expense of our dignity or our freedom. We want the kind of peace that will grant everybody the freedom to realize their own fates.

CONNALLY: You've been most gracious.

WYATT: Mr. President, do you have one more minute for me? We have perfected a process that can convert your crude that is not saleable in its current form to saleable oil as soon as we get the present problems straightened out. We have the process running in, of all places, Wichita, Kansas. And we've unveiled our first plant in Aruba. We have run an Iraqi crude in Wichita to test the process. We can market all Iraqi crudes.

SADDAM: The most important thing for us to do is build, build, build, and build.

[Contentions]

THE OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA

From comments by John Mackey, cofounder and CEO of Whole Foods Market, posted to a Yahoo Finance message board and included in a June filing by the Federal Trade Commission. Mackey began writing frequently in 1999 under the name Rahodeb, an anagram of his wife's name, Deborah. He disclosed his identity only in August 2006, when he lost to another user in a bet concerning the performance of Whole Foods stock. The FTC is seeking to block the acquisition of Wild Oats Markets by Whole Foods.

APRIL 28, 2000, 1:10 P.M.: I like Mackey's haircut. I think he looks cute! If his hair bothers you now, you should have seen what it looked like ten years ago! Clearly, the guy was, and is, into alternative lifestyles. If you patronize any Whole Foods store, you'll see that tattoos, piercings, unusual dress, and interesting haircuts are everywhere. In comparison, Mackey looks like a model for Brooks Brothers!

JULY 6, 2000, 3:04 P.M.: Whole Foods has made a career of putting food co-ops out of business. Given a choice between the drab dinginess of most food co-ops and a beautiful, well-stocked Whole Foods Market, most people desert the co-op in droves.

OCTOBER 11, 2002, 7:04 P.M.: Am I an insider at Whole Foods? Some are convinced that I'm John Mackey himself. I guess until the real John Mackey shows up, having such a reputation probably gives my arguments more credibility than they deserve!

JANUARY 7, 2003, 9:12 A.M.: Contrary to Karl Marx's economic nonsense, capitalism is the one economic system that creates a "harmony of interests" among the various stakeholders of a business. Indeed, the very nature of business is for capital and labor to cooperate to create value for customers. The Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco debacles have once again shown what a focus on profit alone causes. The Whole Foods Market motto—WHOLE FOODS, WHOLE PEOPLE, WHOLE PLANET—captures the company's mission to find success in customer satisfaction and wellness, employee excellence and happiness, enhanced shareholder value, community support, and environmental improvement. What a beautiful philosophy! I love it, and I've got good news for you: if you don't like the Whole Foods business philosophy, then you don't have to shop there, you don't have to work there, and you don't have to invest there. You can make your marketplace exchanges with other companies who share your own belief system. As for me, I think I'll keep exchanging with this company. I like their food, and I've made a ton of money on their stock.

FEBRUARY 8, 2003, 6:18 P.M.: I find all the continual talk about Whole Foods merchandise being overpriced quite humorous! The assumption is that there is some "fair price" that Whole Foods isn't measuring up to. This is absurd! Is a Toyota Camry too expensive? What about an Audi A4? What about a Lexus? Mercedes? What about a Ferrari? These are all subjective decisions each individual must make for himself. If you think Whole Foods is gouging customers, then go into competition against them and offer the same quality at a lower price if you can. Competing with Whole Foods may be harder than you think!

FEBRUARY 25, 2003, 1:31 P.M.: Wal-Mart is one of the greatest companies in the history of the world! This single company has done more for improving our society than every labor union combined. Wal-Mart was just named the #1 Most Admired Company in the United States by *Fortune* magazine. Of course, you don't give much credibility to their writings, no doubt preferring magazines like *Mother Jones* for your interpretation of the world. How come Whole Foods workers' wages and benefits are over eight times the shareholders' profits? I would think that if Whole Foods were solely concerned with profit they would pay their employees less and make much more profit than they actually do. You believe that corporations care only about profit and stockholders and nothing about anyone else. This may play well in Hollywood and in *The Nation*, but it isn't true. As a stockholder at Whole Foods, I have the opposite concern. It is obvious to me that Whole Foods cares way too much about its employees and not nearly enough about its stockholders! As to union-busting, I hope Whole Foods does it. Unions are a cancer in our society.

FEBRUARY 27, 2003, 2:41 P.M.: Adam Smith was one of the greatest thinkers of all time. The entire capitalist revolution that has lifted most of the world out of poverty largely traces back to Smith. The world is steadily moving toward collective progress and prosperity. Any careful student of history cannot help but be impressed at how far humankind has collectively come the past 250 years. It is simply incredible! I have seen the invisible hand, and it is beautiful indeed.

MARCH 27, 2006, 7:18 A.M.: I don't see Wal-Mart as a threat to Whole Foods. Rather, I believe that Wal-Mart will ultimately increase Whole Foods' sales. Most Whole Foods core customers don't like Wal-Mart. Why not? Too big. Too dirty. Too ugly. Bad service. Lack of knowledge about the products. An underpaid workforce resulting in a high ratio of unenthusiastic and poorly trained part-time employees. Bad record on social responsibility. Wal-Mart, like all retailers, isn't unbeatable. They don't appeal to everyone. They emphasize low prices and sacrifice other values to achieve low prices—quality, selection, service, store ambience, and beauty. These sacrificed values are important to Whole Foods' core customers. Price isn't the only thing that matters—perhaps to you but not to them.

APRIL 26, 2006, 3:54 P.M.: No doubt Whole Foods has more gay people working and shopping there than Wal-Mart does because of its greater tolerance and appreciation for alternative lifestyles (and therefore probably more with AIDS). On the other hand, Wal-Mart probably has a lot more people working and shopping there who are obese, smoke, are alcoholics, have heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

AUGUST 6, 2006, 6:19 P.M.: This will be my final message on this bulletin board, as I have lost my bet. The lesson from this bet: never underestimate the manic-depressive [illegible] Mr. Market. Whole Foods had a very strong quarter, but Mr. Market hit the panic button, and the stock has crashed. Whole Foods has a very bright future and I still [illegible] hold my stock for a very long time [illegible] the growth begins to slow significantly. I've en-

joyed my years on this board, but all things must come to an end. To those who were right about my true identity all along, congratulations on your cleverness.

[F.A.Q.]

WHOPPERS

From questions and answers posted to a public-relations website launched this spring by McDonald's in the United Kingdom, makeupyourownmind.co.uk.

Q. Are your burgers made from cows' eye sockets?
A. No. All McDonald's hamburgers are made from whole cuts of forequarter and flank (similar to the mince you'd buy in the supermarket).
Q. I heard that your burger meat is taken from the vaginas of cows. Can you confirm that this is not true?
A. McDonald's uses only whole cuts of forequarter and flank.
Q. Is there really cow sperm in the burgers?
A. No. All McDonald's hamburgers are made of beef. Nothing else.
Q. If the burgers are 100 percent beef now, what were they before?
A. McDonald's beef burgers have always been 100 percent beef, with nothing added apart from a pinch of salt and pepper after cooking.
Q. Why is it that hamburgers are made of beef? Shouldn't they be made out of ham?
A. The term "hamburger" is a generic name for a style of beef sandwich that originated in Hamburg, Germany, in the late eighteenth century. This sandwich was made, and continues to be made, from beef, not pork.
Q. Why is it all of your burgers look like they have been sat on?
A. Occasionally buns can look a bit squashed because of the way they have been toasted or the way they're packaged. McDonald's does everything it can to make sure this doesn't happen. If you are not satisfied with the way your burger looks, please return it and ask for another one.
Q. I have read in papers that the staff take a poo in the food, watch people eat it, then go and laugh in their faces. Is this true?
A. This is completely unfounded. McDonald's is unsure which papers have been reporting this and would like to see the source if you still have a copy. Please contact the Customer Services team with any details.

[Fiction]

TAPE MEASURE

by Nadine Gordimer, from Beethoven Was One-Sixteenth Black and Other Stories, *to be published this month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. The story originally appeared in* Daedalus.

No one of any kind or shape or species can begin to imagine what it's like for me being swirled and twisted around all manner of filthy objects in a horrible current. I, who was used to, knew only, the calm processes of digestion as my milieu. How long will this chaos last (the digestion has its ordained program) and where am I going? Helpless. All I can do is trace back along my length—it is considerable also in the measure of its time—how I began and lived and what has happened to me.

My beginning is ingestion—yes, sounds strange. But there it is. I might have been ingested on a scrap of lettuce or in a delicacy of raw minced meat known as, I believe, Beefsteak Tartare. Could have got in on a finger licked by my human host after he'd ignored he'd been caressing his dog or cat. Doesn't matter. Once I'd been ingested, I knew what to do where I found myself, I gained consciousness; nature is a miracle in the know-how it has provided, ready, in all its millions of varieties of eggs: I hatched from my minute containment that the human eye never could have detected on the lettuce, the raw meat, the finger, and began to grow myself. Segment by segment. Measuredly. That's how my species adapts and maintains itself, advances to feed along one of the most intricately designed passageways in the world. An organic one. Of course, that's connected with perhaps an even more intricate system, the whole business of veins and arteries—bloody; our species has nothing to do with that pulsing about all over in narrow tubes.

My place was warm and smooth-walled, rosy-dark, and down into its convolutions (around thirty coiled feet of it) came, sometimes more regularly than others, always ample, many different kinds of nourishment to feed on, silently, unknown and unobserved. An ideal existence! The many forms of life, in particular that of millions of the species of my host who go hungry in the cruel light and cold my darkness protected me from (with the nourishment comes not only what the host eats but intelligence of what he knows of his kind's being and environment)—they would envy one of my kind. No enemy, no predator after you, no rival. Just your own winding length, moving freely, resting sated. The nourishment that arrived so reliably—years and years in my case—was even already broken down for consumption, ready mashed, you might say, and mixed with sustaining liquids. Sometimes during my long habita-

tion there would be a descent of some potent liquid that roused me pleasurably all my length—which, as I've remarked, had become considerable—so that I was lively, so to speak, right down to the last, most recently added segments of myself.

Come to think of it, there were a couple of attempts on my life before the present catastrophe. But they didn't succeed. No! I detected at once, infallibly, some substance *aggressive* toward me concealed in the nourishment coming down. Didn't touch that delivery. Let it slowly urge its way wherever it was going—in its usual pulsions, just as when I have had my fill; untouched! No thank you. I could wait until the next delivery came down: clean, I could tell. Whatever my host had in mind, then, I was my whole length aware, ahead of him. Yes! Oh, and there was one occurrence that might or might not have had to do with whatever this aggression against my peaceful existence might mean. My home, my length, were suddenly irradiated with some weird seconds-long form of what I'd learned secondhand from my host must have been light, as if some—Thing—was briefly enabled to look inside my host. All the wonderful secret storage that was my domain. But did those rays find me? See me? I didn't think so. All was undisturbed, for me, for a long time. I continued to grow myself, perfectly measured segment by segment. Didn't brood upon the brief invasion of my privacy; I have a calm nature, like all my kind. Perhaps I should have thought more about the incident's implication: that thereafter my host *knew I was there*; the act of ingestion conveys nothing about what's gone down with the scrap of lettuce or the meat: he wouldn't have been aware of my residency until then. But suspected something? How, I'd like to know; I was so discreet.

The gouts of that agreeable strong liquid began to reach me more frequently. No objection on my part! The stuff just made me more active for a while, I had grown to take up a lot of space in my domain, and I have to confess that I would find myself inclined to ripple and knock about a bit. Harmlessly, of course. We don't have voices, so I couldn't sing. Then there would follow a really torpid interval of which I'd never remember much when it was over—

A contented, shared life; I knew that my host had always taken what he needed from the nourishment that came on down to me. A just and fair coexistence, I still maintain. And why should I have troubled myself with where the residue was bound for, when both of us had been satisfied? Oh how I have come to know now!

For what has just happened to me—I can only relive again, again, in all horror, as if it keeps recurring all along me. First there was that period, quite short, when no nourishment or liquid came down at all. My host must have been abstaining.

Then—the assault of a terrible flood, bitter burning, whipping and pursuing all down and around into a pitch-black narrow passage filled with stinking filth. I've become part of what is pushing its path *there*—that was where the nourishment was bound for all the years, after the host and I had done with it, a suffocating putrefaction and unbearable effusions. Jonah was spewed by the whale. But I—the term for it, I believe—was shat out.

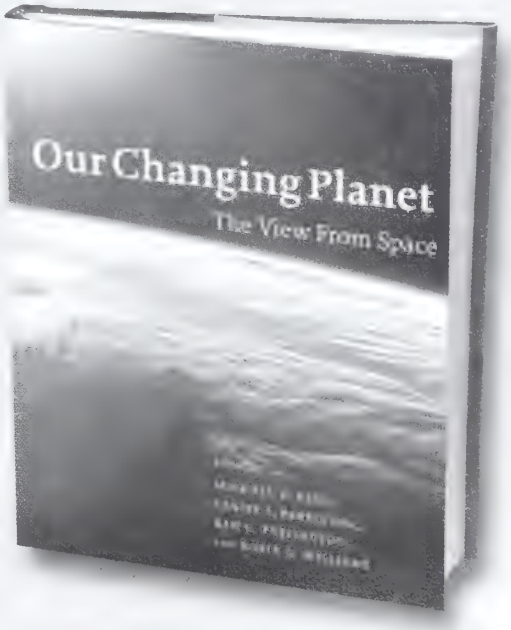
From that cess I've been ejected into what was only a more spacious one, round, hard-surfaced, my segments have never touched against anything like it in my moist-padded soft home space, and I am tossed along with more and many, many kinds of rottenness, objects, sections of which I sense from my own completeness must be dismembered from organic wholes that one such as myself, who has never before known the outside, only the insides of existence, cannot name. Battered through this conduit by these forms, all ghastly, lifeless, I think I must somehow die among them—I have the knowledge how to grow but not how to die if, as it seems, that is necessary. And now! Now! The whole putrid torrent had somewhere it was bound for—it discharges (there is a moment's blinding that must be light) and disperses into a volume of liquid inconceivable in terms of the trickles and even gouts that had fed me. Unfathomable: I am swept up in something heady, frothy, exhilarating; down with something that flows me. And I am clean, clean the whole length of me! Ah, to be cleansed of that filth I had never suspected was what the nourishment I shared with my host became when we'd taken our fill of it. Blessed ignorance, all those years I was safe inside—

My host. So *he* knew. This is how he planned to get rid of me. Why? What for? This's how he respected our coexistence, after even sharing with me those gouts of agreeable liquid whose happy effects we must have enjoyed together. It ends up, him driving me out mercilessly, hatefully, with every kind of ordure. Deadly.

But I'm adapting to this vastness! Can, at least, for a while, I believe. It's not what I was used to, and there's no nourishment of my habitude, but I find that my segments, the entire length of me, still obey; I can progress by my normal undulation. Undulating, I'm setting out in an element that also does, I'm setting out for what this powerful liquid vastness is bound for—nature's built into my knowledge that everything has to move somewhere—and maybe there, where this force lands, one of my eggs (we all have a store within us, although we are loners and our fertilization is a secret) will find a housefly carrier and settle on a scrap of lettuce or a fine piece of meat in a Beefsteak Tartare. Ingestion. The whole process shall begin over again. Come to life.

CAMBRIDGE

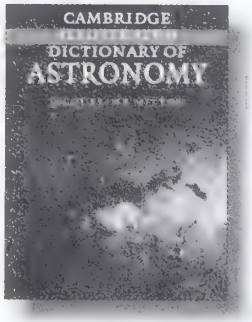
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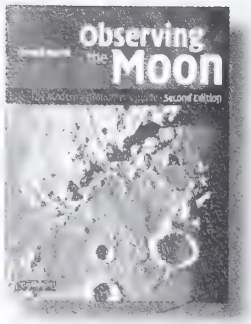
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THE BLACK BOX

Inside Iraq's oil machine

By Luke Mitchell

"A gasoline engine is sheer magic," he said to me once. "Just imagine being able to take a thousand different bits of metal—and if you fit them all together in a certain way—and then if you feed them a little oil and gasoline—and if you press a little switch—suddenly those bits of metal will all come to life—and they will purr and hum and roar—they will make the wheels of a motor car go whizzing around at fantastic speeds. . . ."

—Roald Dahl, *Danny the Champion of the World*

The striking thing about the Rumaila oil field is that the land itself appears to be so completely dead. The hardpack plain is inorganic, barely even a desert. It had been marshland once, a refuge for night herons and water buffalo, but Saddam bled it dry so that he could more easily exterminate the rebels hiding in the reeds. It is hard to believe anything valuable remains. The engineers say there are at least 115 billion barrels of oil in Iraq, though, much of it right here beneath Rumaila. There could be more, too, maybe twice as much, but three decades of dictatorship and sanctions have slowed exploration, and the war has only worsened matters. Now it is dangerous even to extract the known quantities.

It was for this reason that we were driving across Rumaila late last winter in a convoy of four explosives-resistant SUVs, inside of which were ten employees of the British security firm Erinys, each of whom wore black double-plated body armor and carried, at minimum, a handgun and an assault rifle. The convoy had been arranged to transport a single engineer to inspect a single part of Iraq's aging and frequently attacked oil infrastructure. Our driver had told us that Rumaila was "friendly-ish" but that there were still some concerns about kidnapping and roadside IED attacks. He drove defensively. Sometimes he would speed up to ninety or a hundred miles an hour in the left lane, against traffic. Sometimes he would pull off onto the hard dirt itself, driving across twin ruts or inventing an altogether new path. There were no towns or villages. In a few rare instances we would pass a low house made of cinder blocks, and sometimes we would see two or three kids running around in front. Our driver would always wave, even when the kids threw rocks at us.

The engineer, whom I will call Sam, was a "project delivery team leader" for Foster Wheeler, the Houston engineering firm the Army Corps of Engineers had hired to oversee much of the oilfield reconstruction.* His title meant that he spent a lot of time in convoys like this, traveling from well to well, inspecting our progress. Sam was precise in his speech and in his dress. His purple button-down shirt was tucked neatly into his jeans, and his boots were dusty but otherwise immaculate. The rest of us had been required to wear Kevlar army helmets for the trip, but Sam, like most of the engineers in Iraq, wore a white hard hat with his name printed on the front. He had been working here almost since the war began, usually eight weeks on, three weeks off, but as of today he had not been home for [illegible] thirteen weeks and still had another [illegible] to go. When he did get home, he said, he [illegible] do nothing for three days but sleep and watch TV.

Sam demonstrated a sort of [illegible]

* *The Corps, with which I was embedded, asked me not to identify civilians in the field.*

Luke Mitchell is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine.

his work. What makes Rumaila oil so great, he said, is that it is light—its predominant hydrocarbons lack viscosity, which means the oil can push them through a pipe and into storage tanks without much effort - and it is sweet, which means that it contains only trace amounts of sulfur, which is hard on refineries and expensive to extract. Sam said the best way to know if oil is sweet is to smell it. Sour oil smells like rotten eggs. Sweet oil has a satisfyingly bituminous scent, like hot pavement after a light rain.

The oil in Rumaila is especially sweet, and we could smell it everywhere. For the most part, though, we could not see it. The crude was carefully sealed within the surrounding pipelines, mile upon mile of rusty tubing and oil-blackened flanges perched above the corrosive soil like balance beams. Even the wellheads jutting out of their hardened concrete pillboxes were really just vertical pipes draped with gauges. Sam called them Christmas trees. He said there were no horse's heads going up and down like you see in Texas and Oklahoma because the oil in Iraq is already under such intense pressure.

I WAS MAKING THE JOURNEY FROM OIL WELL TO OIL TERMINAL, YET IN ALL MY TIME IN IRAQ I WOULD SEE THE OIL ITSELF ONLY ONCE

The oil remains hidden within this vast arterial matrix all the way from the reservoir to the Persian Gulf. It flows by way of overburdened degassing plants and pump houses and into main lines that parallel the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and then follows their confluence along the Shatt al-Arab Waterway until, a few miles south of the port city of Basra, it plunges into the sea, runs along the ocean floor for another twelve miles, and finally rises abruptly to the surface at a barnacle-encrusted catwalk structure called Al-Basra Oil Terminal. From there it goes everywhere, but mostly to the United States.

I was making that same journey from well to terminal, and yet in all my time in Iraq I would see the oil itself only once. This was in a particularly empty patch of desert, beyond even the lonely cinder-block houses and the rock-throwing kids. We had sped past dry concrete canals and abandoned oil drums and rocket-charred tanks, past mile upon mile of flat dirt and rust, and then we found ourselves driving between a series of mirror-black ponds. These pools crept along both sides of the highway, and through the scratchy ballistic glass of our SUV it was hard to tell at first if the liquid within was oil or water. There were no ripples, though—the pools were thick, and the hot asphalt smell was strong enough that it had become a taste. Sam said the oil came from leaky pipes, that there is no EPA watching over Ru-

maila. "You have to give the devil his due," he said, meaning Iraq. "On a good day, they can put 60,000 to 70,000 barrels an hour. If 50 barrels of crude spill on the ground here, what's that? Not more than a half minute of export."

Oil was selling for about $60 a barrel at the time, and so that half minute of potential export was worth at least $30,000. But Sam was right, of course. Any competent engineer would recognize that these particular pools of oil, already disappearing into the distance, existed within a degree of precision that was irrelevant to the success of the larger project. And, truth be told, seeing the oil was a relief.

I had come to think of Iraq as a kind of black box. Not the black box engineers analyze after a plane crash to determine how the disaster occurred—though such a device would have some metaphoric relevance to Iraq—but rather the black box engineers speak of in describing a mechanism with a known function and a known method. The pig goes in one end, the sausage comes out the other, and what goes on in between is no one's business. More and more of what happens in the world happens in black boxes. It was not very long ago, for instance, that an interested observer could look under the hood of a car and determine that, yes, gas flowed in through this line, and that ceramic plugs probably sparked that gas in these tiny explosions—you could practically hear the individual pistons!—were probably what was spinning that shaft. Now, of course, the inside of an engine compartment is a system entirely sealed off. Gasoline goes in, motion comes out, and when that ceases to happen the engine's innermost ailments are diagnosed only by a computer, which of course is another kind of black box.

Drivers seldom think about how engines work, just as they seldom think about where they get their power. The foot goes down and the car goes forward. Easy. Indeed, discussing the source of our power has become more taboo than discussing the source of our meat, likely for similar reasons. We say the oil is a commodity. That it could come from anywhere. That it is more appropriately understood as a number on a screen, as an idea. We have allowed ourselves to believe that Iraq is a nation-sized infrastructure with intricate workings—indeed, with many leaky pipes—but as a kind of philosopher's stone, as if through our engineering prowess we had found a way to defy the laws of physics as easily as we defy the laws of war, as if we really could flatten the world with a wish or melt all that is solid into air. This is obviously not true, and it is a dangerous fantasy. The mechanism may become increasingly complex, indeed the accelerating system may blur into invisibility, but every system must be understood

it can be controlled. And here at last, in this oil made visible, was the beginning of understanding.

ıe oil, according to the Iraqi constitution, be- to "all the people of Iraq," but the people of ave never fully been able to exploit their na- patrimony. Even when Iraq was at its most ctive—in 1979, just as Saddam was taking full ol of the ruling Ba'ath Party—the best it do was to produce an average of 3.7 million ls of oil per day. Now, after three decades of nces in extraction technology, it is able to

elusive. The Shia in the south and the Kurds in the north happen to be sitting on two very large oil deposits, whereas the Sunnis are concentrated in the center of Iraq, where there is relatively little oil. This trick of geological fate underlies an ongoing political dispute. The Kurds would prefer oil revenue to be distributed on a local basis. The Sunni, who make up a minority of the nation's population, prefer what they call a federal model, in which all of the oil revenue is shared more or less equally. The Shia, who now control the central government, appear for the most part also to favor a federal model, but some



luce about 2.1 million barrels per day. The ısion in 2003 briefly interrupted that flow, but ɔut today is essentially the same as it was just ɔre the war began. Everyone agrees that this is cceptable. Saudi Arabia produces nearly five es as much oil each day, and even the United tes, sucking at the dregs of its own dwindling rves, manages to produce four times as much. One of the oft-cited benchmarks for success in q is the passage of a national hydrocarbon . Even more than the Iraqi constitution, such agreement would address the major fault lines he war and of the nation itself, primarily be- se it would address how the oil money is dis- uted. But agreement on the law has proved

clans in the south have suggested they might prefer to make their own deals. There are other divisions as well. A lively labor movement has emerged since the invasion, and in June some 600 members of the Iraqi Pipelines Union went on strike in Basra, calling for a redistribution of profits. Some union leaders have taken to signing their communications, "Long live the Iraqi working class."

Whether the disputes are based on geography, religion or class, the result has been continued violence, both against the system of oil production and against the people who maintain it. Since the war began, the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security has tracked "attacks on Iraqi pipelines, oil

itish soldier reflected in a pool of oil at a gas-oil separation plant near Basra in southern Iraq, 4, 2003. Photograph © Reuters/Pool/Dan Chung/The Guardian ASA/WS

installations, and oil personnel." They counted 148 such attacks in 2004, another 100 attacks in 2005, and 101 more attacks in 2006. Some of these were minor efforts: "two rocket propelled grenades fired at exposed and leaking valve," for instance, or an "explosion apparently caused by homemade bomb thrown under oil and gas pipes." Some attacks were deadly. The report notes, for instance, that a "bomb blast during changing of the guard at an oil storage facility south of Baghdad in Al Latifiyah killed six Iraqi National Guard soldiers and wounded five more" and also that a bomb on an "oil pipeline near Kirkuk killed an Iraqi oil security chief and eight of his men, who were in the process of defusing another explosive device."

For this reason, and because they are rich enough to afford it, a great many of Iraq's native oil professionals have fled the country. The *Wall Street Journal* in 2006 called this flight a "petroleum exodus" and reported that about a hundred oil workers had been murdered since the war began and that "of the top hundred or so managers running the Iraqi oil ministry and its branches in 2003, about two-thirds are no longer at their jobs." Now most of the engineers in Iraq are from Texas and Oklahoma. They earn double what they would in the United States, but there is still a shortage of talent in Iraq. The inevitable result is that the oil flows a little slower.

The convoy was taking Sam to West Qurna 7, which was also the next stop for the oil after it left the ground. As we drove, Sam explained that West Qurna 7 was a gas-oil separation plant. Crude oil at the well contained a great deal of natural gas and water and salt. The gas-oil separation plant was where those impurities were removed. Raw crude would flow in one end, undergo a series of thermodynamic processes, and out the other end would come a commodity as consistent and interchangeable as a bag of soybeans.

The first sign of the plant was the flares, three massive plumes of orange flame that smudged black smoke across the horizon. This was the liberated gas. The plant itself was almost entirely out of doors, a football-field-sized complex of pipelines connected to three clusters of compression tanks. Everything had been painted gray, and there was nothing else for miles around but flat plains of strangely abraded dirt.

We pulled to a stop and our driver greeted the Iraqi guards in English. He had to shout over a constant screech, like steel cutting steel, and Sam, also shouting, explained that the screeching was the sound of the oil itself. The crude was under so much pressure that it rattled all the loose parts of the system, especially the valves, as if they were reeds or uvulas. The whole system vibrated in sympathy, the oil-gorged tubes acting like amplifying throats or pipes in a church

Sam said the oil would flow more silently o
gas had been removed and the pressure
to atmospheric level.

The inspection consisted of making su
the equipment that needed to be install
this case, a desalting unit—had in fact b
stalled. But Sam also wanted to check th
all condition of the plant and seemed ple
describe the function of its various comp
We would walk and Sam would point to
thing and shout a brief explanation and th
would move on, surrounded at all times by
curity team, half of them walking backwa
of them sighting their rifles into the dista

We approached a rack of four submarin
compression tanks. "Basically, after the
Sam shouted, "the crude goes through
these production trains." We could hear the
gushing into the first tank. Sam said th
manager controlled the relationship betwe
entry and exit valves such that the tank
quite got full. Per Boyle's law, this incre
volume caused a decrease in pressure, a
decrease in pressure caused the "gas"—wh
that point was in fact a liquid in solutio
boil to the surface. You could see the same
ciple at work by popping open a bottle of
Under pressure the carbon dioxide would
suspended in solution, but as soon as y
creased the pressure (by opening the bott
would boil to the surface. In the first tan
pressure was lowered just a bit, which
lighter gas, such as methane, to boil up a
In the next tank, the pressure was lowered
and heavier gas, such as propane, would ris
the mix. Finally, the pressure was reduced
mospheric level, which caused even the hea
tane and pentane to separate. You do it in s
Sam said, because big pressure drops tend
up the equipment.

The next step, as we had seen from the
way, was that the newly liberated gas was
off. This was not the optimum engineering
tion. A more elegant approach would be to
the liberated gas through another series of
to a natural-gas liquefaction plant, where it
be further refined and then sold. Some pla
Iraq did just that but many did not, for the
ple reason that no one had ever gotten arou
building the necessary infrastructure. The r
Sam said, was that Iraq burned away at leas
million worth of gas every day. Indeed, due
lack of domestic refinery infrastructure, Ira
long-time net importer not only of natural g
also of gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, and all o
other much-needed products that may b
tained from raw crude. (This is one reason E
dad has so little electricity, which is generat
most Iraqi power plants by burning fuel

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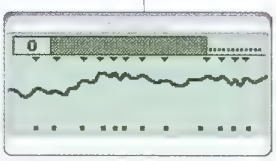
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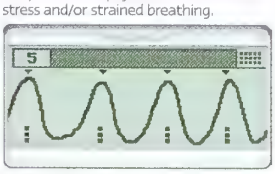


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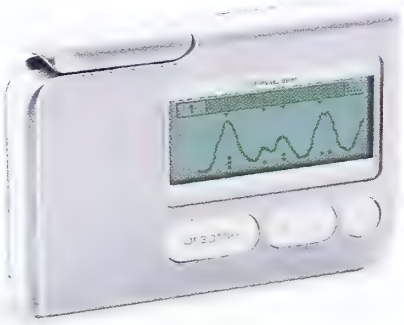
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mala is so salty and alkaline that if you
your mouth you would gag and probabl
the war —and the
seemed to have a special loathing for the former
by the standards of the 1970s, a fairly good industrial infrastructure and run it into the ground.

Saddam's legacy was everywhere around us at
duction train, Sam pointed to a yellowing notice
was entirely in Russian. Other notices on other tanks were in English. This patchwork of documentation was possibly evidence of Cold War
was hard to know because engineers working under Saddam were reluctant to keep detailed



ntinued through the maze. One of
s full of newly degassed oil

n the distance and said they housed trans-
mps. Behind the pumps we could see a se-
f towers that carried high-tension lines off
he distance. After the oil had been degassed
lepressurized it had no more natural mo-
um. Moving energy requires energy, though,
hese pumps, driven by the equally embattled
rical infrastructure, would invest the dry
crude with the power it needed to con-
tinue its journey to the Gulf.

he United States has committed less than
illion to repairing Iraq's oil infrastructure,
h is not very much money. The government
aq could reinvest its own oil income—just
$30 billion in 2006—but oil and interna-
l aid are pretty much the government's only
es of income, and the country has several
r pressing concerns, including the need to re-
l its failing agricultural, educational, electri-
nd medical infrastructures. Iraq also owes var-
creditors about $100 billion and owes Kuwait
dditional $250 billion in reparations from
irst Gulf War. (Some of that debt may be for-
n.) Meanwhile, the engineers I spoke to said
uld take tens of billions of dollars just to get
oil infrastructure up to international stan-
s and as much as $100 billion to fully ex-
the nation's potential oil wealth. The extent
at potential wealth is unknowable, but at
billion proven barrels times, say, $60 a bar-
it is in the neighborhood of at least $7 trillion
probably far more than that. (As of this writ-
the price of oil has climbed to more than
a barrel.) All of this puts Iraqis in a situation
iliar to anybody who has ever had a check on
way but needed a lot of money right now.
y can get the money, but it will cost them.
asked Sam about the reconstruction and he
fairly strong views on the matter. He said
should use the best available technology, the
ensive kind, and it should use that technology
uickly as possible. The Iraqis could probably
rade the system on their own—they were smart
ugh and ambitious enough—but it would take
m twenty years: "They need the horizontal
ls, they need the secondary, tertiary recovery
cesses, they need access to capital, and all of
se things rhyme with foreign oil companies."
am seemed to understand that he was sug-
ring something controversial. The oil compa-
s certainly have enough money. Six of the ten
gest corporations in the world—ExxonMobil,
yal Dutch Shell, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips,
l Total—are in the oil business, and those six
npanies together earned $1.5 trillion in 2006.
xonMobil, which last year made $40 billion in
fits alone, could start drilling advanced wells
hin a few months of signing a contract. But no
jor oil company thus far has been able to strike
any significant deal with the government of Iraq. The Kurds have made a kind of separate peace with several American and European oil companies in the past few months, but the central government in Baghdad says such deals will not be legitimate until Iraq's parliament passes the draft hydrocarbon law. The law itself is foundering, however, in part because of disagreement over how such deals should be structured.

The current draft of the law calls for "production sharing agreements" between Iraq and its potential oil-company partners. Such agreements are rare—they divert an unusually large portion of oil wealth to the oil companies—and typically are struck only in unexplored regions where a large capital investment would represent a significant gamble on the part of the oil companies. Much of Iraq does remain unexplored, but no one doubts the country's oil-producing potential. The risk in Iraq stems from the war itself and from the clear instability of the government, which at times appears to lack the support even of its American sponsors. Such a government could fall at any moment, and whatever entity replaced it could "nationalize" a company's investment or require a new tax on exports or simply push the country further into genocidal chaos, all of which would be bad for business. The proposed agreements basically amount to a risk premium, and the proposed premium is steep. A 2005 joint study by the Global Policy Forum and the British research group Platform noted that any agreements signed "while the Iraqi state is very weak and still under occupation" would last twenty-five to forty years and ultimately cost Iraq between $74 billion and $194 billion.

NO MAJOR OIL COMPANY THUS FAR HAS BEEN ABLE TO STRIKE ANY DEAL OF SIGNIFICANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ

The people of Iraq could wait for better terms, of course. Their oil is only going to become more valuable. Sam called this "the theory of saving stuff for the grandchildren." When the East Texas field was developed, he said, there were a lot of operators who didn't want to run their wells at capacity. They were in no rush to get the oil out of the ground because they thought: Hey, we're already filthy rich—let's save it for the grandchildren. Now, that might make sense from the perspective of achieving maximum value over [illegible] Sam said, but achieving maximum value [illegible] time doesn't always make sense. He had spent a few days working in the fields near Sadr City once, for instance, and a lot of the people up around there ("old boys," in his Texas parlance) didn't even have running water or indoor plumbing or really anything at all other than their tents. "So

on the one hand [illegible] children. Sam [illegible] that old boy [illegible] of electricity [illegible] children." Sam [illegible] not. And indeed [illegible] reported that Iraq's electricity minister, Karim Wahid, had [illegible] Sunir—an Iranian company—to construct a 160-megawatt power plant in [illegible] free marketplace," [illegible] military official explained, "so there's not much we can do about it."

Many of the engineers in Iraq live at Basra Airbase, an immense interruption of the empty desert that is honeycombed by mile upon mile of precast concrete barriers. These barriers are everywhere in Iraq, and sometimes you can see a parade of eighteen-wheelers transporting a few hundred more of them to wherever someone or something needs to be stopped. I was told that whenever a rocket was lobbed over the top of the tallest of them a siren would go off and the security guards would announce that we were in condition red. This had happened 160 times in the previous three months.

THE WAR WOULD CONTINUE, AND SOME OF THE PROJECTS, ONCE COMPLETED, WOULD SIMPLY BE RE-DESTROYED

The base itself began as a simple regional airport and has evolved into an intricate assemblage of functions, a literal military-industrial complex. The government of Iraq operated the commercial airport at its core, the British Royal Air Force operated a separate military airport, and several other military or quasi-military units, including the Army Corps of Engineers, had their own Quonset huts and white single-wide trailers, all of which had been configured, Lego-like, into hundreds of offices, bunkhouses, dining facilities, and latrines. KBR had a large camp there as well, which housed not only the KBR staff but also several Foster Wheeler engineers (including Sam) and two [illegible]

One of those [illegible] Steven Loken, a youthful Air Force lieutenant colonel who had been transferred from Hawaii to manage the oil program in Basra. This morning I was sitting with him and Erich Langer, [illegible] irs officer from the Corps of Engineers w[illegible] ompanying me as I traveled in Iraq, in [illegible] ent-lit cubbyhole of an office and learnin[illegible] ow the reconstruction worked. Colon[illegible] began by warning us that he himself h[illegible] here only six weeks ago and that he wa[illegible] g most of what he knew from private conv[illegible] ke Sam. More over, he was an electrical engineer, so he d[illegible] want to claim any special expertise in oil [illegible] tion. He had already learned a lot, though [illegible] ing the oil from the ground to the ship m[illegible] billions of dollars in capital developme[illegible] the ceaseless labor of thousands of accou[illegible] electricians, engineers, pipe fitters, security [illegible] and others. The repairs alone involved hu[illegible] of companies working under contract to [illegible] of agencies, all of them with varying degre[illegible] cess, expertise, and honesty—Axsia, Be[illegible] Point, Boots & Coots, Eastern National [illegible] Services Company, Erinys, Gas Packing [illegible] pany, Iraqi Drilling Company, KBR, Nor[illegible] Company, Oil Pipelines Company, Parsons [illegible] Joint Venture, South Oil Company, Wil[illegible] Control, Inc.—as well as the Army Corps [illegible] gineers, the Department of Energy, the Sta[illegible] partment, soldiers and representatives f[illegible] dozen other coalition member countries, a[illegible] course, the people of Iraq.

Colonel Loken pointed to a whiteboa[illegible] hind his desk where he had written in [illegible] Marker the names and cost of the proje[illegible] oversaw. The list was divided into two col[illegible] On the left were projects under contract [illegible] KBR and on the right were projects under[illegible] tract with Parsons Iraq Joint Venture, or [illegible] an offshoot of the Pasadena-based constru[illegible] firm Parsons. The projects were organize[illegible] Army task order. Task Order 11 was the $[illegible] million upgrade of several natural-gas liqu[illegible] tion plants, which would help reduce wa[illegible] flaring and provide the country with signifi[illegible] ly more cooking fuel. Task Order 12 was t[illegible] pair desalters (including those at West Q[illegible] 7), at a projected cost of $91.6 million. [illegible] Order 22 was a series of well workovers: $[illegible] million. Some projects were more myster[illegible] Task Order 28, for instance, would cost $7[illegible] lion and was labeled simply "chemicals."

Erich, the public-affairs officer, was from O[illegible] homa, the son of a petroleum geologist, an[illegible] seemed as fascinated as I was by the inner w[illegible] ings of this complex bureaucratic mechan[illegible] Loken continued to describe the chain of c[illegible] mand, how the State Department interse[illegible] with the Iraq Reconstruction Management C[illegible] and how the Iraq Reconstruction Managem[illegible] Office intersected with the Army Corps of E[illegible] neers and how the Army Corps of Engineer[illegible] tersected with dozens of private contracto[illegible] some American, some British, some e[illegible] Iraqi—and how all of them, in turn, interse[illegible] with the government of Iraq, which had its o[illegible] set of complex and evolving bureaucracies. Er[illegible] who had been in Iraq almost from the beginn[illegible] of the U.S. occupation, added that once all of [illegible] projects on the whiteboard had been comple[illegible] the Iraq Reconstruction Management Offi[illegible]

l close up shop. All of the subcontractors
! go home or, more likely, contract direct-
h the government of Iraq and continue
work. Most of the projects on the whiteboard
slated for completion within the year, but
projects did not by any means attempt to
ss the full extent of Iraq's restructuring con-
. They were just stopgaps. Moreover, the
would continue. Some of the projects, once
leted, would simply be re-destroyed. I had
l someone mention that the British would
over the KBR camp when KBR finished
and that the U.S. State Department would
over the PIJV camp. It would take one to
years to accomplish the turnover. But who

weather was perfect, a beautiful California afternoon, and the mood in our bunker was strangely upbeat. We crouched on our benches and analyzed the situation. The attacks, one of the engineers explained, rarely came more than one at a time. The bad guys would get their hands on a 105-mm mortar round or an old Russian Katyusha rocket or even an American rocket left over from the Iran-Iraq War, and they would lean it against a low wall and light it up like a Roman candle and then run like hell. They hardly ever hit anyone. All we had to do was wait for the all-clear siren.

As we waited, our discussion, still in the analytical mode, turned to the strange ways of the Iraqis. One engineer, a Scotsman, recalled the



w? "It's like building an airplane as you fly,"
h said.
bout an hour into our conversation we heard
it sounded like someone dropping something
y heavy on the floor above us. Erich and
onel Loken looked at each other and I re-
nbered that we were in a one-story building.
hoa," Colonel Loken said. "That's incoming."
igh alarm began to sound and Colonel Loken
gested we move to a bomb shelter. On the
out I noticed that the twin clocks in the
lway told Iraq time and Houston time.
We joined several other engineers in an open-
led concrete box known as a Scud bunker. The

Iraqi practice of sacrificing an animal anytime a new plant was opened. It was a hell of thing, he said. Blood everywhere. Erich nodded and said he's seen a ceremony at a plant up north where the Iraqis had killed four sheep. They had dipped their hands in the blood and then walked through the industrial corridors, painting bright red streaks on the walls. It was all part of the blessing, he said.

The bigger the plant, the more animals you sacrifice.

Not all of the oil makes it to the Gulf. There is the spillage, of course, but there is also the matter of theft. The Ministry of Oil h

leaked from a broken pipeline, set ablaze near Kirkuk, February 23, . Photograph © Randy L. Rasmussen/The Oregonian/CORBIS

tion of bribery [illegible]
war, and the American co
their share of corru
tendency is to steal money from A
oil from Iraqis. Most of the smugg
are local operators. Some simply drill a hole in
pipeline and fill modified pickups directly from the
source. Others bribe officials to look
way as they load eighteen-wheelers at inl
minals. The *Guardian* reported in June tha
clan was netting $5 million a week selling stolen
crude to local refineries, $250,000 of which went
right back into paying gunmen to protect them
from other smugglers in other clans. Many be-
lieve that smuggling profits are funding the in-
surgency. The underworld battle between vari-
ous criminal elements has itself undoubtedly
led to considerable violence, and certainly has
added a not very well understood layer of polit-
ical intrigue to the hydrocarbon-law negotia-
tions. One Mahdi Army fighter told a researcher
for the International Crisis Group that "All par-
ties, without exception, steal and smuggle oil. I
mean all of them."

No one knows how much oil the smugglers
take from the system. The Iraq Study Group re-
ported that "150,000 to 200,000—and perhaps as
many as 500,000—barrels of oil per day are be-
ing stolen," and that estimate has since been re-
peated in other news reports. It is a very large
claim, and as I was eating lunch at an oil facili-
ty one day I overheard a Navy engineer ridicul-
ing it. He said moving that much oil out of the
system would require something like a thousand
tank trucks every day to transport their loot to a
refinery or across the border, and that they would
have to do this without being detected in what
is possibly the most heavily surveilled country
on earth. The engineer seemed fairly confident in
his scorn—he suggested that maybe the real cul-
prits were little green men—but my own sense was
that you could move a lot of trucks around in
Iraq before someone figured out they weren't part
of someone else's mission.

There is another failure of accounting that
may explain the massive smuggling estimates.
Two U.S. agencies report on how much oil Iraq
produces. The Department of Energy keeps track
of production everywhere on Earth and has a
standard reporting method. The State Depart-
ment, which is ultimately responsible for the re-
construction, also generates daily reports, but
only about Iraq. The Government Accounting
Office compared their data and found a large dis-
crepancy. The State Department was consistently
reporting higher [illegible] than the Department
of Energy, often [illegible]
rels per day. When [illegible]
findings last spring, many news outlets saw this gap
as evidence of smuggling and corruption. The

[illegible] Energy noted in the GAO
[illegible] that the discrepancy could also
[illegible] perhaps even more dispiritin
[illegible] the Department of Energy do
count as "produced" the significant amo
[illegible] extracts and then, for lack of
ternative, simply injects back into the gro

This might seem an improbably Sisyp
twist, but it is true that Iraq is now som
better at producing oil than at exporting i
northern pipelines have been shut down by
teurs for most of the year, and one of the
try's two off-shore terminals is barely functi
while the other, Al-Basra Oil Terminal, ha
operating at far below capacity for decade
also has very little oil-storage capacity, s
oil that cannot be exported or refined immed
must be returned to the reservoir. This is
reinjection. One engineer told me that I
the only country in the world that still rei
The process is not only frustrating and wa
it is also bad for oil fields. Further compli
the accounting is the fact that some of the
partially refined before it is reinjected. R
strip the gasoline from the oil, sell it for
consumption, and put the remaining,
cruder crude back in the ground, where it
ues the entire field.

Plausible as this explanation for the acc
ing discrepancy is, it is impossible to
whether it is correct, or how much smug
goes on, or even how much oil is pumped
the ground or back into it, because—a
unbelievably—the entire system lacks m
At no point is the flow of oil measured within
The GAO report notes that the United Na
"first cited the lack of oil metering wher
was under U.N. sanctions" in 1996 and tha
had in 2006 signed an agreement with She
Company, which was to "advise the minist
the establishment of a system to measure th
of oil, gas, and related products within Ira
in export and import operations." But st
meters. Measuring a flowing, transforming, g
larly spilled, and often stolen product as it
its way across a war-ravaged desert is not easy.
best Iraq could do was to track the oil as it le
terminal, but the meters there have not w
for years, and so the technique was not pre
A Navy lieutenant explained the method t
military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. He said
"guesstimated" the output based on the
placement of departing ships: they would w
the waterline, and each centimeter the ta
sank represented another 6,000 barrels of oil
you can imagine," the lieutenant said, "a co
of inches could equal 180,000 barrels of fue

There were improvements in the works, th
One of the projects on the whiteboard in Co
Loken's office was Task Order 16. The $42.6



He spent all morning staring at a map of Paris.

She spent one minute asking for directions.

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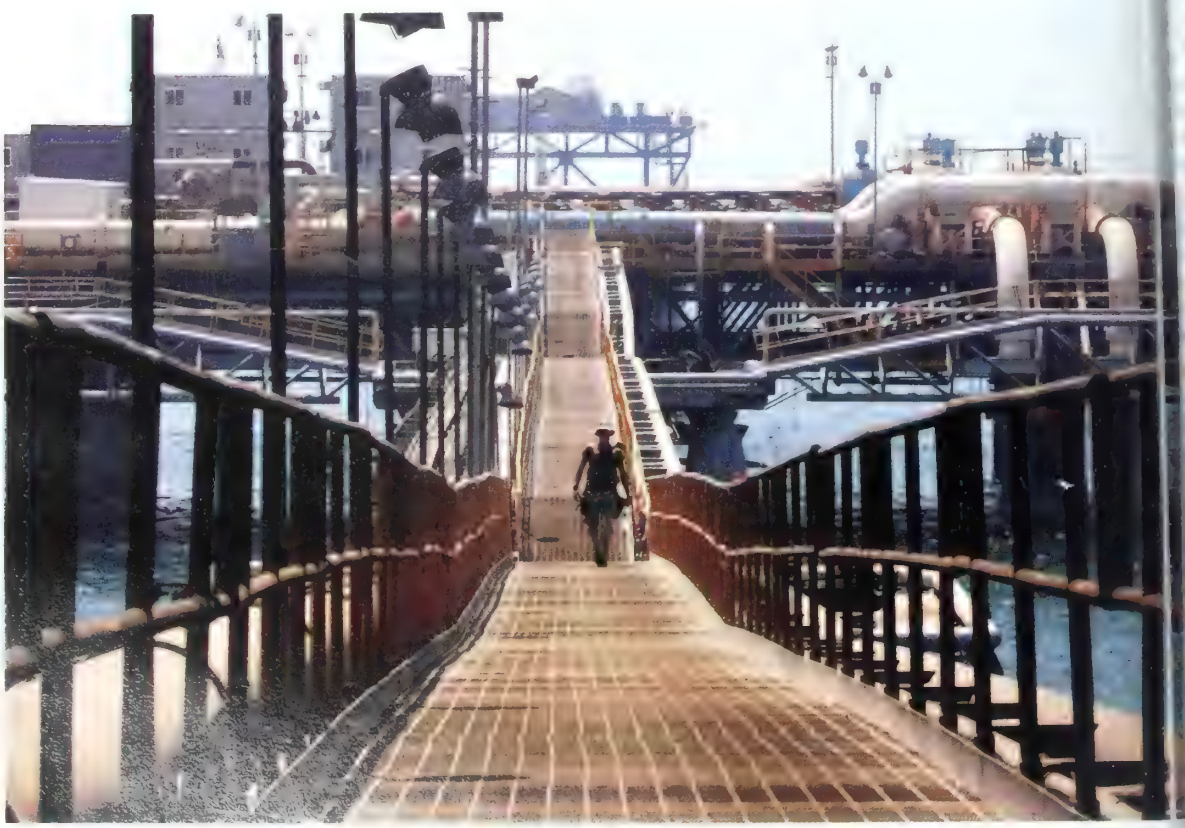
RosettaStone

lion contract was in the PIJV [illegible] been awarded in [illegible] the terminal, impro[illegible] loading capacity [illegible] help solve the problem [illegible] fix the meters. Progress had been slow, but as it happened, Colonel Loken and his boss and his boss's boss were flying out from Basra Airbase to the terminal to inspect PIJV's work, and he said Erich and I could fly along and see for ourselves what they had done.

When Erich and I arrived at the Royal Air Force helipad, our Sea Hawk was already fired up, and the whack-whack-whack of the rotors made meaningful speech difficult. Colonel Loken gave us a shouted introduction

panied by several silent aides, one of [illegible] tags twined into his shoelace[illegible]

The journey from oil field to terminal [illegible] two-star general is somewhat less comp[illegible] than the same journey for crude in the pi[illegible] it is still difficult and dangerous and done in [illegible] We crowded into the Sea Hawk, bound u[illegible] body armor and oddly constrictive Nav[illegible] jackets, and before I could finish buckling [illegible] thing together we were off. We flew fast a[illegible] a hundred feet, rising only to pass over th[illegible] sional power line, and the combination [illegible] altitude and high speed caused the already [illegible] tinct landscape beneath us to blur into a ret[illegible] field. The brown-and-tan flux was so smoot[illegible] it created the illusion of a rippling desert [illegible] an illusion that was dispelled only b[illegible]



to his boss, Captain Fritzley, who was noticeably short, wore rimless glasses, carried his cell phone in a holster, and, until the National Guard called him up, had run a fifty-man logistics team for Boise Cascade in Idaho. I noted the complexity of the contracts he must be negotiating right now, and he laughed and said, "I'm an engineer, not a lawyer." Captain Fritzley's boss was General Abt, who showed up just a few minutes later—leathery skin, shaved head, identical rimless glasses—and was accom-

occasional set of tire tracks, and then the br[illegible] ripples turned a shade lighter and we really w[illegible] over the Gulf. We could see rusty fishing boats [illegible] the occasional freighter, and the sea deepene[illegible] a steely gray and we lost sight of the shore. We [illegible] in odd lines, rolling left then right, the bette[illegible] confuse would-be missile attackers, and then [illegible] abruptly as we had taken off—we landed. [illegible] were on the flight deck of an Australian frigate, HMAS *Toowoomba*, rotors still whacking, [illegible] an Australian seaman was shouting a greet

[illegible] Al Basra Oil Terminal, August 5, [illegible] Photograph © Turner/Al Sudani Pool/epa/CO[illegible]

tling us quickly to a lower deck, where we
ngled ourselves from our armor, and an-
aman lowered an orange rope ladder over
· and we climbed awkwardly down, hang-
ler the high ship for the last few rungs,
o a twelve-man rigid-hull inflatable boat,
as soon as the last passenger had tumbled
raced off across the open sea. Then it was
ncing and waves, a dozen men in a rubber
the ocean, until—and this had all taken
inety minutes—we could see the terminal.
as a spidery arrangement low on the hori-
central platform about five stories tall with
g catwalks extending a half mile in oppo-
ections. At the end of each catwalk were
rthing stations, and attached to each
g station was a very large oil tanker. As they
closer we could see their names: the *British*
the *Tiara*, the *Front Crown*. The last of
the *Universal Hope*, was low in the water and
ing, with the aid of two tugboats, to pull
Captain Fritzley looked out at the oil-gorged
's and said that if you wanted to shut down
his sure would be the place to do it.
ere were no concrete barriers here, just lat-
ork catwalks and ladders and miles of pipe.
workers, from Texas and Oklahoma and
rom Iraq and Kuwait, wore bright yellow
alls and American-style goatees or bushy
ms or handlebar mustaches. The security
in the form of four massive, twin .50-caliber
ine guns, one on each corner of the central
, manned by the men of Mobile Security
dron Seven, a part of the U.S. Navy. A lit-
aque noted that the guns had a maximum ef-
e range of 1,829 meters, which—along with
al Navy warships just over the horizon—had
sufficient to defend the terminal since the war
n. For all its intricate scaffolding, the termi-
emed solid. The dozens of lines that held the
fast were thicker than my well-fed arm.
s we walked along the catwalk in the direc-
of the departing *Universal Hope*, Captain
ley told us about the terminal's past and fu-
prospects. Saddam Hussein had hired KBR's
orate predecessor Brown & Root to build it
973, six years before he took full control of the
th Party. Iran had bombed it several times in
'80s, and it fell into further disrepair under
. sanctions in the '90s. It was theoretically ca-
le of loading 4 million barrels a day, but it
never operated at anywhere near that level.
ne past couple of years PIJV had worked to im-
ve the safety systems, train the workers in how
se them, update the power systems, fix the
ling arms, and fix the meters. They had made
e progress, but the meters still weren't work-
This was a concern. ("I'll tell you what,"
neral Abt muttered to another officer as we
dered down the catwalk, "I've had more ass
kicked in the last two weeks than in the whole rest
of the time since I got here.")

I later learned that the office of the Special In
spector General for Iraq Reconstruction, or SIGIR,
had just issued a report in January severely criti-
cizing Parsons's $75 million Baghdad Police Col
lege project—the inspectors found, for instance,
that failed plumbing had somehow caused sever-
al overhead light fixtures to fill with urine and
feces—and was about to issue another report crit
icizing the Parsons-built Iraqi Civil Defense Head-
quarters in Baghdad, citing faulty security systems
and more leaky pipes. As a result of the investi-
gations, the inspector general was considering
barring Parsons from future contracts with the
Army. SIGIR was investigating the terminal pro-
ject as well, and in another report, issued just a few
weeks after our visit, it would note deficient
concrete pours, sub-
standard plumbing
installation, and un-
safe electrical wiring.
The more satisfying
news, also noted by
SIGIR, was that all
four berths were in
operation, which
was a major break-
through in Iraq's export capability, and the meter
project was on track for completion. (Erich later
wrote to tell me that PIJV finally completed its part
of the project in May, at which point it closed up
shop and sent its engineers home.) Still, there
was much to be done, and the work would likely
continue only in fits and starts.

IF YOU WANTED TO SHUT DOWN IRAQ, CAPTAIN FRITZLEY SAID, THIS TERMINAL SURE WOULD BE THE PLACE TO DO IT

Erich and I climbed a four-story spiral staircase
to the crow's nest, the highest point on the plat-
form. Some of the stairs were loose and the rail-
ing did not seem entirely reliable. The view was
worth the risk, though. The sun had come out
and the sea lit up in a brilliant cerulean wash.
The station itself had been painted in Tonka
truck primaries: bright red, yellow, and blue. I
could see at least two tankers near the
horizon, high on the water and wait-
ing their turn.

That the black box works at all is a signifi-
cant achievement. Yes, the crude is impeded by
friction and siphoned by thieves and thousand
of barrels fall along the way, victim to leaky
pipes and relentless saboteurs. But the ma-
chine, the vast engine of transformation
tinues for the moment to function, the
ignite and the pistons pump, and the
crude is transformed into heat and kinetic
motion, and also into money. All
work of engineers. They overbuilt
backups and fail-safes, and
seems as if their system

no matter how poorly maintained, no matter how overburdened, no matter how corruptly constituted. The engineers have made a machine, though—not a miracle—and a machine can always fail, or be made to fail, or simply be turned to some other purpose.

This is how the last war began: Saddam invaded Kuwait, largely in order to control Kuwait's superior oil-production system. He had overseen much of the construction of his own oil machine and likely believed he had an engineer's understanding of its inner workings. He knew that Kuwait and Iraq both were part of OPEC, whose member nations had for many years controlled international oil prices by agreeing to limit how much oil they produced. And he knew that Kuwait was producing (and selling) far more than its quota. This meant more money for Kuwait and, because it drove down the price of oil, less money for everybody else, including Iraq. The invasion was meant to shift the gears, so to speak. With Saddam in control of Kuwait's oil machine, Iraq not only would increase its oil holdings but also would considerably improve its refining and export capacity, and ultimately add billions of dollars to its national wealth. And it would do all of this even as it kept oil prices at OPEC-preferred levels, which would go a long way toward muting protests from Iraq's oil-producing neighbors.

Of course, Saddam was no more adept at manipulating the regional oil system than he was at maintaining his own infrastructure. The neighbors complained, the United States intervened, and Saddam had no choice but to retreat. But even in retreat he worked what levers he could. And here is where we see the violence that can spill forth from within the black box. Saddam ordered his retreating army to set each of his enemy's 700 wells afire. Great jets of flame shot into the sky, and the oil that wasn't turned into heat or light poured back down as black rain, a demonstration of thermodynamic transformation that seemed at first to be immeasurably more wasteful than the gas flares of West Qurna 7. And yet Saddam aimed to control the force of those fires just as a driver controls the force of the thousands of miniature explosions that occur every minute within the internal-combustion engine of his car. By destroying Kuwait's oil machine, he would drive up the price of his own reserves.

Saddam proved to be a poor engineer in this regard as well, however, and so came the inevitable ironic turn. He was forbidden to sell his nation's oil until the United Nations established the Oil for Food Programme in 1995—and by then Kuwait had managed to repair and indeed significantly improve its own infrastructure. In the end, Saddam had failed to appreciate the true complexity of the systems he was attem[pting] to master, not an uncommon problem.

Prometheus and the citizens of Babel [discov]ered long ago that hubris generally is follo[wed by] disaster. In this land of lifeless desert clay, [where] it is the tale of the golem that seems most [relevant]. A rabbi with knowledge of the secret n[ame of] God, the story goes, could transform an e[arthen] statue into an unstoppably powerful ally. [Often a] wish of the rabbi was answered by the stre[ngth] the golem, who in many instances would [defend] the rabbi's village from outside danger. [Sometimes] times the story ends well. In many golem [stories], though, the inventor suffers for his knowl[edge]. One such tale has the rabbi crushed by the [weight] of his collapsing creation.

It seems to me that in this non-mythical [world], this immutably Newtonian world, the golem [comes] on us not because we know too much but [rather] cause we know too little. We are punished [not] the gods or by fate but by our own willful stu[pidity]. We make our machines and then forget th[em]. our creations, there to be understood and [con]trolled, perhaps because knowledge of their [origins] ods also brings knowledge of their purpose. [We] stand agog, self-paralyzed, even as all that [sol]id moves ever more quickly, blurring indis[tin]guishably like the war-scarred desert beneath [us]—

a golem drawn from the dying g[round] and running beyond our control.

The trip back from the terminal was [much] faster. We passed over a town—the first inhab[ited] place I'd seen in Basra—and the coastline was [sud]denly complex. Railroad depots, grain elevators, a gravel lot mysteriously gridlocked by a [hun]dred identical brown pickup trucks. Freig[hters] loitered along concrete ports, and the gradation between land and sea was perfectly sharp. [Then] we flew inland across the desert and, surpris[ingly], the sky filled with a light mist of rain. It was dusk now and I could just see the hazy outlin[e of] a refinery in the distance, pipelines extending [in] every direction, a dark tangle of oil and [water] and gas that flared bright orange smudges on the violet horizon.

Later that night, back at the airbase, Erich [asked] me if I had noticed the rain. I told him I h[ad]. I thought it softened the desert to the point where it was almost beautiful. Sure, he said, but smel[ls] it. It doesn't smell like rain, not like back hom[e]. I couldn't see his face very well—the camp was [kept] dark at night to discourage snipers—so I could not tell if he was taken aback by the perversity of the weather or simply alert to an unusual inversion of the natural order. Erich was the son of a geologist, though, and it was clear that he had considered the matter carefully. He said the rain down here smelled like *dirt*. And he was right. If such a thing was possible, the rain smelled dry.



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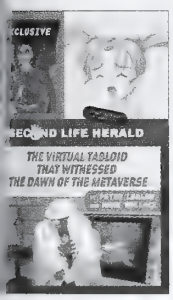
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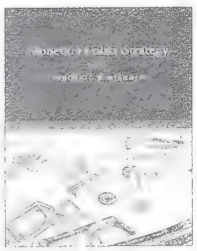


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THE ATROCITY FILES

Deciphering the archives of Guatemala's dirty war

By Kate Doyle

When Guatemala's thirty-six-year civil war ended, in 1996, the country was a vast unmarked grave. More than 200,000 people had died or disappeared in the conflict, most of them unarmed civilians. A truth commission established by the peace accords, the Historical Clarification Commission, opened its doors in 1997 and began digging up corpses around the country. Teams of interviewers fanned out, visiting remote villages to collect first-hand accounts of massacres, rape, torture, and abductions. Victims talked and talked; the state remained silent. The commission sent letters to the defense and interior ministries seeking information about the operations of security forces during the war. They wanted documents: policy papers, plans, orders, intelligence, operational reports, after-action memos. They received almost nothing. The military and the police stonewalled the investigations, and the government backed them. Guatemalan officials, the commission was told, did not document their daily business as did officials in other, more developed countries. It became an article of faith that any paper generated by the regime did not survive the war.

And why, after all, would there be records? In the cities, security forces had sought to dismember guerrilla networks with maximum deniability. Death squads operated out of uniform, in unmarked vehicles, and the newspapers played along, reporting each fresh corpse as the work of "unidentified men in civilian clothing." Anonymous killers did their best to strip their victims' identities, crushing faces and hacking off hands. Or they kidnapped them and threw the bodies into the oblivion of gullies, lakes, and mass graves.

In 2005, however, the government's silence was shattered. That May, residents of a crowded working-class neighborhood in Guatemala City sent a complaint to the country's human-rights prosecutor, Sergio Morales Alvarado, about the improper storage of explosives on a local police base. The prosecutor's first request to authorities for removal of the grenades, ammunition, homemade bombs, mortar shells, and sacks of potassium chlorate seized over years of police raids was ignored. But after a freak explosion on a nearby military base made headlines a few weeks later, the National Civil Police agreed to transfer the weapons off-site. On July 5, Morales sent a team of in[vestiga]tors to verify the removal, and [learned] during that visit that they stum[bled] upon an archive of the Guatem[alan] National Police. The *former* Nat[ional] Police, that is—an institution [that was] entirely complicit in the atrocities [of the] civil war that it was considered [unre]deemable and disbanded in [1997]. Morales immediately obtained a ju[dicial] order granting him unrestricted [access] to the records to search for eviden[ce of] human-rights abuses.

"The day we went to the archiv[es] after getting the judge's order," said [Ma]la Villagrán, a senior staff memb[er of] the prosecutor's office, "we opened [the] one of the file cabinets in the first [room] we entered. And there were doze[ns] folders marked with the names of s[ome] of the most famous cases of poli[tical] assassination in Guatemala." Am[ong] them were files on Mario López [Lar]rave (a labor attorney and a popu[lar] law professor at the national univ[ersi]ty, killed by machine-gun fire as he l[eft] his office on June 8, 1977); Ma[nuel] Colom Argueta (one of Guatema[la's] most promising opposition politici[ans] murdered on March 22, 1979, a w[eek] after registering his new political p[arty]); and Myrna Mack (a young [an]thropologist who worked with Ma[yan] massacre survivors and was stabbed [to]

ographs gathered from the floor of the National Police Archive shortly
t was discovered in 2005. Photograph by Daniel Hernandez-Salazar



death in downtown Guatemala City on September 11, 1990." "And when we opened the folders, we found not only routine police reports, but all kinds of things," Carla said. "Details about surveillance operations targeting them before they were killed, for example." Lopez Larrave's name was listed on a typed page listing twelve names; his was crossed out in ink. Of the twelve, nine were people assassinated or abducted during the late 1970s for suspected subversion.

The appearance of the archive was a huge story in Guatemala, though the government attempted to play down the discovery. "Of course we have records," said Interior Minister Carlos Vielmann. "We are the police!"

Two and a half years later, the human rights prosecutor's office is just completing its report on the archive. The report's publication, set for early 2008, will come just as the new president takes office, after a particularly tense runoff campaign. Both candidates conjure up memories of the civil war: one is the nephew of the murdered Manuel Colom Argueta, Alvaro Colom Caballeros, a businessman whose center-left party has been tainted by corruption scandals; the other is Otto Pérez Molina, a retired general and former chief of military intelligence, whose campaign slogan is *mano dura*, "hard hand."

Few Guatemalans were untouched by the war. Carla Villagran grew up in Guatemala City, the fourth of five children in a comfortable middle-class household; her father, a prominent economist and onetime member of the Guatemalan equivalent of the Federal Reserve Board, was an associate of Manuel Colom Argueta. Carla, who is forty-three and married with three children, was nineteen years old when her first husband was kidnapped, in 1984. His disappearance was part of a wave of abductions set into motion by the military regime of General Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores in the early 1980s, after the scorched-earth strategy of his predecessor, General José Efraín Ríos Montt, had run its course. Army massacres across the country had destroyed hundreds of predominantly Mayan villages and were followed by an urban campaign aimed at capturing and killing the insurgent leadership. Carla's husband was among those targeted; the kidnapping is described in declassified U.S. documents that I obtained in the course of my work for the National Security Archive.

Carla Villagran at her home in Guatemala City. Photograph by Meny Kor



n a cable sent by the U.S. Em-
sy in Guatemala to Washington,
n-Ambassador Frederic Chapin
ounted what happened: "On Feb-
ıry 1, 1984, Héctor Villagrán
lazar came to the Embassy to re-
rt the January 27 abduction of
ı-in-law Jorge Mauricio Gatica
z. According to Mr. Villagrán, his
ughter and son-in-law went to a
ge shopping center to do some
ocery shopping on January 27. Mr.
atica remained in the car with the
g while his wife went into the su-
rmarket. When she came out of
e store, car, husband and dog had
sappeared. A witness told her that
avily armed men in a white panel
uck pulled up behind her car,
rced her husband into the truck,
d departed rapidly in both vehi-
es. Although there were several
licemen in the parking lot—the shopping center is one of the largest in Guatemala City—they did not intervene and would not tell the wife anything."

I arrived in Guatemala five weeks after the archive was discovered. Traffic being what it is in Guatemala City, it was midmorning by the time we pulled up to the gates of the police base. The van from the prosecutor's office had inched its way across town, from the city's historic center to the teeming residential zone, through outdoor markets, past herds of goats, and around diesel-belching buses, to make a journey of three kilometers in about forty minutes. Now we idled before the walls of a vast local outpost of the National Civil Police until a guard waved us through with an indifferent flap of his hand.

Carla weaved expertly around the rusted shells of abandoned vehicles stacked two stories high, with one hand on the wheel and her cell phone against her ear in the other. Our car heaved over the broken ground until we reached the entrance to a cluster of low buildings at the edge of the compound. As we unsnapped seat belts and gathered our bags we could hear the agitated barking of police dogs caged nearby. We opened the doors and tumbled out into a cool, gray morning, staring up at the narrow windows facing the courtyard. We could ah[illegible] the paper mounds [illegible] Carla grimaced [illegible] of rubber gl[illegible]

I entered [illegible] rabbit hole [illegible] where, dr[illegible] hangin[illegible] notes stare.

ndles of police records that have not yet been scanned or catalogued. Photograph by Misty Keasler.

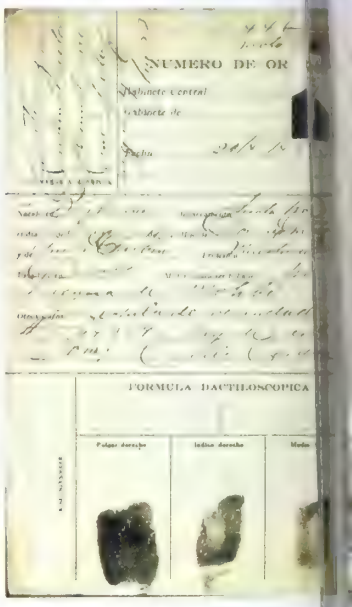
ployees of the police who worked as records administrators greeted us in a small antechamber and then led us into the first room. On every available centimeter of the cement floor there were towers of mildewed paper and file folders, tied in twine and entombed in grit. The paper was decomposing before our eyes—wet paper and rotting paper, charred paper, paper brown with mold, paper becoming compost with small seedlings growing through it. We stumbled from one damp cavern to the next, skirting rusted file cabinets and the sharp edges of old license plates littering the floors. The stench of decay was overpowering; all around us were

lies at the edge of Guatemala City. Finding bodies and failing to identify them was evidently a central preoccupation for the National Police; there were scores of photographed corpses, men and women memorialized as battered faces black with blood or swarming with maggots, each labeled with the same name: "*desconocido*," "unknown." There was a picture of an amputated left hand, "owner unknown," a bloated corpse stuffed in the trunk of a car. Then there were the snapshots of a few soon-to-be-unknown bodies, such as the young man seated with his back to a rough concrete wall in button-down shirt and jeans,

derstand: we weren't prohibited f
looking at them, but she still ha
orders, almost ten years aft
abolition of the N
Police, not to touch.

Carla and I tiptoed up som
crete steps to the second floor
building. A rooftop terrace looke
the junkyard that inhabited this
of the base, weeds twisting th
what was left of the pavement
The air was revivifying, though it
as densely as ever over the city.
inside, we found a series of tiny
dowless spaces, most no wider t
pigpen, with heavy wire ne





insect carcasses and bat droppings, feathers, bird shit, and the nibbling of rats. We breathed the dead air through our flimsy paper masks.

There were five buildings in all. Each building harbored its peculiar secrets. In one, metal file cabinets lined the walls with improvised labels scrawled in black marker across the drawers: "assassinations," "homicides," "kidnappings." In another, we stepped gingerly over haphazard trash heaps, which on closer inspection included thousands of black-and-white photo I.D.'s. The staff was sweeping them into piles and transferring them into clear plastic bags.

I chose a record off the floor at random. It was a 1979 report on three unidentified cadavers found in the gul-

looking at the photographer hopelessly through dark eyes.

As we moved from room to room, the policewomen accompanied us, obligingly yanking open drawers when requested or slipping pages out of bound folders to show us. They balked only once, when we came upon a pile of records from the old Detective Corps, a greatly feared special-operations squad that existed in the 1970s and early '80s, notorious for its role in the kidnapping, torture, and execution of suspected subversives. We asked the woman in charge to hand us some file folders, but she began shaking her head no and then her finger, shaking it at us, no, no, "*No se puede, no se puede*," "that can't be done." It took us a few minutes to un-

wedged over the tops to create a li
of cage. There were old, torn n
tresses, some with brownish stains d
hard into the fabric.

Along one wall was a shelf of bo
including selected works of Lenin
a biography of Stalin, seized from th
owners for their dangerous content.
ternal police-employee files, jamm
into drawers rusted shut by time,
cluded I.D. cards for thousands of
jas—"ears," the civilians who worked
the police as informants, ratting
their neighbors. Years of personnel li
or *nóminas*, lay scattered on tablet
identifying individual police agents a
their superiors, where they served a
in what capacity. There were hundre
of rolls of undeveloped film, huge o
dated computer floppy disks; enorm

Page 4 of [illegible]

Page 4 of the [illegible] record of Victor Manuel Gutierrez, who was disappeared in 1
Photographs by Daniel Hernandez-Salazar (left) and Archivo Historico de La Policia Nacional (ri



otograph by Misty Keasler



leather-bound ledgers listed "captured communists" in the faded spidery ink of long ago.

For human-rights investigators the archive was the discovery of a lifetime, the long-abandoned scene of a terrible crime. The effort required to salvage the records and recover the evidence buried in them, however, seemed beyond human power. Even more challenging, how could the countless pages be rendered meaningful to the rest of society? Would their opening lead to another symbolic acknowledgment of the [illegible] transformation of the country's history? Even Guatemala's office human-rights office wondered [illegible] the archive [illegible] nt treated the question with studied indifference and did nothing. Meanwhile, relatives of the disappeared continued to inquire about their loved ones, though the files remained in chaotic disarray. In desperation, Carla began calling for help among Guatemalan and international allies. I contacted Trudy Peterson, a former chief archivist for the U.S. government, and asked if she would write an assessment of the archive, and she agreed.

By the time the report was finished, it was clear to Carla that they would need Trudy's assistance over the long term, in addition to all their other needs: equipment, materials, more staff, and a secure space. In the absence of government support, others stepped into the breach. Most of the normally fractious community of local human-rights groups offered volunteers. And after the United Nations Development Programme agreed to serve as the project's fiscal manager, international donations began to pour in, jump-started by a pledge from the Swedish government for $2 million. Germany, H[illegible] land, Switzerland, and the Spanish s[illegible] of Catalonia followed suit with sev[illegible] more millions of dollars. (The Uni[illegible] States, after the American ambassa[illegible] and a political officer toured the arch[illegible] donated 106 metal shelves.) Eventu[illegible] ly, the prosecutor's office was able [illegible] hire dozens of staff members. Trudy [illegible] gan flying regularly to Guatemala[illegible] 2006, thanks to the Swiss.

I tagged along recently as Trudy m[illegible] with the team laboring over the I[illegible] tective Corps records. There were t[illegible] long tables in the room, with eighte[illegible] people busy at work: earnest twen[illegible] somethings, fresh out of universi[illegible] young rads with iPods, nose rings, a[illegible] Che T-shirts; and a few older, m[illegible] serious ex-militants. Some used soft, brushes to sweep each page clean [illegible] grit, then removed ancient staple[illegible] reattached loose photos, and bundl[illegible]

Photograph by Misty Ke[illegible]

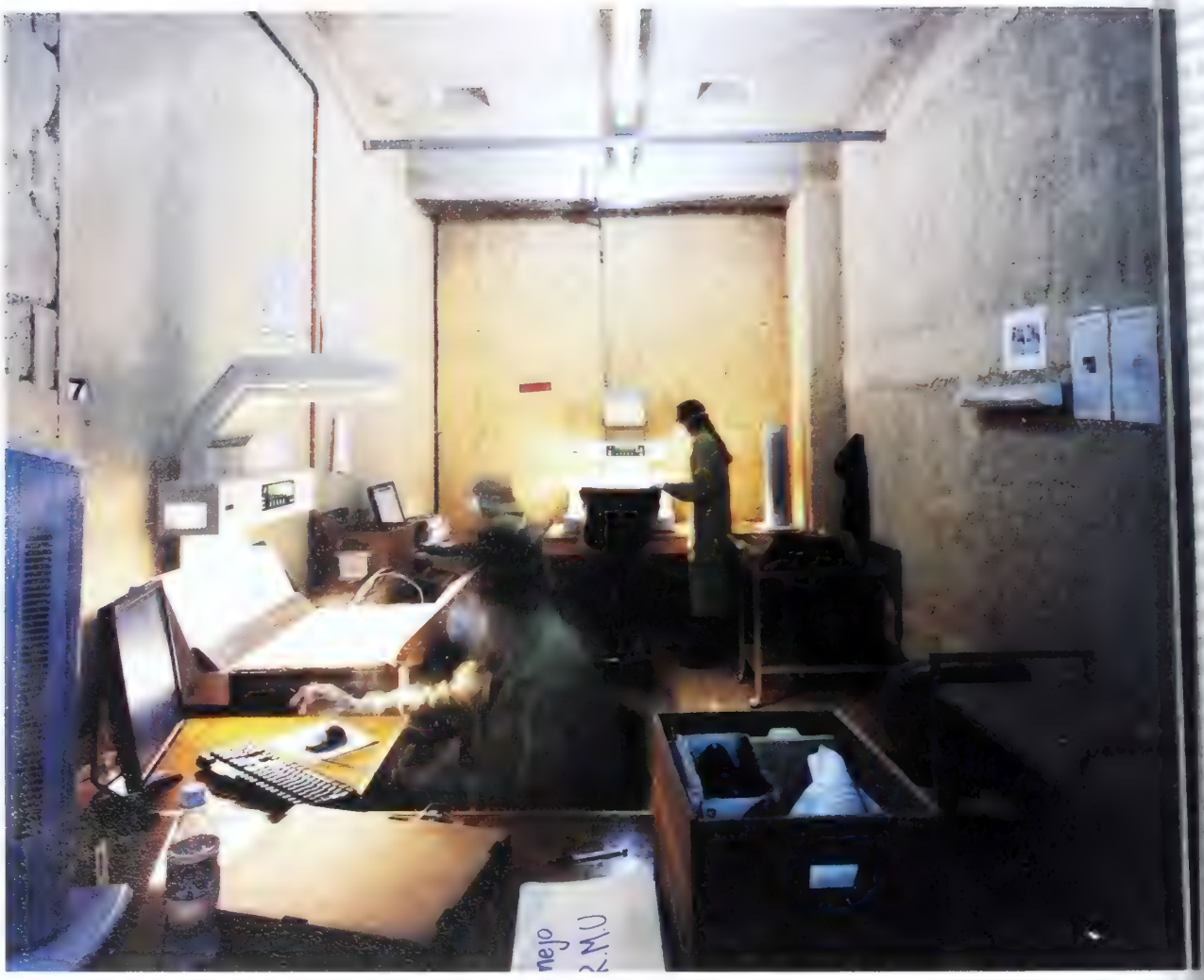


ed files together with cotton rib-
. Others examined the records for
tent, flagging incriminating text
nvestigators.
Watching Trudy study the docu-
nts was like seeing someone deci-
r ancient runes. Over time, Trudy
slowly uncovered the secret lan-
ge of the bureaucracy, and now she
hes the staff how to interpret in-
al file numbers, what ink stamps
ng to which departments, and the
sons behind differently colored
ies. With the bureaucratic code
ken, an investigator can tug at the
ead of a human-rights crime and
ow it to its source—the unit of the
ice that committed it, the names
he individual officers involved.
The head of the team, a young
man named Mónica, who was wear-
a lab coat and pink glasses, read out
ir achievements to date: 389 box-
es of documents covering the ten-year period being examined by investigators (1975–85, the most violent years of the war and the focus of the project). "And we've found a lot of political information in the documents—like notations written by hand on the backs of identity cards that say '*comunista*' or '*subversivo*.' There are lists of file numbers and dates on them too."

Trudy seized the opportunity to teach an archiving lesson. "If you are trying to figure out what happened to a disappeared person, you would start with his name and locate his *ficha* [the identity record], and one of the numbers on the back of it will refer to a *libro* [the oversized ledger that indicates when charges—or *denuncias*—were filed against suspects], and the *libro* will give you the file number of the *denuncias*, so you go to them and examine the nature of the charges, and so forth. That's why we want to keep the document types together: with all the *fichas* in one group and the *denuncias* in another, and the radiograms and reports and correspondence in their own sets—all within the Detective Corps. That's how the police filed the documents themselves."

When the prosecutor's staff first secured the archive in 2005, they were eager to search for evidence of human-rights abuses right away, concerned that the site could be shut down by government fiat or broken into and damaged. Although they understood Trudy's directive to keep [illegible] uments produced by [illegible] the police, they [illegible] grasp her [illegible] preserve record groups as they found them. Until [illegible] the staff [illegible] apart [illegible] cally. [illegible]

otograph by Misty Keasler



convinced them to do it her way, "because that's the only way to trace what these agents were doing," she explained. It's also the only way to ensure what archivists call "continuous custody"—a legal guarantee that documents have not been tampered with or taken out of their original context. By protecting a record's chain of custody, the human-rights prosecutor guarantees that it can be introduced as evidence in a criminal case.

As she and her Guatemalan colleagues reviewed the documents together, Trudy came to understand something crucial about the National Police: they weren't very interested in fighting crime, and the files were not organized to support prosecutions. What was important was the hunt for subversives. The National Police were consumed by the chase, the kill, and the need to cover their tracks. Take the *novedades*, for instance. Each unit of the police produced these regular reports on its activities for a given period and sent them to the unit's commanders, creating a steady flow of information from squads to section chiefs, from section chiefs to police headquarters, and from headquarters to the head of state. Together, the reports give a dramatic sense of the grip the security forces had on daily life in Guatemala City. Police units raided businesses and private houses, searched school buildings, set up roadblocks, conducted sweeps of markets, bus stations, the public zoo. They entered printing companies to hunt for subversive literature, and auto-repair shops in search of suspect cars. They monitored cemeteries and investigated private radio transmissions. One of the activities police described in the *novedades* was the discovery and fingerprinting of unidentified corpses (known in Guatemala as *cadáveres*); when they could, they would match the dead person's prints with fingerprints already on record, and write the name of the now identified corpse across the file. Investigators are now reviewing the xx files and comparing them with morgue, cemetery, and exhumation reports in an attempt to identify some of the thousands of still-nameless bodies.

One of the key documents in the archive is the *ficha*, the personal file card. At age eighteen, every adult Guatemala is issued a small I.D. (known as a *cédula*) with his or her photograph and identifying particulars; the National Police would in turn create a larger index card that contained the same information as well as a complete set of fingerprints. The cards served the dual purpose of controlling the population and providing the state with a convenient means to track dissidents—the

Photograph by Misty Keasler

used them to scribble notes about n's suspected political tendencies. ample, the *ficha* found in the e for Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez—olteacher and prominent leader Guatemalan Workers' Party af- CIA-sponsored coup that ousted sident Jacobo Arbenz in 1954—marked "#1 Communist of emala" by the National Police. 66, Gutiérrez was disappeared in t military and police operation, ned with the aid of U.S. intelli- officers, and was tortured to . His body was buried secretly in ountryside.

addition to finding clues about ate of some of the disappeared, vists are beginning to understand echanisms of cover-up—how the was able to maintain deniability for ng about so many crimes. Some- s the process was as simple as cen- g from the books information that cted badly on government institu- s. In one of the large bound reg- es, for example (this one recording en complaints to the National Po- , a "verbal order" made on April 2, 2, by the chief of the Joint Opera- s Center—a unit that coordinated h-squad operations—directs that complaints from the public should ecorded as described, except when are made against elements of the rity forces, in which case they uld not be mentioned in any docu- nt." Other methods of concealment e more subtle. Anyone perusing the ice documents quickly perceives a it of writing that sounds strange to ear—the persistent use of the pas- voice to describe everything. Police not kidnap suspects; a suspect "is napped" (*se secuestró*). Security forces not assassinate; the victim "is shot d killed" (*se disparó y se murió*). A lice report from November 1983 re- als that this grammatical tic was a tter not of dialect but of deliberate oice when one agent, describing his rveillance outside the home of a sus- ct, slips uncharacteristically into the t person. "Approaching the house, I s able to observe a young woman," he tes, "who, when she noticed my pres- ce, jumped up and looked at me sus- iously, so I decided to retreat." This tion of the report is cordoned off in ink and a note is written in the margin: "Never personify—the third person must always be used."

Investigators also have come across records documenting United States involvement with the police. Throughout the civil conflict, the U.S. government offered Guatemala support and official cover through security-assistance programs that provided training, equipment, and financial aid in an ostensible effort to "professionalize" military and police forces. For the National Police, that aid was channeled mainly through the Office of Public Safety, a worldwide police-training program established by the International Cooperation Administration (the precursor to the Agency for International Development, or AID). Guatemala became the program's first Latin American beneficiary in 1956, after a detective with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department named Fred Fimbres wrote an assessment of the National Police for the U.S. State Department. His study showed that the Guatemalan police considered traditional police functions—such as keeping the peace—secondary to their mission. "Operations, top level planning, [and] intelligence gathering activities are singularly directed toward alertness and preparedness against the 'threat of the communists,'" wrote Fimbres—a focus, he added, bordering on the "obsessive." The report concluded that the United States should provide the National Police with technical and material assistance.

U.S. police advisers launched the program a few months later and spent the next eighteen years working side by side with their Guatemalan counterparts. The National Police sent hundreds of agents to be trained by the U.S.-administered international police academies at Fort Davis, Panama, and in Washington, D.C., as well as to local police laboratories in cities across the continental United States. Thousands more were schooled by American advisers inside Guatemala in criminal investigations and crime-lab skills, riot control, firearms, fingerprinting, interrogation, surveillance, and counterinsurgency techniques.

Washington's concerns about Guatemala intensified dramatically in 1968 when members of the Rebel Armed Forces killed U.S. Ambassador John Gordon Mein in a botched kid-



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napping. AID police experts were assisted by CIA officers acting undercover in order to establish intelligence liaison with security forces and help design their counterinsurgency strategy. U.S. advisers built a new training academy for the National Police and created a special radio network to help senior police and military officials coordinate operations on "high-level security matters." As a result of all these activities, letters flew between Washington and Guatemala City, many preserved in the police archive: The chief of the Identification Cabinet, Sergio Lima Morales, seeks a set of cameras with telephoto lenses in order to photograph the faces of people at demonstrations. Herbert O. Hardin, of the Office for Public Safety in Washington, receives a request for training of two officers in the handling of weapons. Five Guatemalans take a four-month course at the International Police Academy in fingerprint records.

Fingerprinting became a special focus of the program after U.S. advisers converted the Guatemalans to the [illegible] ry Classification System" (name [illegible] Sir Edward Henry, a British po[illegible] spector who developed his met[illegible] criminal investigations in colo[illegible] dia). The Henry system impro[illegible] ability to identify an individual [illegible] fingerprints, file the prints, and [illegible] them systematically. Once the c[illegible] was made, police stations in ev[illegible] ministrative department of Gua[illegible] adopted the new method, aut[illegible] cating their work with an ink [illegible] marked "Henry fingerprint offic[illegible]

As I looked through the rec[illegible] the Gabinete de Identificación, [illegible] the characteristic stamp on one [illegible] the other of them; the finger[illegible] themselves were laid out on a [illegible] divided into ten small boxes, fi[illegible] each side for each hand, each [illegible] designated by the finger that sl[illegible] go there, from the *pulgar* ("thu[illegible]") to the *meñique* ("pinky"). Adria[illegible] young woman working with the [illegible] records, pulled out a card they a[illegible] found weeks before. The *ficha* wa[illegible] side an envelope and attached w[illegible] letter sent by an agent workin[illegible] the field to the chief of the "He[illegible] section" of the Coatepeque p[illegible] station, dated December 7, 1[illegible] The letter described the discove[illegible] a rotting corpse floating in the Su[illegible] ate River in San Marcos departm[illegible] hands and feet tied, beaten, [illegible] tossed into the water to drown [illegible] unknown individuals." Due to [illegible] putrefied state of the body, the ag[illegible] explained, he was unable to take [illegible] prints properly: "I was left with no[illegible] ternative but to cut the fingers [illegible] and send them in place of the i[illegible] pressions." I opened up the en[illegible] lope. On the Henry card, the poli[illegible] man had somehow glued ten slic[illegible] shriveled fingertips, now gray w[illegible] age, into their correspon[illegible] ing boxes.

Lupita oversees the team anal[illegible] ing records of the police departmen[illegible] Second Corps. (Like many of tho[illegible] working in the archive, she asked th[illegible] I omit her last name.) When I visite[illegible] she was looking at the files of the uni[illegible] hospital, where political prisoners we[illegible] hidden in a clandestine section calle[illegible] the *cuartito* or the *cuarto especial* (th[illegible] "little room" or the "special room"

[illegible] VEMBER 2[illegible]

[illegible] three identity records. Photographs by Misty Keasl

ternal records of the hospital
names and ages of detainees
ecretly; Lupita was matching
gainst lists of the disappeared
uted by activist organizations
the same period. For example,
sociation of University Students
ned a list that included Dr. Carilla Gálvez, a surgeon who atd the needs of the poor and who dnapped on August 26, 1982, is hospital in Sololá by unidenarmed men. In one of the police tal's internal records, Dr. Padilears as a prisoner scheduled to be erred to the "special room" on mber 12. (Padilla was one of the ones. Two months after his abon, the government ordered his se from the Second Corps hosafter members of the Inter-Amer-Human Rights Commission made rsonal visit to Guatemala to stigate his and other cases of d disappearance.)

ke many of the older investigaat the archive, Lupita—whose and was disappeared in 1983—spotted the names of people she w as she sifts through the police rds for the prosecutor's office. In of the registries listing "subver-" seized in anti-communist sweeps ne days after the 1954 coup, she found her grandfather, "which is trange, because he always said, ew the communists!'" she told me a smile. Lupita considers her work ng the police documents "*un regalo ida*": "the chance of a lifetime." I rd that phrase a lot from formeritants-turned-archivists. They are ple whose fates were turned comely upside down by the conflict—n and women, now middle-aged, o gave up every semblance of norl life to join the movement.

Gustavo Meoño, the archive's ditor, was seventeen when he left his ily in 1966 to join a radical group American Maryknollers helping sants settle an uninhabited jungle ion in central Guatemala. He threw lot in with the guerrillas after the ssionaries were recalled from the ntry by their order in 1967. As a re-, Gustavo never attended universihe operated underground as an orizer, "talking to labor leaders, to dents, to Christians," slipping into and out of Guatemala secretly until he returned for good in the mid-1990s. "I came from a poor family," he tells me, "and it was a shock for them, who worked so hard to get us into school." Gustavo is a tall, mournful-looking man whose heartfelt style inspires many of the younger archive employees—just as he inspired a generation of young Guatemalans to join the movement during the 1970s and '80s. He is the first to admit that the clandestine life robbed him of any hope for a vocation—"I have no training except for what life has taught me"—but sees the archive work as a natural extension of the fight for justice that he says consumed him during the armed conflict. Gustavo's background is by no means unique within the project; many of the senior personnel overseeing the effort to rescue the files come directly out of the *militancia*—former leaders, guerrilla combatants, fund-raisers or organizers, now enjoying the chance of a lifetime to make sense of their struggle through documents that explain, in part, why it was doomed from the start.

I first came to know Claudina from her passport photo, a small black-and-white picture glued into a bound logbook that the Guatemalan military created in the 1980s. The document was stolen from the secret files of an army intelligence unit and made public eight years ago in this magazine. It lists the names of 183 people kidnapped or killed by the security forces, their aliases, their ties to guerrilla groups, and details about their abductions and their fates. Each entry includes a small photo of the victim next to the text, pictures that were separated from university I.D.'s, drivers' licenses, passports, or national identification cards and stuck into the book. Claudina is number 31. From her picture, she looks fearless and a little haughty, her chin held high, hair unruly, with a broad face and arching eyebrows. She looks like a survivor. Her entry says she was captured on December 23, 1983, and freed two weeks later.

We met face-to-face last March at my hotel in Guatemala City. She was much smaller than I had imagined and not at all haughty—intelligent and intense instead, with little granny glass-



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es and still-unruly hair, but soft-spoken too, with a kind of deep clarity about the past that comes from years of reflection, and a voice soaked in sadness. She slipped out of her office shoes and curled up on my bed to talk. Before she was kidnapped, Claudina told me, she and her companion, Víctor, were working for the PGT-PC (a division of the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo, the Guatemalan Workers' Party). He was an official in the group's directorate, and she was helping to produce the party broadsheet, *Claridad*. The couple lived together with their two small daughters, juggling job and family with their clandestine activities. Víctor is also in the logbook, a dark-eyed and strikingly handsome man, with a tense, wary expression. Claudina was thirty-nine and pregnant with their third child when he was murdered by government forces. According to records found in the police archive (which Claudina hasn't yet seen), he was shot on November 1, 1983, by six "unidentified individuals" driving a Ford Bronco without license plates, who chased his blue pickup truck until he crashed into the side of another car. Víctor was dragged from the truck by the attackers and taken away in their van. "On the following day at 1:30 in the morning, on one side of the crafts market in Zone 13, the cadaver was located . . . presenting various bullet wounds in different parts of the body."

What impressed me most about Claudina during our interview was her rejection of victimhood. "All of this was a consequence of a choice that we made—consciously, maturely," she said. "It was a consequence of our struggle, during which we knew life could be very short." Claudina was kidnapped seven weeks after Víctor was killed. She was taken to a room somewhere with a hood over her head. She spent the next twelve days on a mattress under a naked lightbulb. She passed the time by writing down all the English words she could remember and counting the bricks in the walls surrounding her. She was not physically tortured, but her captors would taunt her about Víctor and threaten to hurt her children. While she was being held, the army emptied her house—"they grabbed the telephone, the curtains, everything, including all our papers"—even her photo albums. As a result, she was left with no contemporary pictures of Víctor. Eventually, they decided she was insignificant to them and freed her, warning that she would have to tell them about other subversives if she wanted to live. She fled to Mexico instead, and that is where she saw the logbook for the first time, in 1990.

"It was so unsettling," she recalls. "When Víctor died, his face slowly became hazy to me. I couldn't remember exactly what he looked like. It always bothered me. I would try to picture him, but I just couldn't imagine his features clearly anymore. Then I turned to the page and saw his photograph. I was shocked. It was like suddenly having him there in the room with me." She found others in the logbook as well—other friends, other colleagues, whom she hadn't thought of for years. To see them, "to read those pages revived my terror, it revived my rage, it revived my feeling of impotence . . . To read in the logbook the details of what had happened, like what day someone was captured, for example—to read that, laid out as though it were totally normal or logical, brought me right back to that time. It was as though a memory that was hidden away in some little corner returned to the present, as though it were happening again. And that woke a kind of restlessness in me, and a wish to do something. I think that it was also in that moment I felt a nagging feeling that I should *act*—because I hadn't had the ability to do anything or talk to anyone about it."

Claudina returned to Guatemala in 2000 and began working for a human-rights organization. Her son—who was, as he pointed out to me, kidnapped too, since he was the baby inside Claudina when she was abducted—is twenty-three years old now and works as one of the investigators in the police archive. He looks just like Víctor. It was he who found the documents about the murder of the father he never met.

The survival of the National Police archive may seem difficult to comprehend. But its destruction would have contradicted the force that drives bureaucracy itself. "I record, therefore I am": the files are the proof of a government's power. They shelter [e]tory of its officers, of their imp[s a]achievements, and investigation[s] ing times of state terror, even th[e m]incriminating documents may [not] discarded, because the agents [sup]sible for them believe that the[ir in]tutions will survive forever. A[nd a]terward, it is often too late. E[ven in] regimes like Guatemala's pro[duce] massive paper trail, which can[not] disappeared overnight.

But the citizen also needs th[e file] The archive does more than [sup]confirm his status as victim; [it pre]serves and restores his history [con]tained within the records of repr[essive] in countries around the world [ev]dence not only of brutal abus[e bu]also of defiance and social prote[st—]rejection, even during the mo[st in]tense periods of state violence[of a] regime's economic and politica[l pro]ject, and a re-imagining of wh[at the] country might become.

Today, the Guatemalan p[olice] archive hums with purpose. Th[e rus]ined cars that cluttered its entr[ance] have been pushed aside. The [tile] patio in front has been swept, [and a] fence has gone up around the b[uild]ings. Inside, more than 200 p[eople] labor over the records: some c[lean]ing them, some boxing, others [ad]ing or typing on computers bo[th] with the help of the European do[nors]. There are eight state-of-the-art s[can]ners that operate sixteen hours a [day]; more than three million pages h[ave] been digitized so far.

"We've made a complete inven[tory] of everything we have now, and [we] update it every day," Gustavo told [me]. "I want an archive that is ordered, [or]ganized, and accessible. That is [my] dream. I think about it all the time—with the shelves lined up and ev[ery]thing in its place. I want the resea[rch] to continue indefinitely, so noth[ing] can happen to destroy it or interr[upt] the work." He pauses. He is lost in [his] reverie. The years of struggle, the l[oss] youth, the scattered hopes, the del[ay] companions have come to this. "I w[ant] to create a museum, a memory cent[er]. It's another dream. This place shou[ld] be cleaned of all the garbage so we c[an] build a park and plant trees with t[he] names of the disappeared. It will be [a] forest of memory."

OF MEN AND MICE

How a twenty-gram rodent conquered the world of science

By Greg Critser

This past June, while Americans
in a daze of war, bad summer
ries, and weird weath-
a mouse hijacked
erican science policy.
was, for George W.
h, a rare piece of luck.
when the political
und on stem-cell re-
rch seemed to be shift-
beneath his feet, with
ne of his own hard-line
isers on the topic start-
to soften in the face of
itical realities, a lead-
scientific journal an-
unced what only a few
ars ago would have
en thought absurd: it
s possible to make stem
ls without using an em-
yo. Japanese scientists
d achieved the result
th pure laboratory
utzpah. They used a
nch of viruses to insert
nes that make cells
luripotent" into the
in cells of an adult
ouse, thereby transforming them into
w stem cells, which were used to
ow new mouse skin and organ tissue.
cientific advances like this one," the
esident intoned, bobbing his head in



a gesture to the cancer survivors up on the dais with him that day, "are important and should give us hope that there's a better way forward than scientific advances that require the destruction of a human life."

And that, the president went on, was why he would veto any attempt to expand access to human embryonic stem cells. A mouse had come to the rescue. Never mind that the viruses used to stick the genes into the cells had caused cancer in a number of the mice, or that the mouse method was still in its infancy, compared with the human-embryo-driven stem-cell techniques that already show likely treatments for the cruelest of diseases. No, the mouse breakthrough, as a *Los Angeles Times* headline writer put it, "may put ethical concerns to rest."

That a twenty-gram rodent could lay to rest one of our most divisive medical-ethics debates might strike a visitor from Neptune as being a bit odd, but that alien visitor would quickly go native were he to spend some time acquainting himself with the practices of the modern research laboratory. There he would discover that the mighty mouse is king. He would find, for example, that the United States [illegible] four American [illegible] purpose [illegible] most [illegible] the [illegible] media, [illegible] ing [illegible] variet[illegible] now [illegible]

reg Critser is the author of Fat Land, *eneration Rx, and the forthcoming* Eter-*ty Soup: Inside the Quest to End Ag-g (Harmony Books).*

fore the Accident, by Adam Stennett. Courtesy the artist and 31Grand, New York City

develop Alzheimer's and heart disease, show the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, alcoholism, drug addiction, and obsessive hair-pulling. And in October, the Nobel Prize in Medicine was given to three scientists who helped develop such genetic "knock-out" techniques in mice. Consequently, the mouse commands money: the National Institutes of Health recently budgeted $60 million to map the function of every known mouse gene.

Even the pesky animal-rights community, from the sincere PETA to the thuggish Animal Liberation Front, seems to be on board with mouse science. PETA's over-the-top public ad campaigns prefer to focus on the fate of empathogenic monkeys, dogs, and cats—despite those animals' minuscule role in modern science. Ask a roomful of animal lovers what they think of mice, as I did at a recent family gathering, and you're likely to get blank stares. Pet owners enact elaborate rituals in pursuit of their animals' emotional welfare. If you decide to kill your pet dog or cat and people find out about it, you're likely to face trial and imprisonment. Mice, however, seem to be the great exception to America's animal-welfare consensus, which is curious, since the mouse, because of genetic engineering, now stands as the ultimate medical proxy for humans.

Today, in the technologized and globalized world of fun-time capitalism, those who notice mouse pain are not, for the most part, technologized, globalized people. They are just working stiffs, folks who maybe have high school degrees and play an occasional "Free Bird" on the lab speaker system. Some of them are gentle people; some of them are rough. They are the people who make all the scientific magic possible by cleaning cages, drawing blood, cauterizing a million mouse arteries. And because of their jobs, they suffer from mouse allergies, carpal tunnel syndrome, and lots of nasty little bites. To them, PETA is a remote enemy.

On a howling windy day on the Maine coast last spring, I met up with a bunch of these good folk, along with some of their bosses, for a weeklong seminar on state-of-the-art mouse-colony-management techniques. Into the group was tipped a gaggle of scientists and lab managers, morosely tapping away at their most recent NIH grant proposals. Our ringmaster was a slight, boyish woman I'll call Gene, who had a Texas drawl long enough to rope a cow. A lab technician at a university medical center for more than a decade, she "just fell into" the job after high school and, needing to support a young family, stayed there. She had seen it all: from the high-handed "principals"—short for the principal scientific investigators who come with every NIH-funded experiment—who never *ever* touched the animals, to grad students suffering through their requisite time in the eighth circle of scientific hell, kids who, Gene said, "just plain don't *like* animals!" There were also the older technicians who seemed to like drawing blood a little too much, and then there were the exhausted Average Joes—she could at times see herself in them—who were so worn down from this low-wage, low-benefit drudge work that they "have an idea of the perfect lab protocol: receive the mice, then immediately euthanize them." And what about all that euthanasia? "The public really doesn't care about mice—they know them as skitty little animals whose story always ends the same way: with euthanasia," Gene said. "It's easier to get stirred up about a cute monkey who has eyes like your own."

> THERE REMAINED ONLY ONE PROCEDURE LURKING IN THE PSYCHIC BACKGROUND, AND NOW GILE TOOK IT UP: EUTHANASIA

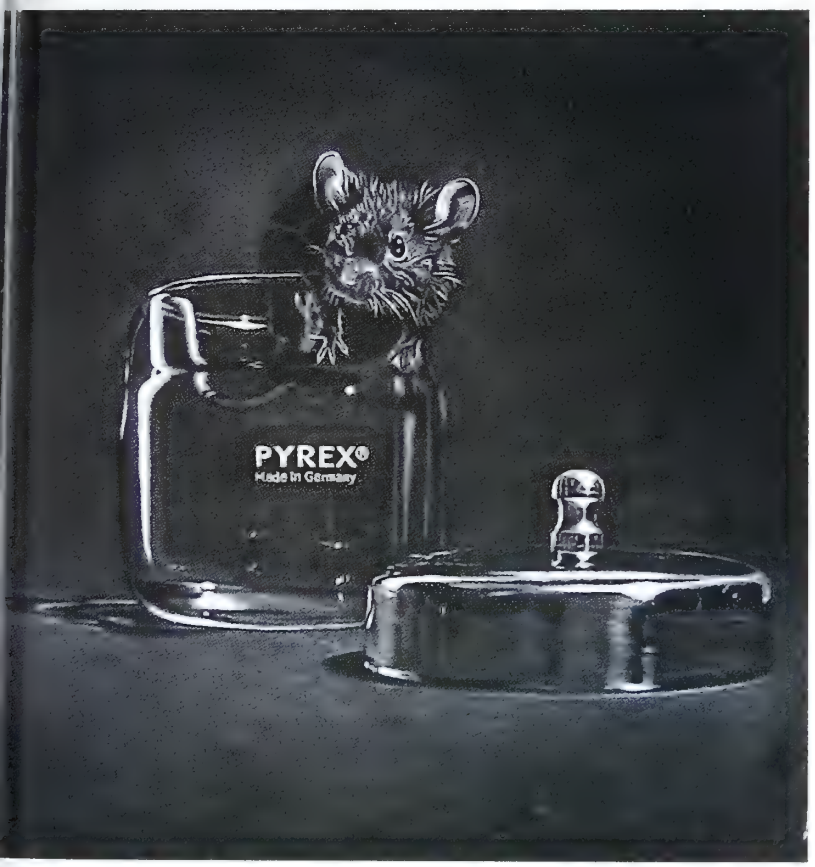
One afternoon, halfway through the week, maple trees budding against a roof of bruise-blue sky, a clutch of us took a van ride out to the Jackson Laboratory, arguably the greatest mouse farm in the world and the gold standard in terms of mouse science and husbandry. It is a vast, campus-like facility with enormous, aircraft-hangar-sized rooms, all temperature-controlled and sterile, and full of mice. Hundreds of thousands of mice. Our destination was the laboratory of Joe Gile, Jackson's master of mouse surgical pro-
dures. Gile was to instruct us [in] st[ate]
of the art methods of anesthesi[a] bl[ood]
collection, gavage, euthanasia [and] bet
entering his brightly lit ro[om]
washed up and put on gauzy [hair]
coats, hats, and gloves. Inside,
crowded around a worktable la[den] w[ith]
surgical instruments, needles, pl[astic]
and various vials of clear but[not]
how important-looking liquid—
small, matter-of-fact toolbox o[f] mo[dern]
ern mouse science. Gile, a pale, [slight]
ly tired-looking fellow whose eye[s] wi[ll]
kle as he warms to his audience, [tells]
us on some ground rul[es] b[e-]
fore we got under wa[y].

The hardest thing for mos[t]
lab people to get their heads ar[ound],
he told us, is the humane imper[ative]
never cause the animal unn[ec]-
sary anxiety or pain. It was [a]
issue with him, ever since th[e]
he'd witnessed a well-reg[arded]
scientist injecting a mou[se]
holding the needle station[ary] in
one hand and then "swingi[ng]" the
mouse by the tail in a little [arc]
into the needle. "They don[']t
it," Gile said of some young scie[ntists]
who take his course. "It takes [time].
For example, in my lab, if you are
ten, and the mouse clamps onto
glove and you react by shaking
off—we've found live mice up on
of the light fixtures!—well, that's
derstandable. But if you get bit
routine exam and you *splat* the m[ouse]
against the wall in anger, well, [then]
you're *outta* here."

The bar thus set, a number of
group giggled nervously. A few
notes. The general feeling was
consciousness, and perhaps rightly
Over the next hour, group mem[bers]
would be judged on their performa[nce]
of tasks almost always performed al[one]
and learned informally, episodica[lly].
Gile pulled a mouse from a small c[age],
holding it just above the base of
tail. "As you know, it's best to t[ame]
the animal and set him down on
feet and let him grab onto the ca[ge]
top, so you can stretch him o[ut].
Then"—he placed his right thumb a[nd]
forefinger over the animal's neck a[nd]
scrunched up some skin—"flip h[im]
over like this and grab his tail wi[th]
your pinky. So he's splayed." Gile th[en]

ut a syringe, already primed, iected the mouse at the base of l. "Now he's anesthetized." A r of us followed suit. The woman o me dropped her mouse on the nd we spent a few minutes chas- into a corner. There followed moments of intense silence as ne tried to get it right. "Fuck! He !" said a guy next to me from the rsity of Michigan. His girlfriend d: "No splatting!"

er the next hour, we progressed, after mouse, through a number niques, first for anesthesia, then vage—essentially slipping a bent



e down the mouse's throat, like you ays see on *ER*—then for blood col- ion. A few of those techniques, n as the "tail clip," in which a tiny gment of the mouse tail is snipped, l the peritoneal draw, in which od is sucked up in a syringe from base of the tail, were fairly straight- vard and tolerable—at least for the ooker. Some, however, had many of backing away from the table.

But we had to practice. These techniques were necessary, Gile told us, because more and more test protocols for pharmaceutical companies require larger amounts of blood to be drawn from the animals, and the old methods don't quite deliver. "First, I want you all to do an intraocular—look how much blood you get from one stick," he said. The intraocular, or "eye-stick," is just that: you pick up an anesthetized mouse in one hand, wield, dart-like, a small pipette-straw in the other, and, in one fluid motion, jab the anesthetized animal just below the eye. The pipette immediately fills with mouse blood, the mother's milk of Big Science. You then dab the animal's eye with a cotton swab and place it in a recovery cage. Despite the matter-of-fact nature of the demonstration—Gile managed to make it seem almost humane—there's a detectable rise in the group bile. "I. Am. So. Not. Fucking. Doing. That," one young woman muttered to a friend. But one fellow from Johns Hopkins did do that. He stepped right up and jabbed away. Missed. Jabbed again. Got it. Pretty soon others pick[illegible] tried too. Gile was ab[illegible] cused on the task—but never let [illegible] forget that we had before us a living, breathing mammal. The tightness in my gut never quite relaxed.

There remained only one procedure lurking in the psychic background, and now Gile took it up. "Euthanasia," he said, casting a placid look over our group. "How many of you have induced it?" Most hands go up. "Now, how many use CO_2?" he asked, referring to the most popular method of killing a lab animal with gas. Again, most hands go up. Again, Gile's slightly unnerving gaze. "Cervical dislocation?" he went on, referring to an older method of euthanasia, also known as "CD," which involves, essentially, breaking the mouse's neck. No hands are raised. "That's what I thought," Gile said. "Too yucky for you. But the fact is, when you take everything into consideration, CD is just as good and just as humane as gas." He opened a cage and held one gloved hand over the door. "It all is in your speed and smoothness. You want to absolutely minimize the stress and anxiety on the animal. That's why you pick him up quickly and then all in one motion bring him down onto the table, holding his head down and then . . ." He jerked, firmly, on the mouse's tail. "It's done. You move on to the next animal." Gile repeated the procedure, lining up the little corpses in a neat row as he went on. No one volunteered for the practice session.

Of course, save for myself, the feelings of dread, anxiety, and alienation were hardly new to anybody in the van that day. When the University of California, San Diego, surveyed its legion of lab workers last year, it found one of the biggest "unmet health needs" was grief counseling for its staff euthanizers. Still, on the ride back to the [illegible] center, with a coppery twilight edging in, the talk was [illegible] mainly about [illegible] had just done.

By the time [illegible] I had been [illegible] ly, for several [illegible] at a local [illegible] me found [illegible] uled for [illegible] Laurie.

e on Pyrex 1, by Adam Stennett. Courtesy the artist and 31Grand, New York City

cute, ever-enterprising, and often thought-provoking. During their first few months out of the lab, residing in a much more spacious cage, Moe escaped eight times, each break foiling my increasingly sophisticated penal technology—added bars, double-blocked gates, a cage set inside another cage. This while her sisters contented themselves with exploring their plush new digs—burrowing, wheel-running, nest-building, and platform-climbing into the wee hours of the morning. Animal behaviorists label what Moe does—with her insistent bar-gnawing, repetitive corner-exploration, and circling—a "stereotypy," which they define, generally, as any repetitive, unvarying, purposeless activity. Most view stereotypy as an abnormal reaction to confinement, but there is no agreement about its function. Is it a stress reaction? Does it represent the unnatural thwarting of natural behaviors—frustration? Or is it something simpler, as expressed by Moe: the drive to get off the running wheel, to escape?

Both Aesop and Horace tell the fable of the country mouse, tempted by the pleasures of the city, who after being chased from the banquet table by the resident humans' more favored companion animals, retreats in fear to the boredom of the countryside. It's a perfect conclusion, for in the murine world, fear always drives the deal. Fear, in fact, makes up fully one third of the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) personality, if one can call it that. Neophobia (fear of the new), thigmophilia (the need to have one's back against the wall), and comensulism (living off of humans)—those make the modern mouse. John James Audubon, whose mammals were often cartoonish (not to mention inaccurate), nonetheless caught *Mus musculus* just right, perched on top of an old piece of cheese, upright, ready to scurry, electric with fear.

Humans, and Americans in particular, it seems, have always had an ambivalent attitude toward *Mus musculus*. On the one hand, he was a cute critter, harmless when considered at a distance. But let that critter dart along the wallboard when we're raiding the fridge at one in the morning and you get the

[illegible] Eeek! [illegible] another: [illegible] tion of evolu- [illegible] to avoid [illegible] brain's way of startling us into action. Dart. Eeek. Splat. You can sense this doubleness in so many ways, from the valor of modern cartoon heroes to the anthropomorphic villainy of Old and New World disease narratives.

The scientific mouse narrative, however, wherein the mouse comes to serve as official human proxy, is relatively new. It begins in 1852 with Gregor Mendel, the barrel-chested Austrian monk who founded the discipline of genetics. Young Gregor apparently preferred mice to peas as the vehicle for his research, a fact largely unknown to modern mythmakers; the little cages of mice stinking up his chilly Augustinian chambers made him quite cheerful, he would later recall. But the Church was not cheerful, and it forbade Mendel to study what would inevitably involve, among other things, mouse copulation. As Mendel later gloated: "You see, the Bishop did not understand that plants also have sex." But it seems the Church won in the end. Europe "lost" Mendel's papers.

Two Americans picked up the Mendelian ball fifty years later. One of them was a geneticist named Clarence Little, no relation to Stuart; the other was an industrialist named Edsel Ford, son of Henry. Together they fathered what might be called modern assembly-line science. In the early 1900s, Little, a handsome Boston Brahmin, read Mendel's rediscovered pages on trait inheritance. He became a convert, began raising mice in his Harvard bathtub, and eventually came to believe that *Mus musculus* was the key to understanding the biology of man. By 1929, with Ford's help, Little had founded the Jackson Laboratory, named after Roscoe Jackson, another benefactor, who had recently died.

And so, on the eve of World War II, Clarence Little came to preside over the greatest mouse farm ever built, selling hundreds of thousands of his "assembly line rodents" worldwide. In so doing he established what a later generation would call a "base of users": people who saw the mouse as their principal piece of scientific software.

Little's reassuring portrait came to [illegible] the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

Advances in genetic engineering, of course, are what made Little's [illegible] model into today's mouse juggernaut, animal that so pervades medical science as to command its own $600 million NIH program, the International Knock Out Mouse Project, or KOMP. Bureaucratically speaking, KOMP's goal is to generate "a comprehensive public resource comprised of mouse embryonic stem (ES) cells containing a null mutation in every gene in the mouse genome"—a complete, genome-wide gene catalogue of the mouse, open to researchers working on all diseases.

The idea behind murine knockout gene technology is simple, its uses legion. My own rescued lab mice are a perfect example. They are of the strain best known as black 6, short for its full genetic nomenclature, C57BL/6J. Originally bred by Clarence Little back in the 1920s, black 6 are the most common lab mice in the world, making up more than 80 percent of all such animals in use today. They are fecund and hearty—traits valued in laboratory and budget-planning circles. Another thing that makes black 6 so popular is their consistent genetic heritage: they have been inbred with their sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, for nearly 100 years. ("The benefit is that everyone has the same slate to write on," a geneticist friend told me of the strain's benefits. "The black 6 is like everyone speaking the same language.") "Knocked out" in the case of my mice involves the eradication of a gene that protects against heart disease. With the gene knocked out, the animal becomes more susceptible to gene-specific cardiovascular problems. Scientists can then test various compounds and even foods that might slow the advance of the animal's

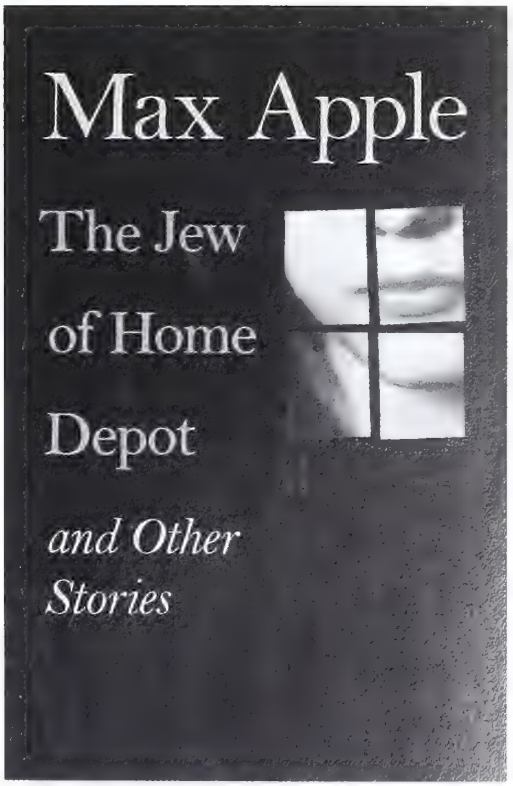
* *At about the same time, by the way, Little discovered something strange—good, but strange. Anti-vivisectionists, who could make life so unpleasant for scientists of his day, didn't seem to care much about mice. What Little instinctively knew: it was, he said using a taxonomic flourish, "the age old enmity of [man] and the Muridae." People are afraid of mice. Good, he said. Let them be. Remember why they should be. And so, in a series of subtle remarks, Little helped foster the bias [illegible] about lab mice that now prevails. To [illegible] mouse, Mus musculus, is the savior we don't mind executing.*

clerosis, hopefully arriving at a
at targets the disease's genetic
such is the theory.
fferent kind of genetic engi-
takes the black 6 egg and im-
n it a human Alzheimer's gene,
ing a mouse that gets Alz-
's, complete with the mental
ments and physical changes
haracterize the disease in hu-
All by itself, the APP mouse, so
for its distinctive gene, has
l a billion-dollar scientific in-
It sells for $236.40 apiece. Its
widespread, and represents a
cant chunk of all public and
money spent on Alzheimer's
h. Over the course of the past
have read reports of scientists
verything from curry powder to
erry essence, from ibuprofen to
cherry bark, to slow the progress
use Alzheimer's. Many show
se. Theoretically.
same goes for cancer. The iso-
of the so-called mouse onco-
-a cancer-tumor gene—has fu-
huge and overdue renaissance in
cancer research; at a recent con-
on of the influential American
ciation for Cancer Research
CR), which took up the entire
ngeles Convention Center this
pring, whole rooms were given
o mouse-driven science. There
eminars by today's leading lights
erything from new cancer gene
veries to new cancer disease
anisms, all discovered in geneti-
engineered mice. Many of the
ers were relatively young men
omen—a few already have uni-
y labs named for them—whose
rs the mouse has accelerated be-
the wildest aspirations.
this kind of assembly-line sci-
that drives the mouse industry,
vice versa. On the floor of the
R, amid the jumbo pharmaceu-
company pavilions with their slick
a-TV presentations, free cake
ookies, and hostesses who look
hey could just stay on and work
pcoming auto show, stand the
ntrepreneurs. There are the fel-
who sell mouse implants, mouse
al instruments, mouse gene se-
ers. There are booths hawking
immuno-assay known to man—
every mouse chow known to

The Ultimate Driving Machine

Finally, a vehicle the planet can breathe easier about.

Our next-generation BMW Hydrogen 7 boasts a 12-cylinder engine with a top speed of over 140 mph. But equally impressive is that it produces near-zero emissions. Which means the exhaust produces water vapor, not carbon dioxide. It's an idea that makes more than an environmental statement. Learn more about our clean future vision at bmwusa.com/ideas.



This is the first collection to appear in twenty years from one of America's best short story writers. His thirteen stories are marvelous—funny, heartbreaking, and wise by turns, and on occasion all three at once.

Praise for Max Apple:

"Apple may not be as well known a humorist as Russell Baker, Calvin Trillin, or Garrison Keillor. But he should be. He belongs in the same crowd."

"Apple is an ami[illegible] hearted [illegible] occupy an agreeable terri[illegible]

The Johns Hopkins [illegible]
1-800-537-5487 •

mouse. There is even a Love Mash pellet for reluctant breeders. "You drop one a these in there an' you just step back!" its co-inventor tells a group of us gathered about for free samples, "'cause they *gonna* go at it!"

One of the more remarkable developments—mouse ultrasound equipment—allows a researcher to monitor the metabolic trail of any experimental drug. All you do is anesthetize the little fellow, mount a mouse-size oxygen mask on him, lay him on a special platform (it looks just like the one Goldfinger used on James Bond when he tried to laser off the spy's testicles), and administer an injection. The mouse's internal organs light up huge on a screen—all the way down to the tiniest blood vessels. The machines go for $150,000 to $350,000, and people are buying them like crazy. The NIH has made sure of that, as has the continuing demand for new drugs by large pharmaceutical companies. It's a mouse gold rush, as Fred Roberts, an unusually low-key sales representative for Visual Sonics, explained. "As a guy who's been on the human side of medical imaging systems for eighteen years, if you would have told me three years ago that I'd be selling a mouse imaging system, I'd tell you that you were crazy," Roberts said. "But the more I peeled back the onion on this industry, the more I became convinced that this is where the future is."

This growing symbiosis of mouse science and mouse entrepreneurship is paralleled by a symbiosis of mouse science and human clinical medicine. Companies that once performed human clinical trials now routinely offer mouse trials as well—which amounts to a kind of one-stop shopping for drug developers. A sales representative whom I met at a recent gathering of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) explained that such a merger was "just logical." The list of her company's services runs the gamut from mouse neurotoxicity to mouse carcinogen testing, and from human drug-safety to human drug-efficacy testing. "Everything has a kind of mouse-to-man arc to it," another sales rep at the same event told me of

[illegible] hospitals, and at many private ones as well. One of the biggest building projects at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston has nothing to do with education: it is a new 45,000-square-foot mouse vivarium.

And almost everywhere you go in big-city clinical medicine today, mice pop up. At Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Dan Cohn, one of the nation's leading experts in the genetics of dwarfism, maintains a mouse colony only a five-minute walk from his laboratory. I had met Cohn over the past few summers at a common vacation spot, and upon hearing of my new murine interests he had invited me for a visit. I found him at his office, in the Steven Spielberg Building, in the heart of the vast Cedars complex. Cohn explained that the mice give him an opportunity to "flesh out" various theories about which genes link up with dwarfism—the better, eventually, to craft diagnostic tests for humans who show up at his clinic from around the world.

What's also amazing, Cohn told me after a brief tour of his vivarium, is not just how mouse science drives human science but how human science drives mouse science. "Recently," he said, by way of illustration, "we had DNA samples from a Pakistani family that we have been analyzing for years. Just on a hunch, I contacted a colleague at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. The next thing you know, I have this very excited mouse genetics guy on the phone. He's telling me, 'You've found out what he has!' I said, 'Who has what?' He says, 'The DNA you sent me matches a sample from a mouse we've been studying here for thirty years. We've never been able to put a tag on which gene was causing his condition. Now you've done it!'" I joked: Cohn had made a . . . a *veterinary* discovery! "I'm not sure how my old grad school mentor would warm to that," he admitted.

But if the mouse is such a good model, with the feds and big pharma companies spending bil-

[illegible]ions on mouse-based scienc[illegible] why is the pharmaceutical indust[illegible] vaunted "research pipeline" [illegible] Ask that question too many t[illegible] the modern lab world and yo[illegible] for, as I was, another backs[illegible] check to make sure you aren[illegible] animal-rights type. Yet the qu[illegible] deserves an answer, however [illegible] and it is this: It takes time to [illegible] stand human diseases with a[illegible] mal model, and even longer [illegible] velop a compound to treat a [illegible] without killing the patient firs[illegible] example most frequently trott[illegible] is that of Gleevec, a block[illegible] drug that has revolutionized [illegible] treatment. Gleevec came di[illegible] out of mouse science in the [illegible] 1980s that showed how pr[illegible] called tyrosine kinases promo[illegible] mor development. But that b[illegible] through didn't become a usabl[illegible] until 1999.

That's one drug. But what el[illegible] PETA is fond of pointing out, [illegible] have been no new drugs, to [illegible] that were discovered using gene[illegible] ly modified mice. (The Gle[illegible] breakthrough used a tradition[illegible] bred mouse.) Not long ago, [illegible] that observation to Joanna [illegible] kowsky, a young researcher a[illegible] California Institute of Technolo[illegible] Pasadena. Jankowsky's field, neu[illegible] ology, has been transformed ove[illegible] past decade by the genetically [illegible] neered mouse, and she is one [illegible] new generation of scientists [illegible] "could not imagine" life without [illegible] mouse. Her closeness with the [illegible] mal was apparent in the stories [illegible] quickly came to swap—about [illegible] the black 6 can be so nasty, a[illegible] how other strains jump like popc[illegible] and chirp like birds. It was obvi[illegible] she was fond of the mouse, and [illegible] markably clearheaded in describ[illegible] her use of them; unlike almost ev[illegible] other scientist I interviewed, she [illegible] the only one to use the term "k[illegible]" rather than "sacrifice" in writ[illegible] about her experiments.

The mouse has catapulted Ja[illegible] kowsky, only thirty-seven, to the le[illegible] ing edge of her specialty, the mole[illegible] lar processes that lead to Alzheime[illegible] disease. In 2004 she used a version [illegible] the APP mouse to test what seem[illegible] like established wisdom in her fie[illegible]

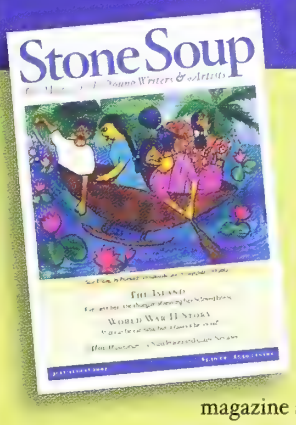
ıe amyloid plaque so closely as-
ed with the disease would dissi-
vith enrichment—with mental
hysical stimulation. Such had
assumed ever since work in the
1990s showed that novelty, edu-
ı, and exercise somehow de-
led the risk of developing
imer's. (It was also the source of
commercial hits as Sudoku and
Age.)

ıat she found shocked her and
eers, or, as the understated
owsky put it: "Oops!" The en-
nent *exacerbated* the amyloid bur-
n the APP mice, even while it
ed to delay learning and memory
ts—proxies for measuring the on-
f dementia. She repeated the ex-
ıent with more mice. Again, the
results: more plaque, despite de-
ed senility. To say that her work
d eyebrows is an understatement;
ı hundred years scholars have
tled with Alois Alzheimer's orig-
observation of plaque associated
dementia—and failed to find a
al connection.

ow Jankowsky and a number of
r young scholars have pointed to
w way. They are not saying that
ue does not matter, but they are
ng something almost as important:
hat awful plaque may not be the
t important disease-related func-
ı of the APP gene. "It may be that
he time you can detect plaque, the
ase process is too far along to treat."
ıat may be more important, she and
ers are saying, is "synaptic home-
ısis"—how neurons maintain a bal-
e between their excitatory func-
ns and their tranquilizing, or
ressing, functions, and how the
P molecules upset that balance.
ıat suggests that we should perhaps
looking at different end points when
test new drugs for Alzheimer's,"
kowsky says. "And we could never
have got here without
genetically altered mice."

f mice have transformed the
rd" molecular neurosciences, they
ve also transformed the "soft," or
ıavioral, neurosciences as well.
ain, it takes young minds as well
young mice. I first encountered
drew Holmes, a senior research
entist at the Laboratory for Inte-

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tree pulp not normally conducive to accessible prose. Holmes had just won a prestigious young investigator's award for his research on mouse psychology. In "The Ascent of Mouse," an article in *Nature*, he deftly sketched the rise of a new generation of behavioral tests for transgenic mice that model everything from anxiety to depression to OCD. What was essential to understand, he wrote, was how the sophistication of the new transgenic mouse models had made many of the old foot-shocking, tail-slamming, open-space-stressing behavioral tests obsolete. "The mouse was demanding that we change," he told me.

And the change is worth it, Holmes argues, because new mouse models and tests can flesh out the complex, human-related behavioral problems long thought to be the exclusive preserve of primates. Consider mental flexibility and perseverance, two traits highly relevant not just to modern, performance-based work life but also to conditions ranging from schizophrenia to alcoholism to autism. How do we retain mental flexibility, Holmes wants to know, and how does normal perseverance mutate into something terrible? To measure that, Holmes and others are using descendants of Little's mice to measure something called reversal learning. He has devised a new, humane test utilizing video screens, feed bins, and lighting to model the process of how we learn and then unlearn something. In an experiment that reminds me of my days trying to survive as a magazine editor, a mouse is placed in a glass-sided cage. At one end of the cage is a feed trough, and at the other is a video touch screen that projects symbols. Mice are trained to poke one symbol for a reward—a food treat. After an animal learns which symbol to poke for the treat, the screen symbols are switched; the test then measures how many times it takes the mouse to unlearn the old, now non-rewarding task and [illegible] this new reward rule. "This isn't just about training mice to do a new trick," Holmes explained. "You can also then compare how two genetically different strains of mice differ at the task, and that gets you closer to which genes are at work for reversal learning and, by proxy, mental flexibility." It also shows that, with some thought, behavioral studies of mice can be made much more humane. In this case, the "stress" inflicted during the test-training phase—normally something like a foot shock—simply involves a brief "lights out" period during which the animal cannot access the reward. Puffs of air are also popular now.

If anything, the mouse model may be too good, too easy to use. Greg Cole, a professor of medicine and neurology at UCLA, and Sally Frautschy, also a UCLA professor, both made this point to me during one of several visits to their laboratory. It was Cole and Frautschy who, a few years ago, used the black 6 to show how curcumin, a spice in curry powder, delayed dementia, neural inflammation, and plaque accumulation in APP mice. It was a brilliant piece of work, since duplicated in other labs, celebrated with the usual media fanfare, and crowned by the inevitable "new" nutritional supplement. But Cole and Frautschy view all the hubbub as highly premature. "The mouse, in a way, has upped a certain expectation about medical science, especially when it comes to aging," said Cole, a thoughtful man who picks his words carefully. "Now every NIH grant application is expected to have some kind of mouse narrative—*x* into mouse equals *y* out of mouse—but the fact is that science does not come as a narrative. It is observation. And I am afraid that as such results get popularized, a lot of people [illegible] get their hopes raised way too soon." The mouse assembly line, in other words, may be producing too much scientific data, too swiftly.

The mouse, like the computer, has become a driving force behind the commodification of science—science as product, wrapped in its own black box, the ever-mutating modern mouse as its foreman, architect, and shill. And commodification—as we know from our experience with cheap com[illegible] food and obesity, for example—on with new prices and new respo[illegible] ties. The mouse model may req[illegible] we reevaluate our [illegible] stance toward these [illegible]

The first place for such n[illegible] ues should be Washington, D.C., where the mouse, legisla[illegible] speaking, has remained a cipher, d[illegible] spite the fact that *Mus mu[illegible]* is now the scientific equival[illegible] USDA corn—a big goverr[illegible] crop. Like many agricultural [illegible] tries, today's mice are spottily [illegible] lated (there has never been [illegible] prise inspection of a mouse f[illegible] by the USDA), highly comm[illegible] (hence the dominance of [illegible] strain), and heavily subsidize[illegible] the NIH and major public uni[illegible] ties). An indication that this [illegible] actly the status quo desired b[illegible] pharmaceutical industry c[illegible] found in the latest version o[illegible] Animal Welfare Act, passe[illegible] 2002. Although protection c[illegible] most all other animals cover[illegible] that act was increased, mice ([illegible] with other rodents and birds) [illegible] specifically left out after for[illegible] bipartisan lobbying by pharmac[illegible] cal companies.

Yet, just as Americans are fi[illegible] waking to the need for a stronger [illegible] (because of bad pills) and USDA [illegible] cause of bad spinach), science is s[illegible] ly awakening from its laissez-f[illegible] mouse reverie: their mice, too, [illegible] need a little more Uncle Sam. [illegible] ving the change are not the traditi[illegible] bogeymen of genetic sciences—[illegible] fear of "genetic drift" or some ex[illegible] bacteriological mutation, neithe[illegible] which has so far materialized. Rat[illegible] change arrives under the worka[illegible] rubric of building better science. [illegible] wake-up call came a few years [illegible] when several independent ethologi[illegible] who study the behavior of anim[illegible] showed that barren and unsocia[illegible] housing conditions—the kind ma[illegible] mice still are kept in today—may [illegible] making the mouse into a less reliable [illegible] search tool. Lack of enrichment—[illegible] in some cases, inconsistent enric[illegible] ment—tweaks their metabolism, brai[illegible] and endocrine systems so much tha[illegible] may make scientific results idiosyncrat[illegible]

…ouse housing, this critique ar… …n lead to bad human pills.

…groundbreaking series of exper… …in the early 2000s, the Swiss …gist Hanno Würbel took a close …t how rodent mothers prepare …ng to deal with environmental … in later life, usually measured by …ncy of grooming, feeding, and …g. He found that the outcome of …aretaking that works for rodents …wild seems to become maladap… …r those in captivity. "The animals …sed under false pretenses," wrote …el. The pattern of nursing in the …disposes "offspring to enhanced …ine] stress responses and fearful… A little caustically, Würbel went … add: "Enhanced fearfulness and …ivity to stress is clearly not in the …ists' best interest."

…orse, many genetically induced …ences among mice—the kind that …o much and make the intricacies …cremental, mouse-based discov… …so worthwhile—can be neutral… …by standardized housing. Most …rican labs house four to six ro… …s per 18- by 12-inch cage (not too …, but about one mouse in ten—11 …ent of all mice—is reared in iso… …n, a powerful predictor of neural …king. I can see some of this, out… …lly, in my own mice when I have …ave one of them in a small space …ore than a few days: the repetitive …ing, the rearing-up, the purposeless … biting. They don't seem to eat …h at those times either. Mice, …logists say, really need at least a …re meter.

What is the answer? Without regu… …on, the industry seeks the lowest… … solutions, lab space being at a pre… …m. That's not necessarily a bad …ulse, as it has encouraged innova… … uses of existing cage space and, in… …ectly, motivates researchers to min… …ze mouse populations. The so-called …ee R's—reduce (the number of an… …als used), reuse (data and animals), …d refine (experimental protocols)— …ain, theoretically, the watchwords … most experiment planners today. …t with increasingly powerful com… …rcial pressure for researchers to ex… …nd mouse research, small innova… …n is not enough. To really make sure …t lab mice are consistent human …oxies in science, says Würbel, we

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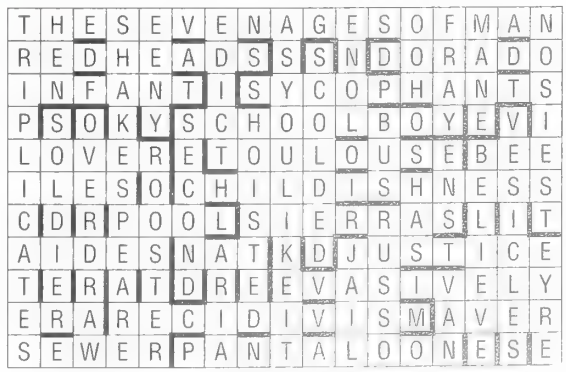
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SOLUTION TO THE NOVEMBER PUZZLE



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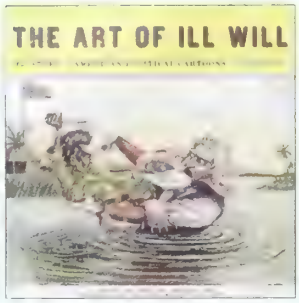
*Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov. Note: * indicates an anagram*

The unclued entries are "The Seven Ages of Man" from Shake… INFANT, SCHOOLBOY, LOVER, SOLDIER, JUSTICE, PAN… SECOND CHILDISHNESS

ACROSS: 10. two meanings; 12. d'or-ado; 13. *; 19. ho… (f)lies*; 24. rev.; 25. *; 27. *; 28. *; 32. *; 34. rev.; 35. re… two rings.

DOWN: 1. * ; 2. (t)hen; 3. e-E-NY; 4. ed(rev)-I-Cr; 5… 8. homonym; 9. (Spai)n-(Prad)o- siest(a); 11. *; 14… bus(s); 17. *; 18. r(0)oster; 20; ENS; 21. homophon… 26. *; 29. (l)aria(t); 30. JA(1)L; 31. homophone; 33.

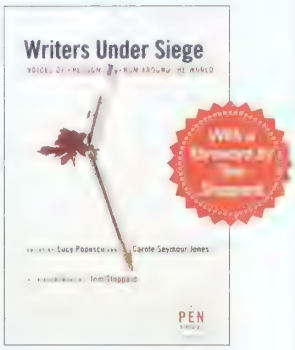
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need to provide them with consistent novelty—in essence, the same learning and developmental arcs that we routinely design and underwrite for our pets and children.

And if we are going to be consistent in our beliefs about animal welfare, then we must at least give to the lab mouse what we give to our pets: maternal handling, burrowing and play opportunities, nest-building, and even "opportunities to take control" of their environment are all part of the mainstream lexicon of modern zoological-park management when it comes to "the higher species," as the noted ethologist Jonathan Balcombe pointed out recently. "There is definitely a kind of animal size-ism at work here," he said. "Because there is nothing persuasive in the literature that the mouse suffers any less than bigger animals."

Indeed, the current literature, across the ideological board, cuts the other way. Consider empathy, a trait long thought exclusive to the higher primates. Last year, in a deft series of experiments, a group of scholars at McGill University showed how mice react when they view a cage mate in pain. The procedure involved inflicting pain by using a small injection of acetic acid, which contracts the animal's stomach muscles and causes "writhing." Some mice were injected and placed singly in a transparent Plexiglas tube; these were dubbed "one writhing," or OW, mice. Others were injected and placed in the tubes in pairs, sometimes with cage mates, other times with strangers, and were dubbed "both writhing," or BW, mice. The process was repeated for twenty-one days, and the results were remarkable: the BW mice showed significantly more pain behavior than the mice that were housed singly, *but only when their counterparts had been cage mates*. The same I-can-feel-your-pain-but-only-if-I-know-you finding also was revealed in a previous experiment using the agent formalin as the pain inducer; formalin's outward sign of pain is "increased licking behavior." Again, when one mouse observed a cage mate's pain, his own pain was [illegible]ased; when he viewed a cage [illegible] that had received a lower dose of [illegible]alin, his pain was decreased, while [illegible]ificant effects were observed [illegible] strangers.

Even more remarkable t[illegible] mouse-welfare issues raise[illegible] study are the ones concern[illegible] man identity. Here Mus [illegible] *Homo sapiens*'s place in th[illegible] around him. As the author w[illegible] "Although most consider true[illegible] thy to be an exclusive ab[illegible] higher primates, empathy m[illegible] phylogenetically continuou[illegible] nomenon . . . well within the r[illegible] all mammals." Translation[illegible] Brother Mouse. And, again, ha[illegible] great news for humans, partic[illegible] since the hottest topic in con[illegible] rary human pain research co[illegible] empathy and so-called [illegible] neurons—a perfect reason, t[illegible] thors wrote, for development [illegible] animal model of empathy."

But don't such findings, digg[illegible] little less superficially, also st[illegible] our tolerance for mouse exper[illegible] tation? If mice are really [illegible] monkeys, emotionally speakin[illegible] long before the pitiful stares [illegible] anti-vivisection posters feature [illegible] After all, we may use 40,000 lab [illegible] keys a year in the United State[illegible] we use 80 million rats and mice [illegible] that is not counting the 70 pe[illegible] of all male mice—usually too a[illegible] sive for use in studies—tha[illegible] euthanized before weaning. An a[illegible] model of empathy? Yes, perhaps [illegible] what about a humane one as wel[illegible] a letter writer in *Science* noted afte[illegible] empathy study, "Your report . . . s[illegible] 'Empathy is one of the nobler hu[illegible] attributes.' Must I conclude that [illegible] absent or suppresse[illegible] some scientists?"

Can we do without mice? T[illegible] have always been critics of murine [illegible] ing, but today nearly all of them ar[illegible] sociated with the harder line of [illegible] animal-rights movement rather t[illegible] with the more mainstream advoc[illegible] of animal welfare. Not Joe Bielit[illegible] Tall, handsome, and charisma[illegible] Bielitzki once served as chief vet[illegible] narian for NASA and, later, as dir[illegible] tor of animal research for the sec[illegible] tive Defense Associated Resear[illegible] Projects Agency, otherwise known[illegible] DARPA. It was there, while co[illegible] manding a project budget that r[illegible] into the hundreds of millions, th[illegible] Bielitzki began to have seco[illegible]

its about mouse testing. "I had lot of reading on the history of ory testing, and I began to see ere has been, over the last fifty a slow but inevitable series of hanges in the way we view lab- y science," he told a group of veterinarians recently. "I mean, a lot of you are not going to like ut we have to see the beginning modern industry as originating Nuremberg Code! That set the rd for human life and lab testing, isplaced it onto animal life. –he stopped and flipped to an- slide—"we've been evolving our-, as a profession. Look at this! back as 1959 we proclaimed the s that drive us today: the three refine, reduce, and reuse. In order ep the number of animals used inimum. Yet look at the numbers ! We're sacrificing—wasting, g, euthanizing, whatever you want il it, 70 percent of all male new- mice, mainly because researchers only females. That puts us at odds our own values."

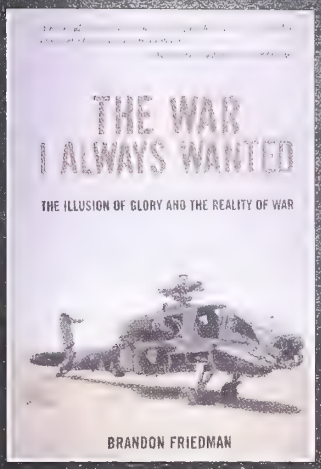
ıe Nuremberg Code! To put it ly, that is not exactly the mes- most of the industry wants to , and for good reason. The ıal-rights machine, in both the ed States and the United King- , has long maintained that ani- models can be replaced with cell e and computer models, but have to provide meaningful data to ort the assertions. (To be fair, research community—especially rma—has not been particularly ful in driving such research for- d, and to date there is no Edsel l of animal-replacement models.) ead, PETA mainly relies on the canards like "mice are not hu- ns," pointing to the obvious and ady scientifically mitigated physi- gical and structural differences be- en the species. But Bielitzki has stopped at being a colorful eshow. His company, VaxDesign ., has developed what he calls "the t marketable mouse-replacing del for vaccine testing." As he puts "It will come out next year, and will be—how shall I say it?— *uptive* to the industry."

Travel around in the mouse world g enough, and you find other people who are non-traditional in their thinking about lab mice and alternatives to their use. They are, like Bielitzki, fueled not just by the humane imperative behind the vast numbers of mice but—how American—by the sheer waste of it all. *Seventy percent of male mice are euthanized before weaning.*

There is even a new Clarence Little, a man out to do nothing less than reinvent the mouse-science industry by using fewer mice in smarter ways. It says something about its unique institutional tolerance that he is being nurtured at the Jackson Laboratory. There Robert Taft is trying to cut the industry's endemic waste by "cryopreservation of genetic material." In other words, the freezing and banking of mouse sperm. "What I'm advocating could revolutionize the way mice are managed," Taft told me one day recently. The son of an Ohio dairy farmer (and a descendant of the twenty-seventh president), Taft harbors a longstanding appreciation for bovine sperm preservation. "Basically, the ability to freeze sperm changed the entire dairy industry," he said, beginning to draw, on his blackboard, a line chart with a steeply declining curve. "You did not have to breed and maintain a large number of bulls to get good genetic material; you could preserve tons of sperm via freezing, distributing, and thawing it when needed." The same model could help reduce the need to maintain large numbers of mice for specialized uses. A principal investigator could phone up and say, "I'm going to be running a new study and I need 500 animals with X mutation." Jackson could then look in its vast databanks, find the right line, and then ship it in special freeze containers around the world. Taft finished drawing a long-tail curve on his board and pointed out the business implications: "Most vendors focus on selling the new and the high-volume, but if you look further out this demand curve, you see that the total demand for smaller, cryopreserved strains is very significant."

But Taft's ideas are changes of magnitude, and they skirt the emerging empathic profile of the mouse. What, if anything, should be done to

THE WAR I ALWAYS WANTED



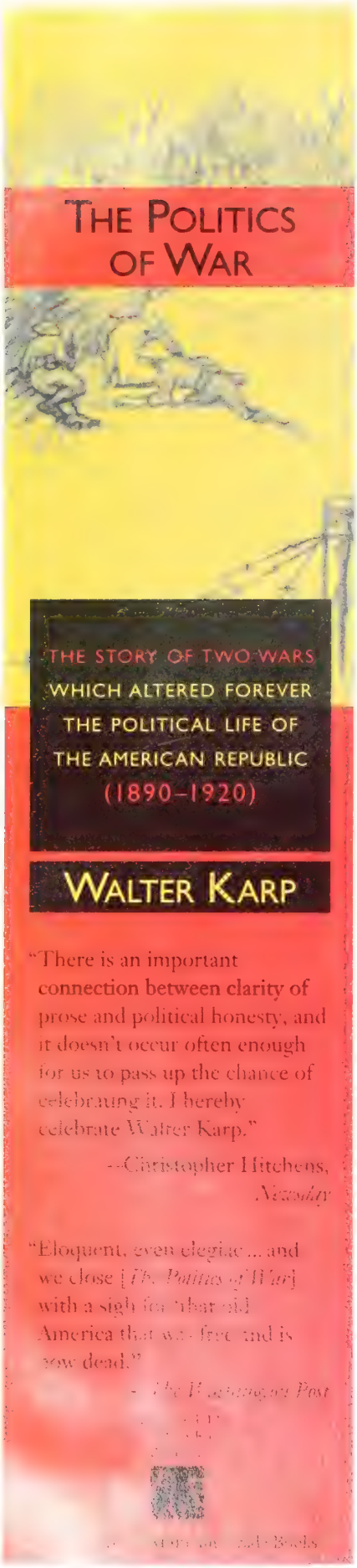
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"Given the



reduce our reliance on one animal, or [illegible] animal. Industry could be pressed to invest more heavily in alternatives to animal models, like Bielitzki's. The NIH could more forcefully apply existing regulations that call for "consideration" of non-animal means by all investigators. That is unlikely to happen, given Washington's historic musophobia, not to mention the growing head-line on both sides of the debate between academic freedom and animal rights. (Among those I met, there was not a single researcher or lab manager who didn't think of him- or herself as the aggrieved in that debate—not a good prospect of future collaboration.) At the very least, Washington might seriously consider including the lab mouse in the next rewrite of the Animal Welfare Act, so that we may at least obtain an independent appraisal of laboratory conditions. Joe Gile, the now-retired Jackson guru of mouse surgical procedures, told me that he is all for it. "The problem isn't with the big mouse houses but with the hundreds of new private and university start-ups that don't have a clue about mouse welfare and husbandry," he said one day over coffee in the Jackson cafeteria. "The stories I hear are horrific. Yes, why not put the mouse under the AWA?"

In the meantime, the mousification of medical science continues apace. Recently, the leaders of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science announced a recommitment to educational outreach. In the past, the society's outgoing president, Bruce Kennedy, said, AALAS avoided doing missionary work "because it was like waving a flag about what we did, and inviting a lot of misconceptions about it." But today, with PETA and, more violently, the Animal Liberation Front driving all the big media coverage, hiding in the proverbial corner is not an option. As any crisis-management P.R. firm will tell you, you've got to tell your own story first, or risk your enemy telling it for you. Following that cue, AALAS has members going out into the community, taking the case for laboratory animals to classrooms and youth groups around the country. "One of the key questions we always ask [illegible] to do with the toughest questions," Kennedy said, "and that question is, your brother or sister had cancer, there might be a way of saving him or her but that way would mean suffering or death for a mouse—or a dog like this one here, which would you choose? It always amazes me, the sophistication of their response. It certainly doesn't always go our way."

I would add something to this curriculum. After every school visit, AALAS should leave behind a pair of black 6 mice, one male, one female, along with a decent-sized cage and a manual on how to care for them. Doing so would be inexpensive, and it would present students with the real equation, not just the industry's, your future health in return for Mickey Mouse's death. I can imagine the science class then, and the message the kids and, later, adults might take from such a learning experience.

December Index Sources

1,2 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (Washington); **3–6** Center for Responsive Politics (Washington); **7** Federal Election Commission (Washington); **8,9** Library of Congress (Washington); **10** Diageo–*Hotline* poll (N.Y.C.); **11** Virgil Griffith, California Institute of Technology (Pasadena); **12–14** U.S. Government Accountability Office; **15** Families USA (Washington); **16** New York City Department of Consumer Affairs; **17** Applied Survey Research (Watsonville, Calif.); **18,19** Opinion Research Corporation (Princeton, N.J.); **20** Standard & Poor's (N.Y.C.)/American Stock Exchange (N.Y.C.); **21,22** Bloomberg News (N.Y.C.); **23** China Public Security Association (Shenzhen); **24,25** American Cancer Society (Atlanta); **26** International Narcotics Control Board (Vienna); **27,28** Miguel Fontes, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Baltimore); **29,30** U.S. Department of State; **31,32** Joshua Tybur, University of New Mexico (Albuquerque); **33** Platinum Stages (Newport Beach, Calif.)/Pacific International Marketing & Promotions (Fresno, Calif.); **34,35** David Sprott, Washington State University (Pullman); **36** TowerGroup (Needham, Mass.); Auntie Anne's, Inc. (Gap, Pa.); Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau (Phoenix); **39** FedEx Freight (Memphis); **40** Farmington Hills Fire Department (Farmington Hills, Mich.)

ENTER THE FORD

Lost chapters from *A Death in the Family*

By James Agee

I.

He saw his father, barefooted and naked to the waist, stealthily lifting his clothes from the chair, and with instant joy and anticipation he remembered. He shot up in bed so fast that the springs creaked and said, "Daddy!"

"*Whhsssht!*" his father warned, so sharply that he was alarmed; Emma groaned in her crib. He frowned, beckoned, and laid his finger on his mouth. Rufus followed him into the hallway.

"Ssh," he warned again, less sharply, and tiptoed towards the back stairs. A board creaked. "*Anhh,*" he grunted.

"Jay?" His mother's voice was muffled and bewildered.

His father spoke close to the door. "It's all right Laura," he said very low. "It's just us."

"See that Rufus wears his sweater," she said more clearly. "It's chilly still."

Rufus felt by the quality of his father's silence that he was annoyed.

"All right," he said. "Where's it at?"

"In the lower left-hand bureau drawer," his mother said.

"All right," he said, and started back along the hall.

"And Jay!"

He stopped. "Yeah?"

"When it gets warm, be sure he takes it off."

"Yeah." He started again.

"And make sure that Emma's covered, will you?"

"Sure. I will." He motioned Rufus to wait and hurried back along the hall. Rufus waited. He heard a drawer jam, and his father's grunt of annoyance; the sound of careful adjustment; the loud noise as it pulled open. "God damn it the hell," his father said tightly, under his voice. Emma wailed. There was intense silence. She whimpered. The silence was still more intense. His father emerged with a red sweater. He avoided the creaking board but his wife called, "Is she all right?"

"Yeah, she's all right."

"Thank you, Jay; goodbye. Goodbye, Rufus."

"Goodbye Laura," he said. "We'll be back by middle of the morning."

"All right."

"Goodbye, mama."

"*Good*bye dear, have a good time."

"We will," his father said; and they went down the back stairs into the kitchen.

The coffee was already boiling strongly; it shuffled noisily onto the hot stove lid, smelling like heroism and profanity. His father [illegible]

EDITOR'S NOTE: After James Agee died suddenly in 1955, at the age of forty-five, the manuscript [illegible] was readied for publication by his friend David McDowell, who—working with other editors at McDowell Inc.—altered the sequence of the novel, omitted chapters, corrected dialect, and inserted as a prologue "Knoxville: Summer of 1915." A Death in the Family *appeared two years later and was awarded [illegible] This month, the University of Tennessee Press will publish* A Death in the Family: A Restoration of the Text, *edited by Michael A. Lofaro. The four chapters presented here are set in Knoxville betw[illegible]*

it with a rag and shifted it to the back of the stove, wagging his scalded hand. He lifted the lid and put in [illegible] It made brilliant, splitting sounds. He put the skillet where the coffee had been. "Better get into your clothes," he said. He got out the bacon.

Rufus took off his nightgown and stood watching a network of blue form on his skin. His teeth rattled. His father looked up from the bacon.

"Get over by the fire," he said. "Hurry up and get your clothes on."

He stood by the pleasantly stinging stove and got into his drawers, watching his father. His father laid thick slices of bacon in the hot skillet and immediately they made a violent noise.



"Stand away," his father said. "That grease can burn the daylights out of you."

He stood away and slowly pulled one stocking on while he watched his father get into his shirt. He stood with his back turned partly towards his son, unbuttoned his pants, and took the galluses from both shoulders, spreading his knees to keep the pants from falling. He looked ludicrous with his knees spread, slightly squatted, the galluses down his back, and Rufus giggled.

"What *you* laughin at," his father said in a good humor, tucking in the shirttails.

"Nothing," he said, starting the other stocking. *Froggy would a wooin go*, he thought to himself.

His father squatted still deeper, reaching inside his pants to straighten the tails, then straightened abruptly, resettled the galluses, and turned, buttoning his fly. "Christ's *sake* boy," he said fiercely. "Don't stand on one leg like that next a stove! You could fall over and kill yourself!" He yanked a chair from the kitchen table. "Here! Sit down! And don't ever let me catch you doing *that* again!"

He sat down. He was startled, hurt, and humiliated but this soon passed as he watched his father and went on with his dressing. His father picked up the skillet and gave it a stiff shake and the bacon made a louder noise than ever. He turned it with a fork and took eggs from the icebox. Rufus was having considerable difficulty with his underwaist and normally, at this stage of dressing, he would have asked to be buttoned up, but his father [illegible] that he was capable of the whole operation and he was determined not to disappoint him. Besides, his father was busy, and might well [illegible] him for standing on one leg. He tried to take great care to get the right buttons in the right holes, but it was so hard to get them in any holes at all that when he had finished he was one button long at one point and one hole long at another. His father took the bacon from the skillet and broke in the eggs; they instantly turned into hard lace at the edges and shuddered all over, making a louder noise even than the bacon. His father salted them and peppered them nearly black. Now if he were to match the extra buttons and the extra hole he would have to undo all the buttons between. His father laid out two plates and two cups and knives, forks and spoons. He decided to say nothing about it. He pulled up one stocking and laid the suspender-button under it, and tried to hook over it properly. He looked up to watch his father turn the eggs and the whole thing slipped. He tried again.

His father looked at him. "Having trouble," he said.

He shook his head, and carefully laid the cord over the button, and pulled. Somehow it went wrong again. He wondered why. When he could see the button, doing it without the stocking in the way, he could do it practically every time and very much enjoyed the way he could slide the button up and down inside the hook, or the hook up and down inside the button, whichever he chose. But with the stocking in the way, he never could count on getting it caught.

"Here, let me try," his father said. He set the skillet back on the stove, where the eggs quieted, and knelt down. It worked perfectly easily for his father. His father undid it and said, "Look here." He looked at him. His father said, impatiently, "No, *here* I mean," and he realized he was supposed to look at his stocking. "Trouble is, you don't pull up on it right. See? Look here." And he pushed the button under and pressed strongly up, so that the button showed sharply through the stocking. "Now what you do, you get the button way down and then you try to get the hook over where it's too narrow to go. Like this. See?" He did what he described and the whole thing flew apart. They both laughed. "You can't ever get it that way," his father said. "You got to pull up on it. *Up* on the button, *down* on the hook. Like this. See?" He put the button under, and pulled up with it sharply, and pulled strongly down on the hook. "See? You bring it *way up* from underneath, and *way down* from on top, so that the wide part of the hook slips over the button. And then you hold them *close together*. You got to keep 'um just as close together as you can. See?" He showed him how close together they were. "And then—now you hold them just as close together as you can while you do this—now you slide it into place, so the narrow part comes right *round* the button. See? Like this." He slid it very slowly, and Rufus watched how adroitly the narrow part slid round the button. His father undid it.

right now you try it," he said. Rufus put the
under. "Now way up on the button from
' his father said. He pressed up hard. "Now
y down with the hook, so you get the wide
er the button." He did so. "Now what do
?"
se together," said Rufus.
at's right. And then what?"
w slide it."
d what else?"
se together," said Rufus.
at's right. Now let's see you do it."
held them close together and slid them
owly until the button was as far down as it
go. "Is that right?" he asked.
re it's right," his father said. "Now hurry up
t's eat this while it's hot and you can fin-
th that later. Wait a minute," he said. "Got
buttons a little mixed up." He quickly un-
ed and rebuttoned the underwaist. Always
t the bottom where you can see, he thought;
im now? No, one thing at a time. "You're
pretty good, buttoning yourself," he said.
fus said nothing.
s father thought: Damn fool thing to tell a
; dumb as a fish.

II.

s a long way out to Chilhowee Park but even
de out there was fun because the streetcar was
en. You didn't get in a door at the front, dad-
st swung him up along the side wherever he
, because there was a long step along each side
no walls on the car. The seats went right
ght across. The conductor came right along
utside, and he could make change out of the
silver tubes while he hung on with one hand.
y went all the way along Gay Street and out
ss the viaduct by the Southern Depot and
made a big curve to the right and then went
ght again, out Magnolia Avenue. For a while
e were big houses with big trees on the lawn,
there were smaller houses closer together, and
ler trees, then there were fewer houses, some
and some small, but farther apart, and more
s, and empty fields, and big signboards. Then
e was always the place where mama said,
at's where we first lived when we came down
n Kalamazoo," but there was nothing there
pt bushes and trees and lumps of clay and he
embered it had burned down, when Aunt
la was still just a tiny baby. And not long af-
that they could see the first of the Park.
he first that he could see of the Park was in
e ways almost the most exciting because there
as coming to him, or him to it, and soon he
ld be going right into it. High up beyond the
n treetops he could see curves of white paint-
wood and he knew that one was the rolly coaster and the other was the fairy's wheel. For the first little while there was only the very top of them; the top of the popcorn-white wheel, moving up from the treetops and down into them again, with dark little cars hanging just under the curve; and the top curve and then after a little the very lowest curve of the rolly coaster, and sometimes you could see a little dark car creeping up one of these curves or streaking down the other side, and the little dark heads of people sticking up from the car. Then while the streetcar came nearer, the trees began to come flakily apart and through them he could see the high white fence that kept people out who wouldn't pay and beyond it almost the whole wheel and nearly all of the rolly coaster, looping way up and way down and in and out and round and round itself like an enormous frozen white worm, and when a car was coming down why even when the streetcar was still moving you could hear the wonderful black roaring of the little car and even the yells of boys and the screams of ladies; and then the streetcar stopped and everybody got out and hurried across the gravel to the gate.



Inside the fence there were lots of things you could see that you couldn't see at all from outside. There was more than you could even see all at once, and even what you could see, it would take more than all day to do all of it. It was the most wonderful and beautiful place in the world except maybe the circus.

There were wide gravel walks full of people; and shade trees; and lawns with signs that told you to keep off but nobody did.

There were two lakes that really joined together, with a little gate in between which could be opened or shut. There were boats tied up side by side with their noses all pointing one way like minnows, and you could get in one of these boats, being very careful to step in the middle or it would turn over, and it always pressed down springily when you stepped in it, and then daddy would take off his coat and roll up his sleeves and pull at the oars and you could go right out in the middle of the water. If you looked over the side of the boat when it sat still, sometimes you could see fish hanging in the water, dark and wet and slowly wavy and if you put popcorn on the water there would soon be a quick *snap* and it was gone: a fish got it. Sometimes you could ev the fish come up and take it, and the minute he took it he *bent* back down in the water as fas a ball bouncing off a wall. There were gr swans on the water with swelling chests a



necks, then curved them back over and rubbed against their chests with their [illegible] as if they were trying to preen themselves and a little bit mad at everybody else, even other swans. It was clear they did not like the people in the boats. They mostly stayed in shallow, narrow streets [illegible] go much or couldn't at all, and [illegible] near they swam away and you could see their dark wide feet kicking behind them in the water. Sometimes if people threw popcorn or pieces of sandwich they wouldn't even pay any attention. Sometimes they would, and then the orange neck moved just like a snake, daddy said, and they would take the food [illegible] sometimes you saw one with his whole head and neck [illegible] in the water, right up to the shoulders. He was eating something off the bottom of the lake, daddy said. And then the long limber neck and the head would come up dripping and the swan would shake, and there would be a little rainbow around him. Sometimes they snarled up their necks and jabbed and nibbled at their own necks with their own bills.

"Reckon he's got lice," daddy said. "Just like a chicken."

"Oh how awful," mama said.

"What's awful about it," daddy said.

"They *look* so wonderful," she said.

Sometimes they got out on the bank, or got mad at each other or at people, and then they spread their wings and they were the biggest, grandest wings in the world.

"Why on earth don't they just fly away," she said.

"Clipped, I reckon."

"They don't *look* clipped, goodness knows. They've got wings enough for an Angel."

The merry-go-round was all gold and red and flashing mirrors and paintings of mountains and fast rivers in orange and blue and white and while it was whirling it made such loud and happy music you could hardly hear the rush of the roller coaster cars. There were horses on it with gentle expressions and others rearing up with arched necks and red nostrils, and lions and tigers with [illegible] glass eyes and fierce faces, all in the brightest colors. Some of them went up and down wavily [illegible] merry-go-round whirled and some of them stayed still except that they whirled by very [illegible] when you came there you had to wait till it stopped. You had to wait your turn. It was nearly always crowded with children and you saw the same faces and the same [illegible] cited eyes swing past over and over and o[illegible] older children had all kinds of tricks on [illegible] mals; sometimes they were so brave that [illegible] in the [illegible] coat hollered at them to q[illegible] even swung aboard if it was still slow enou[illegible] made them stop. There were nearly alwa[illegible] people with the littler children, and othe[illegible] people hung around looking, and waiting [illegible] were even seats for the littlest children an[illegible] times ladies sat in these seats with their b[illegible] their laps and sometimes a baby cried be[illegible] didn't know what was up, poor little c[illegible] didn't know this was sposed to be fun. Wh[illegible] heard the music and came over it was alw[illegible] awfully long time before the merry-go [illegible] slowed down and stopped, and if he aske[illegible] it would stop or why it wouldn't stop or [illegible] ing to stop now, they were impatient with h[illegible] said for Heaven sakes have a little *patienc*[illegible] you. But after a while it would really go slow[illegible] the music would begin to get wheezy and [illegible] tune, and now the faces of the horses and li[illegible] tigers were very clear and you could begin [illegible] out the one you wanted to ride on, and fin[illegible] would really stop all the way, and the music [illegible] stop too, and then you could begin to get o[illegible] couldn't be sure if you could get the anim[illegible] wanted because lots of people stayed on an[illegible] of others that weren't let stay on were very [illegible] and mad if they were big or even crying i[illegible] were little. But you could always get some[illegible]

When they first came there mama wo[illegible] let him ride an animal, even one that stoo[illegible] even if daddy said but I'll *hold* him on; he h[illegible] sit in one of the seats with her or with daddy. [illegible] were pretty, all bright red with gold leaves [illegible] dering on them, but they were sissy. But by [illegible] he never had to sit in one of the seats, he [illegible] always go on one of the animals. Sometim[illegible] liked the lions or tigers or even the one [illegible] white swan, bigger than any in the lake, [illegible] sometimes he liked the horses better because [illegible] were the ones you could really ride, daddy [illegible] a real lion or tiger would never let you an[illegible] wouldn't ride you any good even if he was [illegible] ing to try, but he didn't really much care wh[illegible] What he cared about was to ride the ones [illegible] went up and down, instead of the ones that st[illegible] still, and that was what his mama and dadd[illegible] gued about now that, and whether he [illegible] ride all by himself without *anybody* looking ou[illegible] him. His daddy would say, But daw *gone* it [illegible] ra they're every bit as safe as the ones that st[illegible] *still*. And she would say, Well they don't *loo*[illegible] safe. They don't look safe *one bit*. And he w[illegible] say, Look dear. He's strapped on. He hangs o[illegible] the rod. All that happens is, it goes up and do[illegible] Now how in the world can *that* hurt anybo[illegible] And she would say, But Jay it *looks* so danger[illegible]

I'm just silly about it but it *does look more* ous, that's *all*. And why can't he *wait* for hings till he's a little *bigger*? she would say. l be all the more fun if he has to *wait* for *little* while. All right, he would say. You're ss. Don't *say* that Jay, she would say. You now that provokes me. And he would say, ht then *I'm* the boss, and stand up big and and pat her shoulder and grin if some man oking and the man would grin back, and she look flustered. But when she was there lways did what she wanted.

vas the same with whether he could go on nself. Finally she said he could go by him- he rode an animal that stayed still, and he ride one that went up and down if daddy with him and stayed right there holding but he positively couldn't do both at once, ust wouldn't stand for it, and so that was t would be worked out. Daddy would pick up by the armpits and say now get your foot stirrup, and help him get it in, and then he d say now swing yourself over, and he would own some of his weight into the stirrup and daddy's help swing himself over; and daddy d put the strap around his waist and buckle d he would say, Now grab aholt of the rod hang on tight. There was a silver rod that right up through the animal's neck. So he d grab aholt of it and hang on tight. And if daddy was getting off he would say, Now owboy stuff. Just set up straight. Promise? he would promise and daddy would drop ven after it began to start. Or if the animal up and down and he stayed, Rufus could feel and now and then between his shoulders if he looked around there he was and they ned, and he looked to the front again be- e then you could really see it rising up so no- and high, and then sinking, and then rising gain, and the animals ahead, rising or sink- too or just standing still, and he could always the rising and sinking more if he was watch- it at the same time.

iding all by himself was even better, and one he best things of all was at the very beginning, en daddy had strapped him on and he had bed aholt of the silver rod and they just wait- for everything to begin. Because for a little le that seemed like a long time, everything d very still and it seemed as if it would nev- et moving and yet you knew it would, so that held your breath almost, waiting; and then all sudden things weren't quite standing still more. Instead there was a kind of buckling h like two freight cars joining together and ry car down the line budging a little too, and h this lurch the first slow whistlings and foof- s of the music began and a few tight strings e plucked or hammered with a sound like very slowly breaking glass, and a second later you could feel that everything under you was beginning to move forward, and the people standing at the side began very slowly to drift, and if you looked at the round edge of the floor of the merry-go-round you could see how still it seemed to stand while the gravel slid past it, just a smooth quiet pouring like slow water, every gravel sharp from every other, and a kind of quiet happy *ahh* rising up from the children on the animals, and the animals which went up and down began some very slowly to rise and others very slowly to sink, and the foofing and whistling began to become faster and firmer and brighter, and the jangling strings and the drums and trepans began to really bang and glitter and sound like something, rising and getting faster and brighter all the time, and the gravel began to get blurry and long and the faces standing along the side swung to look as you swung by, and then everything outside the merry-go-round began to streak and stream, and the music was quick and loud and wild, and all the animals which could were rising up and sinking down as grandly as waves of the sea, and if you kept looking outside the merry-go-round everything streaked by in such a whirl it almost made you dizzy, so that what he would do instead was mainly just hold on, and look straight ahead, and look out only when he thought it was swinging around once more to where he could see daddy and mama. Things all went so fast that sometimes he missed them, or looked just in time to lose them again, but after a little while he knew just about when to look, and how long to wait, and when to look again, and there they were, nearly always looking right at him, and smiling, and sometimes waving: he had to learn to whirl his eyes very quickly to pick them out so they would be clear and not streak.



Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
But still my soul seems heavenward bound

And finally, best of all, there was a time when he and daddy came out by themselves and daddy let him ride one of the ones that went up and down, and didn't stay on with him but got off and stood by the side and there he was, doing it all by himself; and the rising and sinking felt even better than ever before, and sometimes when he went past daddy he was up and sometimes he was down so that he had to calculate for this, and he was proud he screamed for him to look, and daddy looked and broke into a grin, and he yelled

the next time around, and daddy was still smiling from last time and grinned again [illegible] him, and by next time [illegible] wanted to show off, and took [illegible] rod and leaned far back and screamed *Look-laddy, no hands!* and the grin that was starting stopped and broke into frowning so that before he came round next time he knew he had better be holding on, and sure enough, even though he was holding on now, daddy was smiling and frowning and shaking his head all at the same time.

Sometimes right in the middle of the ride there would all of a sudden be no more music, and everything whirled along almost in silence, and with a hush over it besides, and seemed to go even faster and to be mysterious and frightening and happy, like silent falling in a dream when somehow you know you will land without hurting, and all you could hear was the oily clashing and elbowing and the occasional squeaking of parts of the great machine; and then all of a sudden a bran new tune would start and everything would be bright again, and with bran new cheerfulness it would seem to go even faster than in the silence or before it.



The only trouble with these rides was that though they seemed so long when you were waiting your turn, when you were on, they were really over awfully soon. It always kind of sneaked up on you that all of a sudden, when things still seemed to be careening along so beautifully, and the music was so loud and fine you couldn't hear anything else in the world, a kind of weakening would begin to sneak into the speed. Things began to be a little less streaky and before long they were hardly streaking at all, and the music began to sound a little the way mama did when she wasn't really thinking what she was saying, what she called thinking out loud, and a kind of queer sadness began to get under everything like sometimes late in the afternoon, as if something was beginning to be over with that you couldn't make last longer, and couldn't ever have again; this was so even when you were practically sure you would be let stay on for another ride but of course it was much more so when you knew that it was absolutely the last ride and that no amount of begging or arguing would make any difference. Everything and everybody outside began to be much too clear, and the moving animals moved all the time more tired and lazy, and the music gradually fell apart into unhappy-sounding foofs and bangs and grunts and gurgles, and the slowing strings sounded like a lot of springs on screen doors snapping, [illegible] of a sudden everything would be over [illegible] the middle of the tune, and the edge of [illegible] would stop right next to the steady grave [illegible] certain piece of popcorn, and all the peop[illegible] their faces outside would be still and ordina[illegible] you knew you were just as still and ordi[illegible] they were. If you were staying on for anoth[illegible] it was all right because right away you wer[illegible] ing again for everything to start up, and see [illegible] ones get off who couldn't have another ri[illegible] feeling glad you weren't them. But if it was [illegible] ride for you, then you saw mostly the other [illegible] who were staying on and weren't even b[illegible] but just looking at you, proud and easy, h[illegible] daddy unstrapped things and helped you [illegible] and when you were down on your own feet [illegible] ways felt queer and unsure for a minute or[illegible] be walking.

But there was something even more w[illegible] ful than the merry-go-round and that w[illegible] little train, and he always had at least one r[illegible] that. If you got on the little train it took yo[illegible] out along the side of the lake and around a [illegible] circle and back again to where you started. [illegible] cars of the train were not closed like the c[illegible] a big train, they were open, but the engine w[illegible] exactly like a big engine, all over. It had a [illegible] light and a little smokestack and a little bel[illegible] a whistle, and smoke and steam came out of [illegible] it burned real coal, and a shaft went up and [illegible] along the side pushing the wheels just like [illegible] engine, and the whole thing was so little i[illegible] hardly any taller than he was. He liked to w[illegible] the engine start up almost as much as he lik[illegible] ride in the train, because when you were r[illegible] in the train you couldn't see it nearly as w[illegible] ran on a little track so narrow he could step a[illegible] it with one step. When it was ready to go, the [illegible] gineer stepped aboard and sat down and rang [illegible] high little bell and made the steam puff, an[illegible] was so big he sat right back on a board across [illegible] coal car and his knees came right up to the [illegible] of the engine, and he reached in between [illegible] knees to run it. Then it would start up with [illegible] bell whanging and the hot, happy whistle bl[illegible] ing *wheeee, wheeee, whee-whee-eeee*, and sm[illegible] and steam coming out, and one car after an[illegible] er would rattle smoothly past full of people, w[illegible] the wheels making the same kind of click[illegible] clack-tee clickety clack, faster and faster, th[illegible] real train makes.

Of course it *was* a real train, like daddy said, [illegible] a make-believe but a real one. The only differe[illegible] was it was so little, but someday, daddy s[illegible] maybe it would grow up and run on the big li[illegible] That was why its whistle was so high, it was s[illegible] little, and its bell too, just like when people [illegible] little their voices are high, but it was a real tr[illegible] sure enough, all the same, and some ways ev[illegible]

t wouldn't go as fast as a big train but it
lenty fast enough for its size, a lot faster
could run, and it was bright red like a fire
and the little bell was gold and the whis-
silver, and when you sat in it you could see
h more than in a big train. In a big train
ld only see out the side through the win-
d a little bit out the other side through the
vs over there, but when you rode the lit-
n you could see out both sides and behind
and down and straight ahead—wherever
nted to look. Way up ahead you could al-
e the engineer's back, higher than anybody
d when the back began to turn you knew
e was coming and if you looked out along
le you could see the whole engine stretch
eways and then the engineer and then the
o or three cars, just like on a real, on a big
and then you began curving yourself and
g back you could see the other cars. Or if
od up with daddy holding you, you could
l the cars ahead and all the cars behind,
in a line, each waggling a little different
he next one, and all the heads of all the
, and the engineer and the smoke up ahead,
ou weren't supposed to stand up, it was
t the rules on this line, daddy said. And you
see the whole park swimming past. The
ran between white fences, but they were
high as the train, and two places it blew its
le loudly and a gate came down and it went
ht across a walk, and everybody who was
ng had to stop and wait for it, and another
it went so near along the lake you could
y see any ground on that side, only the wa-
oving very fast, as if you were riding a fast
oat, and if you looked out further you could
he water and everything on it, boats and
s and people and the little island in the mid-
nd the trees on the island, turning slowly
d, and the fairy's wheel and the rol-
ly coaster and even the big fair build-
ings were winding slowly too.

here was a whole line of little places where
could do all kinds of things. One place you
d get ice cream cones, and weenies, and pop-
, and peanuts, and sandwiches, and root beer.
other places were for grown-up people and
e was always a crowd of them there. One
e they turned a big rattling wheel and if it
ped right you could get prizes like an Indian
ket all in bright colors or a golden lady with-
arms, with a sheet around her waist and a
k right in the middle of her stomach. There
a place where you could get little flags, and
whips all in bright colors. Another place you
to throw rings over things and if the ring
t all the way over, not just the thing you
throwing at but the square block it stood on,
too, you could take that home with you. Only, the things people wanted most, like the seventeen-jewel watch or the genuine imitation diamond ring, why even if you tried and tried, you couldn't ever seem to get the ring quite over the square block, and daddy said it was a sell and he wouldn't even fool with it. There was a noisy place where they shot guns. You didn't get a prize there, you just shot for fun, daddy said. Shooting gallery. He liked the shooting gallery. There was another place where there was a darky with his head through a hole, only the man at the counter called him nigger, "hit the nigger in the head and you get a cigar" and the ladies got a kewpie doll. They threw baseballs at him, right at his head, and he dodged. Mama just hated it, she said it was an outrage and it ought to be stopped, there ought to be a law.



Daddy didn't like it either but he wasn't mad about it like mama was. "He's got to make his living," he said. "That's one way he can do it."

"But what an unspeakable way to make a living, Jay."

"Wouldn't catch me doing it," daddy said. "I'd starve first."

"But the *principle* of it, Jay!" mama said.

"I said *I* wouldn't stand for it," Jay said, "or throw at him either, case you don't know it."

"Of *course* you wouldn't Jay, I know that. But *other* people do."

"That's none a my business," daddy said. "If he wants that job that's none of my business either. He's a pretty good dodger," he said. "I bet he don't get hit more'n one time in a hundred. Them balls look soft to me," he said. "They're lopsided like they're soft." Once he picked one up and held it out to mama. "See they're soft," he said. "Couldn't even hurt if they did hit you."

"I don't even want to *touch* the horrid things," mama said.

"You buying that ball mister," the man at the counter said. "Three for a dime. Hit the nig—"

"Naw," daddy said, and he put the ball back on the counter.

"Don't handle nothing, Mac, if you ain't paying for it," the man said.

"It's back where it belongs, Buster," daddy said, "so look out who you try to boss around."

"*Jay!*" mama said desperately, and dragged him by the elbow. "*Your temper.*"

"Soon bust his jaw's not," daddy said.

"He was in the right Jay. He wasn't tryin[illegible] *boss* you."

"Don't worry," daddy said, "I won't do n[illegible] with you around"; and he came away, tho[illegible]

Rufus could see the man and other men still watching after him.

"Not even if I *wasn't* around," mama said. "He was in the *right* you know."

"Not the way he talked to me he wasn't."

"But Jay he's just a, a *low boor*," mama said. "He doesn't *know* any better."

"I'll *boor him*," daddy said, "if he ever talks like that to *me* again."

"What's a boor," he asked her later.

"Just someone without the beginning of courtesy," mama said.



Next time Rufus stayed home he went right to that counter first thing and just kept looking at the man, who was busy, until the man looked back at him, and then they kept looking straight into each other's eyes in a very exciting, unpleasant way, until finally the man at the counter said, "Whyn't you move along, Mac, I don't want no trouble."

"That's all I wanted to know," daddy said, and he smiled, but not nicely.

"It ver *lookin* for trouble," the man said, "just say the word, cause there's plenty here that's paid just to find it."

"Just if you want it," daddy said. "If you want it I'll give you all I got. You and them too. Way you talked tother Satdy you was looking for it. Now I'm here without my wife you ain't looking so sharp."

"You picked up a ball," the man said.

"Yeah and I put it back," daddy said.

"You didn't have no business picking it up," the man said, "lessen you was aiming to buy."

"That's right," daddy said, "and you didn't have no call to talk bossy, not when I done already put it back, and what's more you only done it hiding behind my wife's skirts."

"I didn't even know you *had* no wife," the man said. "I can't keep track a everybody front a this stand, I'm a busy man. Now whyn't you move along Mac, they's people waitin here."

"All I want to know is, do you want to talk bossy now," daddy said. "Looky here." And he picked up one of the balls and held it out to the man. "Now I'm not stealing your damn ball," he said. "In a minute I'm putting it back where I got it. Now you got anything bossy to say about it?"

"You ain't got no right to touch nothing you don't pay for," the man said.

"I know that," daddy said. "And I'm putting it back. All I want to know is, do you want to get bossy about it cause if you do, Buster, hurry up and start bossing." The man looked at him and all the people looked eagerly at the man and at daddy, and the man didn't say anything. "Al ig daddy said. "Now I'm putting it down." n put it down gently where he had taken fr "How about now," he said. "Other time bo bossy after I put it down." The man j looking at him, and his face got red all ov right," daddy said. "Just watch out who y tr boss around, next time." And he turned ro and Rufus took his hand and people sto b and they walked through.

Rufus could hear the man shouting ". ri now, three for a nickel, but the nigger and y a cigar," and he wanted to look around, b dy never turned his head so he didn't eit r.

III.

"Thing is," Jay said, "they're not getti a younger."

"I know, Jay."

"Course Mother's strongern she looks, st g a horse; may be, she'll bury the lot of us, b

"I know she isn't well, Jay, so crippled p much of the time. Besides, you ought to s h more often. I know she misses you."

He said, shyly but with conviction, "Mi he matter of that."

Laura put her hand over his. "Of cour yo do, Jay; why shouldn't you. She's a very n wonderful woman and I know you thin th world of her."

He looked at her carefully, with part ila love. "You two really do take to one ano er don't you."

"I certainly take to her, Jay, and . . ."

"Well, I can promise you she likes you. I n you ever doubt that."

"Thank you, Jay. No, I don't doubt it. lo one bit."

He thought for a minute.

"It's Paw I mean," he said.

"Yes?"

"I mean his heart. One of these days or o those attacks is goana take him off—like th," and he flicked an ash from his cigarette so sh that he frayed the damp end. "Damn it," he d

"I know, Jay. And even if they were both *well*, I'd still see your point."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean of course you ought to get it. Let t talk. It won't be easy but we can afford it perf well. You're perfectly right. They can't get thinking of it as a luxury but I think of it as close to a necessity. People lose touch with e other. And it's so hard by train. Besides, I w the children to know your mother and—w mainly your mother and father, and to know country too, but all your people." Her voice rising and becoming girlish, as it always did wh she was excited. She put her face close to his

eagerly into his eyes. "Let's just go right
nd get it, Jay, and think no more about it.
—angry that discussion ever came up!"
r eyes were very excited and angry.
v wait a minute sweetheart," he said, smil-
Vait a minute!" He kissed her cheek, and
le a movement like that of a bird settling
ers. "Don't go and get sore at *them*. *They're*
lame. Don't forget, Laura, they've got some
n their side. It's bound to seem extravagant
n. Besides, you know, if I didn't have any
o go on than they do I'd probably feel the
ay. After all, I didn't really make any point
we want it. I hate to argue and besides I just
want to. They weren't so bad about it. They
really get nosy, you know."
now they didn't. I just resent the way they
o quiet about it. All that 'it's your busi-
ttitude. Of *course* it's your business, Jay!"
gain her eyes flashed.
ell frankly," he said, deeply pleased, "I didn't
like it either. But how else were they to act.
wouldn't lie about it, you know. They were
oly just as sorry as we were the whole thing
up."
never have brought it up if I'd known it was
to turn into a discussion!"
ire, sure, but it's all right. It was bound to
up sooner or later."
s I suppose it would, it would have had to.
don't like it all the same."
e don't have to like it, sweetheart. We just
to go on about our business."
hen it's settled," she said, with apprehension
ll as exhilaration, for the idea that it really
ettled took her a little by surprise.
saw the look.
ot one thing is settled, my darling," he said,
ng as you feel any doubts about it."
h no Jay . . ."
mean that," he interrupted; "I mean that
seriously, Laura. So don't go making up your
till it's good and ready to make up. And if
think we'd better not, why that absolutely
es it, and no regrets or disagreements from
. . You know I mean that, don't you Laura?
know I'm not just trying to push you into
ething."
Yes I do, Jay, bless you. You never have
and I know you never will. I better think
nute."
That's hurrying, dear. Take your time. Think
ight. Think a year if you need to."

"A minute'll do," she snapped out absently, concentrated on her thinking.

He watched with tenderness how her pretce knotted up and frowned over the thinking; it occurred to him that to be watched might self be a kind of forcing, and he looked away.

"Jay," she said.

"Yeah?"

"Aren't they—I don't mean to be silly but aren't they rather—dangerous?"

"Autos?"

"Well yes."

"I guess they can be, Laura," he said, trying to take the question really seriously. "People do get hurt; killed even. Run over. Accidents. Go too fast and blow a tire; don't drive carefully; don't keep a lookout for some fool, even if you're careful yourself. Yes, I spose there's a certain element of danger in it, that you can't get around. But after all, there's a certain amount of danger in living, whatever you do. You don't ever take a train trip but what the train might wreck. You never go on an ocean voyage but what the boat might sink. People on the *Titanic* certainly weren't expecting any trouble, Lord knows.



"But Laura, there's danger of a sort, not a very big sort but still some danger, if you do no more than just stay in the house, there too for that matter!" He laughed a little. "People have been known to break their necks in a bathtub, you know." She smiled at him uneasily. "Anyone's a fool that goes out *looking* for danger. But he's worse than a fool if he spends all his time worrying about how to avoid it. Then he's a fool and a coward besides.

"Not that I mean you," he said suddenly. "I wasn't even thinking of you. You've got a real point there that has to be taken seriously. Only I feel there are just certain things it's much better for a person not to dodge or fear too much if he wants to be really alive. I reckon I feel about it the way I do about money. You know I'm no spendthrift and I believe in being moderate but I *mean* moderate—not miserly. You see how I mean, don't you Laura?"

"Of course I do Jay, and in principle I feel you're right. I just . . . really wonder whether we ought to think of a thing that involves any such risk, with the children and all."

"I know Laura, and don't think they haven't been on my mind too, because they have. But at the bottom of it, you see, the same thing applies to the children. Either they grow up healthy and normal, with a good healthy respect for danger but no terror of it, or they don't. Besides, one of the main things I mean is, the children are [illegible] guarantee of safety."

"Guarantee? What do you mean?"

"Well of course I don't mean quite [illegible] but I do mean near it. As I figure it, nine[illegible]

percent of the accidents must come from people who are careless and unsympathetic. Those must be careless simply because they haven't anything to give them a strong sense of responsibility. Now people with a strong sense of responsibility are going to be very specially careful. They're going to be on their guard against every contingency, even against the fools. So having children, and a wife," he smiled at her, "and feeling about them the way I do, I calculate that I reduce our margin of danger down to just about as small as it can possibly be reduced; and the rest—well, the rest you have to leave up to Fate, Laura.

"Same Fate that breaks your neck in the bathtub, even if you never dare go out of the house. Only even then, I bet a hundred to one it's carelessness.



"Besides we're talking out of all proportion, as if it were some sort of a death-machine or something.

"But Lord God I'm talking too much."

He started rolling another cigarette. He said, with shame, "And I guess I *was* trying to talk you into it."

"No you weren't, Jay. You might have been, but you weren't. Because I think you're right. I think that's the way to feel about it. Let's just get it, dear. Let's."

"Now you're all excited. You cool off and tell me what you think in a day or so."

"No maybe I am but if I am it's a kind of excitement I believe in." Unexpected even to herself she said, "You don't think I married you because I was cautious do you?"

They were both transfixed by shock. Their eyes were extremely charged and complex.

He said, very gently, "Are you ever sorry you did, Laura? I know for awhile you had good reason to be. But are you ever sorry anymore?"

She said, very fiercely, "*You know* I'm not!" and burst into tears.

He took her in his arms. "Laura, sweetheart, my darling wife, God bless your heart! Look at me ura. No, forgive me, I know it. God yes I know for a minute, what you said, or something u said it, I wondered, that's all. I had to kd brain myself for asking but I had to rything just seemed to fall out from e me Laura."

ked up at him. "I love you with all ty heart for asking," she said. "And n't you dare ever to doubt it again."

he night they both lay awake and o the dark. They had neither moved nor said anything for a long while and, no there had been no change in their br h ch believed it possible that the other w. sl She said, very quietly:

"Jay."

"What is it, Laura?"

"Do you remember writing me onc fr Panama, 'I have a terrible premoniti f pending disaster'?"

"Nope, can't say that I—yes, I do, too

"You do remember?"

"Yes."

"Jay, I've been lying here awake—" h went dry; "I feel that now." She caugh hand and her breath shook.

He quickly turned to her and stroked h fo head. "Oh Laura," he said. "Laura. No."

"Yes I do. I don't know when. Or whic Maybe all of us. But something dreadful to happen, Jay. Something irreparable. family. In that auto."

"Bless your heart my Laura, bless your You're just a lot more scared about that da auto than you thought you were. That's al that settles it. We just won't get it, dear, won't get it."

"Something terrible; terrible."

"Nothing is going to happen sweetheart, that auto anyhow, because we aren't go have it, don't you see, we just aren't go have it."

"Oh, Jay."

"That's all right. That's *all right*. We just have it. That's all. That's all."

"You must think I'm awfully foolish Jay ashamed of myself."

"I just think you're awfully scared and if so scared you'd be awfully foolish to walk rig into what scares you."

"It isn't like scare, Jay. It's something ver ferent. Like a cold breath going all the through me; *freezing* cold. It's knowledge, J

"It can't be knowledge because we aren't to get that car."

She said nothing. He stroked her fore She said, "Could you ever forgive m we didn't?"

He said, "I couldn't forgive myself if we d you feel this way."

"I don't *want* to feel this way. It just—seen force itself on me. Believe me I don't want

"Of course you don't dear. We can't any help how we feel."

"Jay, if it *is*—knowledge—it's going to h pen and nothing we can do will prevent it."

He felt impatience, but such love and sym thy that it was easy to subdue it. "There's one sure way to prevent it. And that's what we're ing to do."

"You mind, don't you?"

nd a little, but nothing like I'd mind get-
when you feel so terrible about it."
're so good to me, Jay."
cks."
kind and good."
etheart."
to laugh at me."
nothing to laugh *at*."
do forgive me?"
urse I forgive you. There's nothing
ve."
ank you Jay. Oh I can't ever thank you
n."
"Nothing to thank for."
"Oh yes there is. Yes there is!"

er, when they had lain silent and awake for
while, she said again:
?"
s Laura."
at was all very foolish of me. That—
n I had, that premonition. I'm over it now."
was deeply tired. "Are you sure?"
s I really am. Those are terrible things while
ast Jay, as you must have known when you
me from Panama, but when you're over
you know right away how foolish it would
take them seriously."
ey're bad, all right, while they last." He
enerous. "I suppose sometimes they really
to pass."
guess they do. But yours didn't."
smiled in the dark, and patted her. "None
ne ever did, dear."
e said nothing for a while. She was doing her
o prepare herself to say what she was going
y, with complete sincerity. Finally she was
to say it: "Jay, I really am over it now. Thor-
ly and permanently. I feel just the way I
when we talked just tonight. Only more so.
get it, Jay, and I'll promise you I won't be
again."
e leaned over her. "You're really sure you
t it?"
'm really sure."
You're not going to worry?"
Not more than a sane woman ought to."
Then it's all right?"
Yes it's absolutely all right." She embraced
. "Absolutely positively."
efore long, he was asleep. But Laura still lay
ke. The force of her premonition was gone,
both her love and her common sense forti-
her, but its coldness still echoed in her heart.
se things are very strange, she told herself;
very seldom come to pass. And she told her-
When sinister things come at us out of the
r darkness, we just have to put our trust in
l. And for a considerable time she prayed,
nestly and humbly, receiving thorough com-
fort therefrom, before she fell asleep, with her hands still folded in prayer.

IV.

So all of a sudden late one afternoon, when Rufus was already keeping an eye on the corner where he usually first saw his father coming, he heard a noise and turned to look, and there along the street came his father, sitting up high and proud in the most beautiful auto with his straw hat way on the back of his head; and when he could get back his breath he screamed *"Daddy!"* and his father lifted one hand to him grandly and shyly, and pulled in towards the curb, slowing down. *"Mama!"* he shrieked. "Daddy's got an *auto*!" and he ran out to the curb. His father overshot their front walk and stopped the auto, and made it tremble all over with a wonderful loud noise, and then he looked around and grinned at Rufus and quieted the engine and then slowly, to the child's ecstasy, he made the auto go backwards, exactly to where he wanted it; and reached down and pulled up on something that made a crackling of springs, and stepped out onto the sidewalk just as Rufus' mother hustled out the front door, wiping her hands on her apron.



"Why Jay!" she cried above the happy throes of the auto; and she ran down the steps and joined them. "You didn't *tell* me it was *today*!"

He smiled down at her. "Surprised?"

"Why I'm surprised out of my *life*!"

"*He's* sure surprised," his father said, for Rufus was jumping up and down as high and fast as he could and yelling with joy.

"Rufus," his mother said. He didn't even hear her. *"Rufus!"* she called much more loudly. He looked at her happily, out of breath. "Quiet *down* a little dear I can't even hear myself *think*."

"Aw let him holler."

"Jay, he's on the verge of *hysterics*," she said confidentially.

"Oh pshaw he's nothing of the kind, he's just tickled. Let him steam it off."

"Welll," his mother said uncertainly; and now he was somewhat quieter. Suddenly she realized something. "Why gracious goodness, Jay," she exclaimed. "Where's the *man*!"

"What man?" he asked, amused.

"You know perf—you mean to tell me you drove here all by yourself?"

"Sure I did," he said casually. "Don't tell but one."

"But *how* on *earth*! I mean where in the world—"

"Not *alone* Jay," she said with alarm.

"Course not. Till today."

"He says it's all right? You're sure?"

"Sure he does. Says he'll give it back if I get any more questions."

"But you had to come, why, right through the middle of *town*!"

"Why sure."

"But Jay how could you *dare*!"

He laughed while she looked at him with doubt and admiration. "Good Lord Laura if other people can do it why, so can I. You'll get the hang of it when you get the hang of it."



"But all that traffic. I can see it—"

"I didn't get into much traffic till I got the hang of it."

"Welll."

"Well honey there's always got to be a first time."

"I spose so," she said rather vaguely. "Jay, can't you turn it off?"

"Sure I can. Just like to hear it run. Sides we're gonna take a joyride and I hate to crank it up. Hurry up and get Emma."

"But supper's almost ready."

"Put it on the back of the stove."

"Couldn't we go *after*?"

"Aw come on Laura. Just a little spin. We'll go for a real ride, after."

"Well I'd—just a minute then." She hurried into the house.

Rufus and his father turned and looked at the auto. It was vibrating like jelly and glittering like patent leather, and it made such a strong pleased noise.

"How you like it?" his father said.

"*Oh!*" Rufus breathed. "*Oh* I *like* it. I *like* it daddy." He could see Arthur and Alvin standing in their yard looking. "Hello," he said.

"Hello," they said.

His father smiled and tipped his hat and he saw Mrs. Tripp standing by the vine on their porch.

"Look what my daddy got," Rufus said.

Arthur and Alvin nodded.

"It's a new auto."

Arthur and Alvin walked to the edge of their yard and stood looking again.

Across the street he could see Greta and Culin Biddle standing in their yard. Mr. Biddle was sitting in the hammock on the porch smoking. He walked around in front of the auto. It had round wide lights like eyes and they were edged with wide bands of yellow brass, and on a broad piece of brass at the top the name was stamped in [illegible]. Up beyond that, the glass windshield was shining in the sun. "So you got yourself a buggy," he heard; Mr. Tripp had walked up and Arthur and Alvin were with him.

"Yeap," his father said.

"How much it set you back?"

"Not so much," his father said.

"Nice little machine," Mr. Tripp said.

"Yeah," his father said.

"No style, a course," Mr. Tripp said. "Got to up with an awful lot a cheap Ford jok[es] Lizzie. But by all I hear they're the best th[ing] the market, dollar for dollar."

"That's right," his father said.

"Course they got an awful name for re[sa]ing down," Mr. Tripp said. "But where [you] ahead, he supplies you the parts. H[ave] breakdown, you can always count on ge[tting] new part pronto."

"Uhuh," his father said.

"I'll be just a *minute* more Jay," his [mo]th called from the door.

"Well get a wiggle on," his father called, [but] was already gone.

Mr. King came up. "So that's your ne[w ma]chine," he said.

"Howdy," his father said. "Yeap. That's [it]."

"Evenin," Mr. King said.

"Evenin," Mr. Tripp said.

"Looks like a stout little buggy," Mr. King [sa]id. He leaned over and looked into the front [seat] "How's it run?"

"Runs fine," his father said.

"Course they make a heck of a racket," Mr. Tripp said. "Hear one comin, mile off. But by [and] I hear it's a top-notch engine. Ford puts a [lot] dollar value in the engine, don't care about s[ome]

"Dollar for dollar," Mr. King said with [cer]ty, "there ain't a thing on the market can [come] near it."

"That's right," his father said.

"What I was telling him," Mr. Tripp said.

"All ready," his mother called, and she hu[rried] Emma through the door and hooked it. "H[ello] Mr. Tripp, oh *hello*," she nodded to Mrs. T[ripp] who smiled beside her vine. "Why good a[fter]noon Mr. King, how's Mrs. King. I've meant to run over these—"

"About the same, thanks," Mr. King said.

"You please give her my *very* best regards w[hen] you and tell her I want to come over *very* so[on] I've just been so awfull—"

"Thank you I'll tell her that. That's a dandy [lit]le auto you got there."

"*We* think so."

"It's a humdinger."

"Why thank you. You tell Mrs. King we [will] you, any time she feels up to an airing, we [will] be deligh—"

y now she sure will appreciate that I *know*, do I. Thank you loads."

at's right," his father said. "Let's do ow."

d you too Mr. Tripp of course," his moth-

ather said nothing.

anks," Mr. Tripp said.

ll spose we get goin," his father said. And ned the door to the back seat, and helped and lifted Emma by the armpits and swung to her mother's lap.

't it going to be awfully breezy, Jay," she "with the top down?"

w," he said, "it's just for a minute. Well, sir," d to Rufus, and heisted him right over the oor into the front seat. It was quilted like ehair sofa, and it smelled like oilcloth, and e could see iron pedals and rods sprouting icatedly through the floor and the bran bbed rubber mat which also wore the name And now his father jackknifed himself in the wheel with his knees sharp and high, illed the door to on his side with a light clear and turned around to smile at his wife and tle girl.

ang on tight," he said; "Here we go!"

y," she said to him low, not to embarrass him e the men, "do go *slowly* dear, remember it's rst time."

fus saw darkness flinch in his face but it hed quickly and he said, "Why sure dear I was aimin to."

"So long," Mr. King called.

His father lifted his hand in a half-salute at King and Mr. Tripp, who lifted their own s in saluting waves; then he planted his feet erfully among the cryptic pedals, and released ong brake with a *pwong*, and adjusted the levers just under the wheel, and the whole lurched gently as if a hiccup had caught it, the engine made a loud splendid noise which ather immediately subdued, and they drew dly and smoothly away from the curb in a clean line to straighten out just to the right ne middle of the street; and looking back, Ru- could see his mother's intensely excited face hair blowing around it, and his sister's pink, rested face, and his home already shrinking a e among the moving trees, and the two men two boys who watched after them; and even le he looked, they broke apart, and Mr. King ed for his home and Mr. Tripp and his sons ed for theirs; and looking sidewise from the , he could see the front porches and far shoul- of the road flow past like a quick silent river, looking straight ahead, the lined houses and s on both sides of the avenue swelled and ned up like arms to embrace, and slipped on by, and he knew that everybody on every porch and along the sidewalks was looking at them and wishing they had an auto too. Another auto was coming the other way and as it came nearer and Rufus could see the man who was driving it he felt as if they were special friends and waved and called out "hello" jubilantly, and the man smiled and lifted his hand; but Rufus' father did not wave; he only smiled with dignity, and drew over a couple of feet to the right so they would both have lots of room to pass; then brought it back towards the middle and glanced around.

"How you like it?" he said.

"Don't look back *please* Jay," his mother said.

His father looked quickly front and said out of the end of his mouth, over his shoulder, "*I* know what I'm doin Laura."



"I know dear I'm sorry. But *I don't*."

"I asked you how you like it," he said after a moment.

"Why I just simply *love* it of *course*," she called.

"Too breezy?"

"Little bit," she said. "I should have taken a scarf."

"I'll slow down," he said generously, and did so.

"Now that's lovely," she cried. "That's *just* right. Thank you dear."

He nodded.

"*Thank* you," she said more loudly.

"Sure," he said, and nodded vigorously; and then he slowed still more, for a horse and buggy was turning into the street at the corner nearly a block ahead. "Got to be real careful about horses," he called back over his shoulder. "Never know which one's agonna shy, at a machine"; and with his left hand he squeezed a rubber bulb discreetly, and a horn gave two short charming blasts. The buggy was already straightening out and now, instantly, it drew far in towards the curb. At the same moment a streetcar came round the quirk in Highland Avenue and headed towards them, swelling. It was clear to the grown people that if all the vehicles continued at the pace now established they would be passing each other at about the same time, with leeway, but not much. Rufus' father slowed down still more, and the swelling streetcar came even with the buggy and then, in another few seconds, passed them in a glorious yellow clanging. The driver of the buggy leaned out and nodded to Rufus' father, who somewhat increased his speed and swung far out to the middle of the street to pass, making his gine as smooth and quiet as he could; the b tiful black horse showed no extreme signs of but he was reined far back with a whit

the corner of his mouth and he took prim little shamwise steps on tiptoe [illegible] hoofs; the driver saluted his father thankfully, and his father politely returned the salute and, after a little, resumed his speed and his lane a little to the right of the car track.

"My," Rufus' mother said, and he saw his father smile proudly. "I think you did that splendidly, Jay."

"Poor old nag," he said.

"Yes poor thing," she called, "just scared out of his wits but *much* too well-behaved to show it."

"They'll get used to it," his father said. "Like they are to streetcars. Lets of time to broke to it already. Broken."



"Some people think it's the end of em."

"Yeah I know. I doubt it though. Nothing like a horse for bum roads. Style either."

"If all the people who drive autos were as polite and careful as you Jay it'd be *all right*. But some of them are just simply *demons*. *No* consideration for *anything* but just to *burn up the road*."

"That's a fact," he said; and almost as if she had ordered it, a sound of wild threatening hurry grew behind them and a continuous and mercilessly loudening *squeak squeak squeak* of a horn, and glancing back they saw a big gray auto blaring straight up the middle of the street with its glass flashing the low sunlight and the horse was struggling in his harness like a dancer, and the ruthless horn grew even louder, and his father wrenched his auto to the right so violently they were all toppled, and the next instant the auto rocketed past them in a sneering streak, its driver grinning back cruelly under his goggles, and his mother yelled "*Mercy!*" and Emma began to cry, and his father stopped so abruptly they were thrown again, and he looked after the auto, as it wriggled past the quirk in the Avenue, and said in a low hard voice, "Why you cra-y God damn son of a bitch I like to bust yer f—God damn jaw!" And his door was already wrenched open and one foot was out before he realized the uselessness. "I swear to God I could kill a man like that," he said. "I mean it. I could kill him and it'd be a pleasure to."

"It's just an absolute *outrage*," his wife said. "He ought to be jailed. Ought never to be allowed to *drive* an auto!"

"Oughta be murdered, that's what."

"You all right?"

"Yes."

He looked back along the street; the driver was out beside his horse's head now and [illegible] was almost calm. "How do you *like* t it," yelled. The driver shook his head very "You all right now?"

"Yeah; much obliged," the other voi faintly.

His father and the driver waved, and h fa got back under the wheel. He twisted, d ted Emma on the head. "Now now ho y," said. "There there there. It's all right no D cry. Don't you cry."

"Awful sorry I shook you up so," he his wife.

"Why it wasn't your fault Jay. There w no ng on earth you could *do* but get out of th

"I ought to pulled over quicker. Sooner n I was worried for that horse."

"I think you did just right. And Jay. ea She touched his shoulder and he looked ou "Darling I want to thank you for stoppi chasing him. I know how much you m st wanted to just chase him and beat hi to pulp but you stopped. For our sakes. I preci th dear." She looked warmly into his eyes T thoughtfulness and self-*control* dear. *Very* uch

He turned dark red and said, "Couldn't a ug him anyhow, he was agoin like a bat—Th au wouldn't go that fast even if I tried."

"Well it goes plenty fast enough I'm sure fo *decent purposes*."

"Sure it does."

"Of *course* it does."

"How's little Emmer now," he asked Emm an he put a finger under her chin. "Goana sm fo daddy? Huh? Goana give daddy a big smile H lifted her chin and Emma looked at him l ng ly, with her lower lip stuck out. "*Aww*," h id "Smile?" And he prodded her ribs gently.

"*No* dear," her mother said; but Emma gan to smile bleakly, then warmly, and then sh be gan to giggle.

"That's my brave little girl," her father id "*That's* how we like to see her. Well," he id "Reckon our joyride's about ruined."

"Oh *no* it isn't; don't *say* such a thing. It as just *awful* a minute that's all."

"You all right now?"

"Perfectly all right though I do think, J do have supper on my mind sort of."

"Sure you do, me too. Less just spin ar a couple blocks and we'll take a *real* h *after* supper."

"That's just what I was thinking."

"Sorry I cussed like that," he told her low voice.

"I don't blame you *one bit*," she said sto "only," she lowered her voice, "I do wish you more careful dear, in front—" she nodded, mentioning them by name.

"That's what I mean," he said.

ow dear," she said. "But you had great tion."

e did have that," he said, and started driv- in. At the quirk he went downhill to- ne knitting mill and turned east on For- nue; when they came to the corner just and behind their house he turned to the d then to the right again, onto High- d coasted in to their curb and shut off the They sat for a few seconds, just enjoying lves, and heard the cooling auto tick like

"*I* don't think they're so noisy," his father ietly.

at are?"

ds," he said. He lowered his voice still 'Tripp said sompn smart aleck about you ar one a mile off, Ford."

ıy what—perfect nonsense Jay *did* he! *When* say that!"

ıen you were still in the house."

ell I certainly do like his *nerve*!" she said, oked angrily at the Tripps' porch, but no- as there. "Of *course* it isn't noisy!" A gleam into her eye and she leaned forward and d his shoulder. "You know what Jay?"

ah?"

ink he's *jealous*, that's all. Just *plain jealous*! ke a silly little *boy*!"

father began to smile.

ıe *eye dea*!" she drawled contemptuously. "I'd catch him saying any such thing to *me*," id. "*I* think it runs just *beautifully*," she said. 's what *I* think."

ıre it does," he said. "Runs fine."

hat did you say to him Jay?"

ho?"

hy Mr. Tripp of course."

othing much."

ell *I'd* certainly give him a piece of my , *believe me*."

o you wouldn't either," he said.

hy what do you mean I wouldn't!"

ou don't want trouble with neighbors, no 'n I do."

ell no. No. Certainly I don't but I do have wn opinion of Mr. Tee are eye pea pea from on regardless. I think he's just a jealous lit- ll, that's what."

shh."

hat are you shushing me for. *They* can't ."

ittle pitchers."

h *my*. *Rufus*. *Look* at me. Don't you *ever* t *any* of this about," she whispered "Mr. p. Dyou hear? Cause if you did and it came eir ears it would be *just simply awful*. You rstand?"

esm."

romise mother. You promise?"

esm."

"Word of honor?"

"Yesm."

"My," she gasped, and coughed softly. "I'm glad you stopped me Jay."

He laughed. "Can't be too careful," he said.

"You certainly *can not*! *Heavens*!" She giggled again, and he laughed, and Rufus giggled, wondering why.

"Well let's get some supper," he said.

"Yes indeed."

They all got out and stood looking at their auto, standing there so shining and pretty and ready to go. Rufus reached up and laid his hand on the hood; it was warm as toast.

"Don't do that son you'll spoil the finish," his father said. "See?" and he showed him the dark, dull print of his whole hand.



"Oh gee," Rufus said.

"Tsall right we can fix it," his father said, taking out a handkerchief and shaking it, "but let's all try and keep it good as new. Hah?"

"*Oh yes*," Rufus said, and watched with respect and relief while his father gently polished every trace of his hand from the hood.

There it stood shining darkly, a little smaller, when they looked at it through the screen door. And there it was waiting, all through supper. Rufus and Emma both got up from the table several times during supper and went to the window, just to look at it standing there so beautiful, and they were not often told very urgently to stay in their places. Their father and mother looked out several times too from where they sat, their father even twisting around in his chair to really look, and they all had big appetites, though it was very ordinary food and twice Laura exclaimed that she wished she had known, she'd have fixed something special. When supper was nearly over she left the table suddenly and they heard her prowling around not in the kitchen and after a few minutes she came back with a dark bottle and two delicate glasses.

"Why *Sweetheart*," their father said.

"Surprised?" she asked, looking roguish.

"Surprised and dee lighted," he said, and he poured out a glass for each of them. They lifted the glasses up to the level of their eyes and sniffed at each other shyly.

"Well," he said.

"To many happy trips," she said, and they sipped a little.

"*Mmm*," he said.

"*Is* good isn't it," she said, her voice a little gurgly with it.

"How bout—" he said, and nodded towards the children.

"*Heavens* Jay no!" Her forehead puckered.

"Just a little bitty sip I mean," he whispered. "Just enough to wet their whistles."

"Well, Rufus maybe," she said, looking anxious. "A *really* tiny one."

"Here you are Rufus," his father said, and there was the fine glass close in front of him, small in his father's hand.

"What is it." he asked.

"That's wine," his father said. "We're drinkin that to give the machine good luck."



"Just a teeny sip now. Just wet your lips."

It was a glowing red-brown like wood and it tasted rich and wise.

"Mmm," he said. "Yum yum."

His father laughed and his mother exclaimed "Why Rufus!" and laughed too.

"I can see that's a plenty for *you*," he said.

"I want some too," Emma said.

"No Emma," her mother said. "Huh *uh*! Make you sick."

"Rufus got some and I want some too," Emma said, and she began to scowl.

"Mercy child don't *frown* so!"

"I want some too!" she said more firmly, and her lower lip began to stick out. Before her mother could stop him her father moistened his finger and rubbed it on her stuck-out lip.

"Now pull that little shovel in honey and taste it," he said, and she was already doing so.

"Like it?"

"Yes."

"That's wine. Sherry wine."

"I want more."

"Nope, that's all that's good for a little girl."

"Finish Jay, I better put it away before we're all simply reeling," his wife said, and they both laughed, and he drank what was left in his glass.

After supper that evening they drove down to 1115 and took Uncle Hugh and Aunt Paula for a joyride while his mother and Emma waited on the front porch, and then they took Granma and Grampa for another one while he and his mother waited and Uncle Hugh went along again to hold Emma in his lap. The first time they only went over as far as the U.T. and drove up through the Campus, and Uncle Hugh and Aunt Paula said it was perfectly wonderful. The second time they were away so long that Rufus' mother began to worry and Rufus began to get restles[s] in[-] vious, but then finally, quite a while a[fter] they heard a noise they thought they re[co]g and sure enough there they came, fro[m] pletely unexpected direction. They had [a] bit of trouble, and Rufus' father seem[ed] slightly annoyed at the very idea they mi[ght]

"Bran new machine," he said. "Good [as]

But it was *no wonder* they'd been gone [so] as his mother said (Rufus repeated it, "[No]*der!*"), for they had gone almost all the [way] to Bearden and back.

Out of some kind of hidden uncomfort[able] in the air, even Rufus began to suspect th[at] effort to please older people and win them[over] joyriding, his father had driven them a lo[ng] than they had really expected to go or [to] going. Though nobody said anything of th[at] His grandmother was very pleased and poli[te] ways, and even his grandfather said pleasan[t] he had to admit it had its points on a hot e[ve] Though nobody would ever catch him buyi[ng]

But mostly they talked about Emma ins[ide] the ride. The minute his mother was sure [of] they who were returning and that no ha[rm] come to them, the thing she was really w[orr] and angry about was that Emma had bee[n] out so awfully late; "She'll be just too exh[au] to sleep all night," she said, "just crying h[er] out." But as it turned out, Emma had fallen [as] before they'd gone two blocks and had sle[pt] a log right through the ride, only waking [up] whimpering a little whenever they had t[o] and going right bang back to sleep the m[in] they got moving again.

Her father was tickled pink. "She takes to [it] a duck to water," he said.

"She wasn't one bit of trouble," her [Uncle] Hugh said.

"Any time she's hard to get to sleep," h[er] ther said, "just let me take her for a spin. T[hat'll] fix her, I'll guarantee it."

Of course, as they all agreed, Emma n[ever] always slept the sleep of the just under al[l] any circumstances; still, it was certainly f[un] how she always woke up whenever they sto[pped] and always conked right off again the mi[nute] they got moving.

"She just plain likes to travel," her father [said]

But then her mother said she had a bright [idea] "You know how jiggling a baby will quiet it s[o] times," she said, "and if you stop it just oper[s] little mouth and yells bloody murder till you [jig] gle it again. Like Rufus always did," she said

"*Little* mouth!" Grampa said: "Hah."

"Oh stop it Papa," she said.

"Sure I bet that's it," Jay said, and Hugh s[aid] "Why of course."

"Well, yes that's exactly," she said. "Just w[hat] I meant. It must be the vibration."

n," Granpa said. "Some use frm after all. ne in every crib, live happily ever after." know there might be real money in that aura said eagerly; she was quite flustered ey all laughed at her. "I don't care," she nestly, though she was beginning to laugh *nean* it. I bet you that's just the way *lots* ntions happen and people make *scads* ey out of taking them *seriously* and them *through, not* just sitting around *laughing*." All the same, they just kept sitting around laughing.

When they got home that night his fame around pretending to be a chauffeur ened the door and bowed before he Laura and her sleeping child out of the at.

ank you James," she said.

e pleasure's all mine Mam," he said: "No, not what they say is it? Very good Mam." wed again. "Well," he said. "Reckon Rud me better put the machine to bed."

l right Jay take him along but don't go ng off on your own."

urse not."

p back in son. Be back fore you get her ," he said, and without wasting any more they started up the street. The minute were over the little hump and couldn't see ouse any more he began gradually to up so that the houses no longer just float-, they streaked, and when they came to irk he didn't turn downhill to Forest Av- but just slowed up enough to take the ling turn smoothly, and then pulled down e little thing under the steering wheel as it would go and really tore up the empty , so fast that the dark stretches of pave- which raced between the round pools of at the corners seemed very short and it ed as if they moved from pool to pool al- as fast as you could walk step by step. He d forward over the wheel and glanced at n, smiling.

cared?" he asked.

duh uh," Rufus said.

ike it?" his father asked, eyes on the road .

Oh *yes!*"

e saw his father smile. "Just wanted to her up and see what she'll really do," he , and they both watched the sleeping ement stream towards them and under in their yellow light while the air made autiful fluffing roar past both edges of the dshield and the branches of trees sailed hing overhead like whips. All of a sudden gh weedy bank soared into their light and father said "*Gahd dam*" under his breath and plunged his foot down hard on one brake and grabbed up hard on the other, and they careened, making a terrible noise, and stopped like hitting a stone wall, with the bank up high and glaring right in front of them and a tremendous noise from the engine until he remembered the engine and shut it down quiet.

"You all right?" he asked with terrible anxiousness.

"Mm hm," Rufus said, very much excited.

"Didn bump yer head, scare yourself."

"Huhuh."

His father just sat for a minute, breathing hard. "*Wow!*" he said finally. "That was a close call sure enough." He shook his head back and forth. "Lucky thing we got new brakes," he said. He got out of the car and walked slowly around to the front and Rufus could see him in the snubbed light, examining very seriously. He shook his head again. "Boy!" he exclaimed. "Come on out and looky here," he called quietly, and Rufus slid under the wheel and came to his side. "Lookit that." A big sharp rock jutted out bluish among burdocks, not two inches from the left headlight.



"Golly," his father said.

"Golly," Rufus said.

"That's last time I'll play I'm Barney Oldfield," his father said. "Less I got me a good clear piece a pike."

Rufus didn't understand the reference so he said *Golly* again, and shook his head slowly. Just to keep in touch. He felt a hand wad up his shoulder and looked up; his father's eyes were very blue and his face was ashamed and worried. He looked as if he wanted help and Rufus loved him and felt very proud to be looked at like that.

"Sure you're all right?" his father asked.

"Yeah," he said.

"That's good," his father said solemnly. He kept looking at him. "Don't say a word about this son," he said, and one hand gestured uneasily towards the auto. "Scare mama to death. She asks where we were all this time, we just tell her we took a little longern we aimed to, but we didn go fast. All right?"

"Sure," he said, using the manliest word he could think of.

"But don't tell her about this. Or goin fast. Huh?"

"Huh *uh*," he replied proudly.

"Hate to tell a lie," his father said. "But don't want to skeer her do we."

"Huh *uh*."

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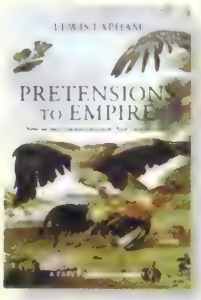
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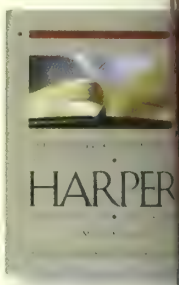
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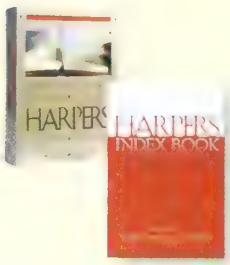




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EW BOOKS

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ompared with Victor Serge, Arthur Koestler was a dilettante. Koestler you'll recall as Hungarian-born Zionist firebrand, ercover Comintern agent, cold ior, and predatory priapus who ished four autobiographies and a dozen novels before ending up as omoter of paranormal science and cide. On a twentieth-century grid vould seem the ultimate waffle, score marks from Hitler and Sta- o prove it. Yet Serge turns out to nore thrilling. Born "by chance" elgium in 1890, home-schooled is anti-tsarist parents in the "heady itions of the Russian revolutionary *intelligentsia*," he grew up from a militant young socialist in Brussels to an anarchist and jailbird in Paris to an insurrectionary in Barcelona to a volunteer Bolshevik fresh to the Finland Station in 1919. Until 1923 he was a journalist and Comintern agent in Germany, after which he hid out in Vienna with Antonio Gramsci, returned to Russia to join Leon Trotsky's Left Opposition, got himself expelled from the party in 1928, arrested in 1933, and deported to the Urals, where his wife went insane. International protests by the likes of André Gide achieved his release in 1936. In Paris he worked as a wage-slave proofreader in the print shops of the socialist newspapers that refused to publish his eyewitness accounts of the Revolution's betrayal. The fall of France to the Nazis sent him on the lam again, this time by refugee ship to Mexico, where, besides writing histories, novels, a memoir, and a manuscript on pre-Columbian archaeology, he also studied psychoanalysis.



Serge died in 1947, a year after finishing THE UNFORGIVING YEARS (New York Review Books, $15.95), which remained unpublished until 1971 in France and has now at last been translated into electric English by the indefatigable Richard Greeman, secretary of the International Victor Serge Foundation. It's a seething, hallucinatory novel, more like something by Andrei Bely from the silver age of Russian symbolism than André Malraux's chilly cerebrations, Ignazio Silone's soul-shrivings, or Serge's own autoanalytic *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*. Like *Tulayev* (and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*), its precipitating crisis is the arrest and show trials of the old Bolsheviks. For Serge's characters—most of them Soviet agents before, during, and after the war in Paris, Leningrad, or Berlin, in Kazakhstan or Mexico—the Bolshevik confessions are unbelievable. But the Revolution is their only weather. Variously, they'll go on as before, ideologues and automatons; or submerge themselves in silent, anguished doubts and "lucid somnolence" while outwardly obedient; or secede from politics entirely, hoping not to be pursued and punished. On the one hand, "secrets, ciphers, stratagems, silence, masks." On the other, despair, abomination, complicity, nemesis, denial, "pure madness," "the Tower of the Savior and the Tower of the Dog."

Although tokens of the historical and material world abound, from Tamburlaine and Schopenhauer to the Bronze Horseman and the Paris Commune, Hegelian dialectic and class struggle can't compete with the symbolic demons of schizophrenia, paranoia, and Thanatos; Freud trumps Marx. Serge's secret agents, each of them a "fugitive from persecution whose papers were lost somewhere between a lake of blood and a penal colony," end up in the Mexican desert like so many "marionettes and fossils," looked down upon by death's-head deities, by gods of silence, by stone skulls with geometric eyes.

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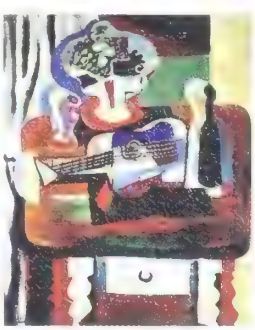
ume of John [illegible] and magisterial [illegible]

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Live the Young Communist League! The Young Are Taking Over the Older Generation's Torch!" (1924), exander Samokhvalov © The Granger Collection, New York City. Photograph of a Veracruz carved n the form of a skull by Don Wrechee © Bowers Museum of Cultural Art/© CORBIS

eleven years for Richardson to get from Cubism to the Ballets Russes, from *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* to *La Danse*. I'll not be so churlish as to say I'm disappointed. His portraits here, written in lime juice and acid, of Diaghilev and Massine, of Cocteau and Aragon, of Gertrude Stein and Clive Bell, are a wicked delight. The walk-on parts for Stravinsky and Coco Chanel deserve a theater of their own. Picasso the "volumetric" sculptor is almost as compelling as Picasso the acrobat and clown. But a little Olga goes a long way in her White Russian tutu. And the Pablo of neoclassicism is a lot less interesting than the Pablo of blind minotaurs and mannerist Madonnas. Leaving behind bohemian friends like Max Jacob, he likes money and the south of France too much; among the bathers on the beach, he is too creaturely comfortable.

Still, this is a biography that will rank with Painter's on Proust and Ellmann's on Joyce. It isn't Richardson's fault that we have already heard enough about Gerald and Sara Murphy and Scott Fitzgerald, and too much about Misia Sert and André Breton; and that the infighting of a ballet company quickly palls. Nor can any biographer be blamed for a falling away from those brilliant early days of Oedipal drama and Barcelona anarchism, of Roman Catholic churches and Moorish gardens, of El Greco in the head and Goya in the heart and opium and theft, into tedious celebrity-spotting. Richardson has old haunts to visit, and old bones to rattle, and other scholars to reprove. We hear tell of Picasso's sadistic side and bourgeois streak, his debt to Ovid and his habit of "appropriation," his fear of loneliness and insanity, his addiction to whorehouses, his cult of the Marquis de Sade, his lifelong grief at the death of his younger sister, his never learning to drive, the fact that "Tipperary" was one of the few tunes he could really hum, his shamanism, his white silk pajamas, and his famous joke that "he had an eye at the end of his penis." While we are waiting for Dora Maar, we will spend enough quality time among bulls, harlequins, centaurs, contortionists, vaginas, and guitars to appreciate the Minotaur's "atavistic Mediterraneanism"—an art "inherently Spanish in its darkness and intensity, its savagery, paradox, and irony." He will go on making this art and making love as though they were the same thing, as for him they were: metaphors for each other; the teasing and torture of women and of forms; a new mistress and a new style; alchemist, chameleon, exorcist, cannibal, sponge. "The cat eats the bird," he once told Malraux; "Picasso eats the cat; painting eats Picasso." And Richardson devours all of them.



Helen Vendler has entirely consumed William Butler Yeats. But OUR SECRET DISCIPLINE: YEATS AND LYRIC FORM (Harvard, $35) is criticism, not biography or journalism. Which is to say that Vendler, A. Kingsley Porter University Professor at Harvard, hasn't set herself down to explain the poet's motives, explicate his meanings, summarize his themes, or argue with him either: "Poems," she says, "are hypothetical sites of speculation, not position papers. They do not exist on the same plane as actual life; they are not votes, they are not uttered from a podium or a pulpit, they are not essays. They are products of reverie." What interests her is prosody, stylistics, and technical expertise: "Form is the necessary and skilled embodiment of the poet's moral urgency, the poet's method of self-revelation," what Yeats himself called "that stern colour and that delicate line/That are our secret discipline . . ."

But there is a huge however. Vendler also knows everything else, all that other stuff about Greek and Christian mythologies, medieval history, Renaissance art, imperial politics, and Celtic whimsy. Yes, sure: "To me, the formal shapes of a temporal art—as they appear, gather force, evolve into coherence and climax, and round themselves into completion—are beautiful and revealing to contemplate, and the poet's decisions as he invents and revises and finishes such shapes deserve investigation." So her principal [illegible] fiercely pursued, is to chase d[illegible] net, ballad, and ottava rim[illegible] "rhythm, syntax, rhyme, diction[illegible] phrasing, figuration," and "reit[illegible] flux, and recursion"; "inscapes, [illegible] chiastic" quatrains, and "spati[illegible] ented vectors" of internal form; [illegible] copulas, quasi-Petrarchan [illegible] trimeter march-rhythms, "soci[illegible] :as," and "exclamatory modes" [illegible] songs" and "master-tropes." Ne[illegible] less, she can't help but explain in[illegible] passing that Yeats borrowed his [illegible] la for the sublime ("terrible b[illegible] from William Blake ("fearful [illegible] try"). That he was respectful in[illegible] er 1916" of "the wearing of the[illegible] even though he hated green a[illegible] litical symbol so much that he [illegible] it as a color for the binding of his [illegible] That he'd actually only seen th[illegible] saics referred to in "Sailing to [illegible] tium" in Ravenna, Italy. That d[illegible] are the symbols of resurrection [illegible] man sarcophagi, and that Pl[illegible] shows up in both Byzantium poe[illegible] the greater glory of Neoplat[illegible] Moreover, how many of us knew [illegible] John Donne's upright shroud-[illegible] death-image on the St. Paul's m[illegible] ial probably inspired the "col[illegible] corpse" in "Byzantium"?

In other words, as she leads [illegible] the hand through some of the [illegible] known poems in the English lang[illegible] we discover how little we knew [illegible] them after all, and how hard th[illegible] worked to make them sound [illegible] evitable. *Our Secret Discipline* [illegible] much an intellectual feast that I a[illegible] most reluctant to mention a cou[illegible] other books of criticism otherwise [illegible] thy but, by comparison, thin i[illegible] shank. In BAMBOO: ESSAYS [illegible] CRITICISM (Bloomsbury, $22.95 [illegible] novelist William Boyd thinks out [illegible] about people, places, art, film, te[illegible] sion, and fellow writers ranging [illegible] Toni Morrison and Milan Kunde[illegible] Rousseau and Chekhov. In TURN [illegible] BACK THE CLOCK: HOT WARS [illegible] MEDIA POPULISM (Harcourt, $[illegible] the semiotician Umberto Eco sub[illegible] anti-Semitism, Harry Potter, int[illegible] gent design, the Middle East, *The [illegible] Vinci Code*, and many other headac[illegible] to his usual perverse spin cycle. [illegible] even wonders whether he'd wan[illegible] live forever, as if he had a choice.

Fish, Bottle and Guitar, 1914, by Pablo Picasso © 2007 Est. of Pablo Picasso/Giraudon/Art Resource and ARS, New York

IONG THE REVIEWERS

Updike and the book-review bugaboo

Vyatt Mason

d in this essay:

nsiderations, by John Updike. Alfred A. Knopf. 703 pages. $40.



ately, manifestos on the matter of book reviewing seem to be cropping up all over. "The pab- that passes for most reviews is an t to the intelligence of most read- wrote Steve Wasserman in the *mbia Journalism Review* this fall, months after Cynthia Ozick, nting in these pages the decline in lar conversation about books, de- d, "What is not happening is lit- criticism." Nor is such exaspera- confined to our more seasoned nentators. In the new literary jour- *+1*, dissatisfaction found a specif- get, *The New Republic*: "Its method wholly negative ... indiscriminately And a 2003 essay on reviewing ts discontents in *McSweeney's* off- t *The Believer* found editor Heidi its observing that "a lot of books are reviewed by people who don't read books unless they're reviewing them."

Differing somewhat in their ultimate points—some saying that too much criticism is mean-spirited and rude; others offering that it's softheaded or too content to mollycoddle—all took pains to acknowledge earlier manifestos, thereby suggesting the problem wasn't new. Thus Wasserman quoted similar assessments of reviewery by Jay Parini in 1999 ("ill-considered opinion, ludicrously off-the-mark praise, and blame"), Edmund Wilson in 1963 ("The disappearance of the *Times* Sunday book section at the time of the printers' strike only made us realize it had never existed"), and Elizabeth Hardwick in 1959 ("Sweet, bland commendations fall everywhere upon the scene; a universal, if somewhat lobotomized, accommodation reigns"). Julavits cited Orwell in 1936 and Wilson in 1944. *n+1* name-dropped Wilson, too. Apparently, one can't not. F enough. Here, then, is an even earlier excoriation, vintage 1928, from Wilson's "The Critic Who Does Not Exist": "When one considers the number of reviews, the immense amount of literary journalism that is now being published in New York, one asks oneself how it is possible for our reviewing to remain so puerile."

Yes, very clearly: one asks. What is curious, though, about this run of failing grades sent to generations of critics is how few serious suggestions are made for remediation; these critics of criticism are stern teachers with high standards, but it would seem they have little practicable curriculum to impart. Julavits tells us, for instance, that "there exist many able reader-critics to write about [books], people whose main qualification is that they seriously care about books"—"caring" the policy that would ensure "both fairness and rigor when assessing the success or failure of an author's project." Or, as *n+1*'s editors maintain, "The moral responsibility is not to be intelligent. It's to *think*. An attribute, self-satisfied and fixed, gets confused with an action, thinking, which revalues old ideas as well as defends them."

Let us concede them their points, such as they are, while not failing to note that the more functional and specific traits that any of these advocates would wish a work of criticism to exhibit are left unqualified. What criticism might practically entail—what tactics, what techniques, what fine tools—is left unelaborated except in the most amorphous (to care, to think) terms. And so, when Zadie Smith tells us, in her own recent 8,000-word manifesto on these matters, "What I am imagining is, I hope, a far more thorough reader," what is one left to suppose but that the true critic, like a unicorn or a y must reside in the imagin

If it were [illegible] to learn [illegible] thought [illegible] ing to [illegible] as a [illegible] ic or a [illegible] ions [illegible] do for [illegible] trip to a [illegible] Mas[illegible]

Mason is a contributing editor of Harp- Magazine. *His last review, "I Buried a list," appeared in the October issue.*

and Fog," by Cara Barer. Courtesy the artist and De Santos Gallery, Houston, Texas

charming. I should say the town is not so very; rather, it is the sort of place to which one's grandparents might hope to retire comfortably if they had the means. There is, however, an enlivening feature of the town that could incline you to a longer stay: a shop with the punny name Manchester by the Book. That it is an attractive used-book shop of the kind we see less and less makes it a nice place to pass an hour. That it has in a glass case, among assorted pricey rarities, scores of John Updike's review copies might be cause to loiter.

In the forty-nine years since Updike's first collection of poetry, *The Carpentered Hen*, appeared in 1958, amid the fifty-nine books that have followed—six subsequent poetry collections, five children's books, one memoir, a play, fifteen collections of stories, and twenty-two novels—there also have been eight collections of essays. Although it is the novels and stories that have kept Updike a household name for fifty years, in undertaking what he calls his "daily exertions" Updike has also been generating essays that cover a hodgepodge of topics: art, golf, health, fashion, media, America, and others still. The essays alone run to nearly five thousand pages. Of these volumes, the six largest have been devoted mostly to a single subject—books—three hundred signed reviews of which have appeared in *The New Yorker*. (Updike also wrote dozens of unsigned reviews for that magazine's "Briefly Noted" section, including an anonymous review of Nicholson Baker's *U & I*—a memoir of its author's infatuation with the book's eventual reviewer.) All told, Updike has published more than a million words on books.

The entry points for those exertions have been the countless paperback promotional copies sent out for his consideration. Updike has sought various strategies for dealing with this bounty. He has, it is said around Manchester-by-the-Sea, given review copies away to his church, for the book sale. Others have been handed off to the wives of the men with whom he golfs. But those copies on deposit at Manchester by the Book were, as he told the *Boston Globe*, "just collecting dust and mouse droppings" in his cellar and his barn before he sold them for "a fair price."

Thus, you can sit on a couch in the store and open (until it sells, of course) Updike's copy of Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full*. A penciled "ugh" greets the reader in the margin of page 12 adorning the line "Lipton was shaking his head so hard his jowls were lagging behind his chin and flopping around." On the same page, the pencil pinpoints the phrase "an extraordinary pounding," and then notes, supra, "clichés—a semi cliché in every sentence." Yet that same reader's pencil, so peeved so soon, does not fail to fit a "good" onto page 531 beside a description ("He surveyed the tiny red eyes and all the mangy faces looking at him"); or, on page 552, to tag a sartorial catalogue of some length with a "beautiful." And in Updike's galley of *Gain*, by Richard Powers, one notes a ballpoint-penned "awful" pinned to the phrase: "For over a century, Clare laid countless clutches of eggs whose gold only the niggling would stoop to assay"; whereas, nearby, a passage of reportage earns an approving "what a trick!," and an epigram soon thereafter—"Funerals are for the living, to punish them for all that they've failed to do for the dead"—nets a tidy "ha." A peppering of "ha"s, in fact, in pencil and various tints of pen, season the once-bland margins of many of Updike's uncorrected proofs; Norman Rush's *Mortals*, say, in which its 700-plus pages are stung with spidery tattoos—"graceless sentence," "good," "run on," "good," "a talky style," "'angel-tits,' cloying," "'worse for war'—pun!," "do we need this?," "dithering," "is this too blunt or excellent?"—not to say corrections, even to the novel's final page, where a forgotten "in" has been planted with a caret.

To peruse copies of books that Updike read with the intention of reviewing—including Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*; Alice Munro's *Selected Stories*; Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin*; Barry Hannah's *Geronimo Rex*; and many others—is to meet a reader who, in a most inarguable way, is a picture of thoroughness. The margins run with comments, even in appendices, even by footnotes. "I read slower than I write," Updike wrote, rather amazingly, in 1975, suggesting that these annotative efforts represent a substantial investment of time. If criticism is, as Terry Eagleton has said, a way of "looking at meaning not as an object but as a practice," then [illegible] see in Updike's review copies [illegible] ble, rudimentary motions of [illegible] tice. As often as not, his m[illegible] may be seen doing one of the [illegible] mediate jobs of criticism, wh[illegible] distinguish, however arbitrar[illegible] things from bad. And yet, in t[illegible] Updike may be spied under[illegible] more considered task: that of [illegible] gation. The form of punctuat[illegible] predominates in his margin[illegible] question mark. What one is [illegible] to is a patient reader's private [illegible] sation with a book.

A monkey, of course, ca[illegible] marginal marks; the po[illegible] ture reads slower than h[illegible] too. It is what these jottings a[illegible] bings add up to that matters. Tho[illegible] of criticism that have poured fr[illegible] dike are, as he writes in the pre[illegible] *Due Considerations*, his latest [illegible] tion of essays and his sixtieth bo[illegible] "end-products of an adolescent [illegible] ing to become a professional wr[illegible] at least to enter in some guise i[illegible] mass of printed material that [illegible] above the middle-browed middl[illegible] in the middle of the last century [illegible] vast cloud gently raining ink."

Some readers, however, have [illegible] suspicious of Updike the rainma[illegible] dismissing out of hand the poss[illegible] that quality could obtain in the t[illegible] such unlikely quantity. Updike' [illegible] ductivity, particularly the uneven[illegible] his fictional output as time wears [illegible] *Seek My Face* no *Of the Farm*; *Villa* [illegible] *Couples*; *Terrorist* no *Rabbit, R*[illegible] courts doubt over his powers o[illegible] crimination. Consider the foll[illegible] sonnet of Updike's, published i[illegible] first issue of *The Oxford America*[illegible] composed on the eve of Valen[illegible] Day, 1989:

> Though most of them aren't mu[illegible]
> write about—
> mere squibs and nubs, like half-sm[illegible]
> pale cigars,
> the tint and stink recalling Tues[illegible]
> meal,
> the texture loose and soon dissolv[illegible]
> this one,
> struck off in solitude one afternoo[illegible]
> (that prairie stretch before the late [illegible]
> fails)
> with no distinct sensation, swee[illegible]
> pained,
> of special inspiration or release,

a masterpiece: a flawless coil,
en, in the bowl, as if a potter
orked in this most frail, least
ful clay
himself to shape a topaz vase.
l perfection, not seashell nor
, how can I keep you? With this
n.

undera defines *kitsch* as "the
denial of shit," and we might
ned to worry over Updike's
e acceptance of same. Read-
poem, "The Beautiful Bowel
nt," one wants very much to
hat with each artistic choice—
en parenthetical shift into the
iously pastoral "prairie stretch";
ning of "release" with "master-
he pun in "as if a potter"; the
couplet's "O" through which
n's final feet run—Updike him-
eased a roar of compositional
r. One is not, however, so sure.
's unusual talent for what he
the "lyric glimpse" can draw the
use beam of his attention too
to the illumination of mean-
detail, to the making of one too
ttempts, as he said in 1965, "to
he flux of life into the icy per-
ce of print." When David Rem-
smisses, fairly, those who dismiss
e as "a preternaturally skillful
of surfaces," one shouldn't ignore
dence that Updike is unfailing-
rtist of the visible, an adherent to
m Carlos Williams's injunction,
eas but in things." That Updike
hard-pressed to discriminate, at
between the telling thing and
elling of *everything* suggests a
th that becomes a weakness.
vertheless, it is that very sensi-
to surface that makes Updike such
itive critic. If there is seemingly no
o the number of goosebumps that
e can catalogue in the areolar
at rings a raspberryate nipple, he
es far more stringent limits when
ing the fruits of the imagination
other artist. Updike has called
ianity "my curious hobby," and it
that its teachings inform the do-
others prescription that guides his
as a reviewer. In *Picked-up Pieces*
), Updike's second collection of
, he lists his rules for reviewing:

. Try to understand what the author
hes to do, and do not blame him for
achieving what he did not attempt.

2. Give enough direct quotation—at least one extended passage—of the book's prose so the review's reader can form his own impression, can get his own taste.

3. Confirm your description of the book with quotation from the book, if only phrase-long, rather than proceeding by fuzzy *précis*.

4. Go easy on plot summary, and do not give away the ending. . . .

5. If the book is judged deficient, cite a successful example along the same lines, from the author's *oeuvre* or elsewhere. Try to understand the failure. Sure it's his and not yours?

All better literary criticism tends to abide by these rules as a matter of course. Dale Peck was ultimately easy to discredit as a voice of critical discernment not because of the severity of his pronouncements (his dismissals of Nabokov, Joyce, Faulkner, et al.) or even his showboating rudeness; rather, he courted his own dismissal through his increasing disinterest in crafting arguments that would plausibly substantiate, through textual evidence, his condemnations. Critical authority can only be earned, and Updike's rules represent the very minimum, practical, practicable means by which one can go about building authority: with direct and responsible recourse to the books themselves.

"Easier said than done," Updike wrote of actually adhering to his own rules. Indeed, his earliest attempts at reviewing did not show especial promise. Like many young novelists who turn to the practice as a means of keeping themselves afloat while building a reputation, Updike initially leaned too heavily on a tendency as necessary to fiction as it is nettlesome in criticism—an overweening subjectivity. Here are how two of his early reviews from 1960 begin:

> On a British-owned island in the West Indies recently, I read through an anthology of "schoolboy" stories—a genre special to the English, who take their schoolboys with a singularly high seriousness.
>
> When I had finished reading this big book, I closed it, and looked at the back, and my tired eyes, without my willing it, went out of focus, placing, to the right of Aiken's face and slightly lower, a dimmer duplicate.

To read a review that begins in the first person singular is like watching someone propose a toast to himself at a party thrown for another man. Here, though, what grates isn't even so much the presence of the reviewer's "I" as the prosaic details relating to the atmosphere in which he read the books. Updike still does, now and again, begin a review in the first person, but he does not include details as banal and self-infatuated as those above. What seems clearest in these fledgling efforts is that Updike had yet to distinguish between the novelistic practice and the critical one: he was willing to include details (the Indies; the closing of the book) that said too much about Updike and not enough about the book under review.

Quickly, though, Updike distanced himself from this kind of easy solipsism. Scruple was substituted, and thoroughness maintained. His careful reading would serve the making of clear aesthetic points. From a review of *Franny and Zooey*, in 1961, in *The New York Times Book Review*:

> The more Salinger writes about them, the more the seven Glass children melt indistinguishably together in an impossible radiance of personal beauty and intelligence. Franny is described thus: "Her skin was lovely, and her features were delicate and most distinctive. Her eyes were very nearly the same quite astonishing shade of blue as Zooey's, but were set farther apart, as a sister's eyes no doubt should be. . . ." Of Zooey, we are assured he has a "somewhat preposterous ability to quote, instantaneously and, usually, verbatim, almost anything he had ever read, or even listened to, with genuine interest." The purpose of such sentences is surely not to particularize imaginary people but to instill in the reader a mood of blind worship, tinged by an envy that the author encourages with a patent leer of indulgence.

Without coyness, Updike renders a stern judgment [illegible] tation. He builds toward [illegible] in plain sight, [illegible] ity that is [illegible] of a plausible case. Rather than caring about books per se, which Heidi Julavits describ[illegible] ment [illegible] be seen h[illegible]

job. The job in this case demanded that he point out flaws in the work of a fellow fiction writer and corroborate those points with evidence.

Although some readers are uneasy, a priori, with negativity, Salinger's reputation has weathered Updike's high-profile critique for a very simple reason: a text is not exhausted by a work of criticism, only informed by it. We leave Updike's review thinking not about negativity, nor about Updike, but thinking, as good criticism makes us, about a writer's choices. That we ultimately do or do not agree with Updike's assessment is of no importance. That the assessment is clear and well-founded allows us to engage a point of view with which we can also, if we are so disposed, argue privately.

"What can one say, critically, about a critic without seeming hypercritical?" asked Updike in his assessment of Cyril Connolly. Of Updike, one can say that he is no Cyril Connolly. He rarely goes curmudgeon. Most books find him in an equanimous mood tending to curiosity: How is this made? Why does it work? Why did it fall apart? There are, however, instances in which his poise is most regularly tested. In recent reviews of American fiction, one senses a certain uneasiness. Updike says as much in his preface to *Due Considerations*: "As I passed the sixty-two book reviews in this collection under my eyes again, I wondered if their customary geniality ... didn't somewhat sour when faced with a novel by a fellow-countryman." Indeed, in his reviews thereof—of Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* ("a reader undertaking a novel grants the writer a generous initial draft of suspended disbelief. DeLillo spends this advance payment as recklessly as his hero overinvests in loans against the yen"), Norman Rush's *Mortals* ("It is annoying, one could say, that a novel demonstrating so acute, well stocked, and witty a sensibility is such a trial to read ... the story feels impeded by a joyless exactitude"), Denis Johnson's *The Name of the World* ("Denis Johnson's radioactive wine holds up best in small bottles, before the decay of rhetoric sets in")—Updike does take issue with the means by which these novelists establish a believable world through prose.

Whether writers or not, readers will often prove more responsive to certain effects than to others, those that in some way speak to them directly. ("What else have you underlined?" asks one character looking at the marginalia in the book of another in Philip Roth's *Zuckerman Unbound*. "What everybody underlines," she says. "Everything that says 'me.'") Not surprisingly, Updike isn't immune to appreciating writing that mirrors his own aesthetic (in his marginalia to a book about W. H. Auden, adjoining the words, "'without body, parts or passions,'" Updike, inveterate alliteratophile, pencils, "lovely phrase"). The question, though, in criticism, is whether local responses are fitted into a case for or against a book that offers more than subjective aesthetic appreciation—more than what Terry Eagleton terms a "waffling belletrism, a sort of linguistic equivalent to wine tasting." Despite Updike's suspicion that he is too hard on his American confreres, he is far more supportive of difference than he is intolerant. Even his review of Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full*, famous for the assertion that the book was "not literature," is, in the main, a record of that novel's capacity to entertain and stimulate, albeit with the argumentative point that Wolfe does not possess the full complement of writerly gifts that would make him the great artist he has trumpeted himself as—a fair critical parry to the novelist's thrusting manifestos of the past, such as "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast," which ran in *Harper's*. The arguments Updike makes against particular works of fiction grant a reader his own mind: one feels encouraged to read the books and form independent opinions.

Except, perhaps, when one encounters Updike's reviews of non-fiction. "Writing criticism is to writing fiction and poetry as hugging the shore is to sailing in the open sea," wrote Updike in an earlier collection. Whereas fiction, in Updike's analogy, charts a course for deep, open, and often uncharted (and to Updike the novelist, *exciting*) waters, criticism hugs the shore of a discovered country. When that country is fictional, the fiction writer in him generally delights in a writer's willingness to explore a dangerous unknown. But Updike seems to hold non-fiction narratives—cultural h[istory] particular—to a stricter cri[tical] dard: when the country expl[ored] tual, Updike shows little fo[rgiveness] for cartographers who, in his v[iew] tell north from south. In *Du[e] ations*, Jed Perl's *New Art Cit[y]* ry of art in Manhattan duri[ng] mid-century, and David All[yn's] *Love, Not War*, a history of t[he] revolution, meet with unsy[mpathetic] appraisals. Of Allyn: "Though [we] admire the wealth of detail a[nd] mented anecdote that fuels h[is] narrative, there is something [critical] ical about his take on this, aft[er] timate sea-change." Of Perl: h[is] trek ... is a wearying one." Updi[ke] these men their grasp of the [art] takes more time, in Perl's case [particularly], to hammer away at the in[ad]equacies of their styles: "While one w[ould] mistake Perl's hip, allusion-rich [prose] hot air, it does, in its schemati[c] and eager phrasemaking, attain [the] air status."

Naturally, a critic of non[-fiction] should take the writer's style [as] ously as he would that of a [fiction] writer. And yet, what is curious [in] dike's reviews of non-fiction is [the] flex to use style as a stick th[at] providing too short a measu[re of] book's virtues. Three instanc[es of] stylistic tic ("David Allyn lik[es] image of running out of steam [and] to use it at least three times" [is] evidence enough, such that wh[en] Updike allows himself a dozen ex[amples] of Perl's tendency to coin com[pound] adjectives, one wonders to wha[t end]. For to level at an art critic the k[ind of] scrutiny that might prove he is n[ot] Bellow may not be the best use [of] Updike's column inches, or the [best] measure of Perl's worth.

This emphasis on style allo[ws a] general statement that a[pplies] to Updike's writing on [both] non-fiction and fiction: He is no [more] ically drawn, in his reviews, to th[e] ploration of bigger questions. "Th[ese] are neither casual aesthetic riffs [or] reviewer's mere 'personal' opin[ions]; they are philosophies," wrote Cyn[thia] Ozick, approvingly, in these p[ages] about the literary criticism of Ja[mes] Wood. By contrast, one would r[ather] mistake Updike's criticism for ph[ilo]

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Where in the work of Denis
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tions—theoretical, political—
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eviews of the work of Roland
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s enduring worth.) Updike is
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reviews remain, in Wilson's 1928
ation, "so puerile" is because read-
book well, not to say writing about
l, requires time, diligence, intel-
e. But it also demands something
ps rarer still, at which few writers
sarily excel—a quality that, in
mental ways, seems at odds with
reative endeavor: an abiding hu-
mility. As Frank Kermode has said of the critic's role, "we shouldn't get above ourselves." After all, the critic's job, as Kermode knows, is "to serve literature." Criticism is a private service made public, and how many people go into writing with the hope of becoming servants of the public good? It is as Updike wrote, in 1962, of James Agee's 250,000 words of criticism contributed—anonymously—to *Time* and *Fortune*: "Surely a culture is enhanced, rather than disgraced, when men of talent and passion undertake anonymous and secondary tasks. Excellence in the great things is built upon excellence in the small." That is as close as Updike has ever gotten to a manifesto on the state of book reviewing, and that, to my mind, is just close enough. ■

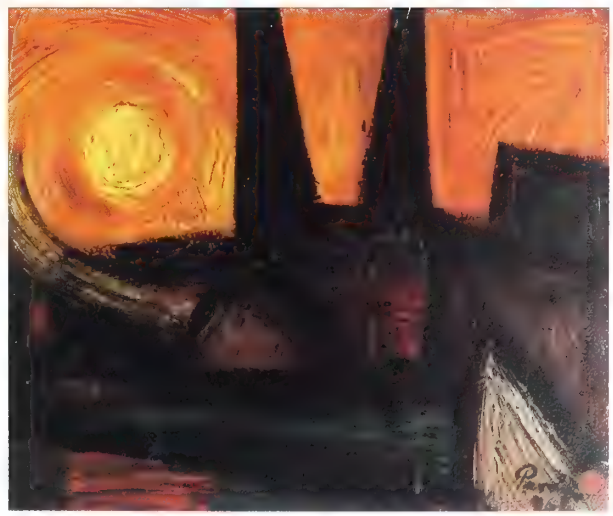
HUNGARIAN REFLECTIONS

A tragic history of a divided people

By John Lukacs

Discussed in this essay:

The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary, by Bryan Cartledge. Timewell Press. 606 pages. $29.95.



It is no easier to write the history of a small country than that of a large one—especially when the language of a country is peculiar, and when its history is riven by endless internecine struggles. Thus the best histories of any country are almost always written by their natives. Yet there are occasions when the sympathetic and interested eye, and consequently the pen, of a foreigner may penetrate the jungle of confusing events and complicated sentiments with a clarity of vision (and subsequently of prose) amounting to something more than the antiseptic desideratum of "objectivity." (After all, perspective is a component of reality.) Such is the case with *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary*, by Sir Bryan Cartledge, which [illegible] thor's perspective in his tit[illegible] words sug[illegible] asset of Hunga[illegible] is its refe[illegible] bitter, hard-wo[illegible] val in the face of calam[illegible] surprising ti[illegible] tive [illegible]

John Lukacs is the author of many books, including George Kennan: A Study of Character. *His essay "When Democracy Goes Wrong" appeared in the April 2005 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

ne Square in Szeged, by Emil Parrag © Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library

intellectual creativity and an unexpected capacity for recovery—have almost always made their appearance after the survival of somber tragedies, within a few decades after the failure of national uprisings and political revolutions.

Cartledge, a former British ambassador to Hungary, is the latest example of an odd conjunction of Hungarian–British relations through the centuries, a conjunction that obtains despite the great differences of geography, fortune, and national character that separate the two peoples. Anglophilia, on the one hand, has long marked the inclinations of a certain class of Hungarians; on the other, there have always been a few Englishmen who have expressed notable sympathies with and interests in Hungary, writing remarkable books about that country and some of its people. An Oxford historian, C. A. Macartney, wrote what is perhaps the most detailed and minute political history of Hungary between the two world wars and during the second one, a history that includes more details than are known even by native Hungarian historians, a remarkable achievement. Yet Macartney's work has two shortcomings. One is his arguable political and ideological inclinations, apparent in his occasional and strange approbation of certain right-wing demagogues. The other is his overemphasis on Hungarian politics, about which his knowledge is near-encyclopedic. Cartledge's *Will to Survive* is broader—and deeper.

The great Jacob Burckhardt once told his students in Basel that history has really no method of its own. But, he added, "You must know how to read." Bryan Cartledge knows how to read. Here is a professional diplomat who spent less than four years in a country, who has no personal ties with it, but whose interest was acute enough for him to learn its difficult language and read volumes and volumes about matters in which many of his predecessors, especially political historians, were not much interested. In one place he writes: "This necessarily cursory survey of Hungary's culture between the two world wars"—it is more than that—"has concentrated so far on literature because it is primarily in her literature, and above all in her poetry, that Hungary's national identity has always been enshrined and expressed." Well, his [illegible] Hungarian poetry and prose and of Hungarian art is more than commendable; it is exceptional. His summaries and vignettes include not only the well-known composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály but also such poets as Sándor Petőfi, Endre Ady, Attila József, and Miklós Radnóti, who are hardly known outside Hungary, and such novelists as Zsigmond Móricz, Dezső Kosztolányi, and Gyula Krúdy.

Cartledge is not a medievalist, but his survey is a solid presentation of Hungary's difficult history during the Middle Ages. His historical judgments are often excellent. He questions much of the mythology surrounding the murky origins of the Magyars—such legends as their descent from Attila's Huns, or their inspiration by the Miraculous Stag, or the blood oath of seven tribal leaders who entered Hungary with their leader Álmos—and proposes an account, which he calls "the probable truth . . . less dramatic but far from prosaic."

Cartledge devotes fully one half of his substantial volume to the past one hundred and fifty years. This is not disproportionate, since, after all, these one hundred and fifty years were marked by the protracted, painful attempts of Hungarians to arrive at an independent state of their own. And at what cost! For the independence of a small state—and of one without relatives or close friends, situated between German and Russian imperial powers, pressed by one or the other—is often hardly more than illusory. Perhaps Cartledge attributes a little too much of the German and National Socialist influence in Hungary between the wars to the Hungarian wish to correct the mutilation of their state by the Western Allies in 1920. This is arguable. But certain is his proper and fair treatment of Hungarian domestic and foreign politics and society (including the centuries-old and far from simple and sometimes tragic history—and the very unusual circumstances—of Jews in Hungary). Many professional historians, including Hungarians, could learn from the judgments of this former guest in their midst.

In this year 2007 the conditions and the prestige of my native Hungary are not very good. This is a melancholy devolution[illegible] situation eighteen years ag[illegible] the states of Eastern Europ[illegible] Hungary had earned the g[illegible] spect and interest. The t[illegible] from the Soviet sphere [illegible] Europe to a parliamentary [illegible] cy was easy and civilized. [illegible] for a more-or-less free and [illegible] ciety existed, and they w[illegible] promising than in other E[illegible] ropean countries. But by 20[illegible] gary's financial and econon[illegible] had slipped below that of ot[illegible] ern European countries; [illegible] strife in Hungary is now wi[illegible] there are symptoms of an in[illegible] and perhaps even political c[illegible]

At the same time, the H[illegible] people are better off than th[illegible] been for a very long time. [illegible] this is due to the end of Com[illegible] and to the subsequent bene[illegible] market economy (an imprec[illegible] but let that go); even so, the[illegible] of private possessions well p[illegible] the end of the Communist re[illegible] another example of the nati[illegible] tality beneath the surface of [illegible] The quality of education (es[illegible] in the middle schools) remain[illegible] Intellectual and literary and [illegible] achievements are considera[illegible] deed, the creators and consu[illegible] the arts now come from strat[illegible] population who were untouc[illegible] such matters in the past. The[illegible] thin and ephemeral stratum f[illegible] new rich; there are still many f[illegible] old poor (including Gypsies, a[illegible] percent of the population); bu[illegible] gary has already moved towa[illegible] new and inchoate form of a c[illegible] society (consider how the e[illegible] "middle class" is losing its m[illegible] in many parts of the world) th[illegible] probably become the overwhe[illegible] social and political reality i[illegible] twenty-first century.

Yet Hungarians still complai[illegible] terly, for there is a duality in the [illegible] garian mind. Its curious and often [illegible] ly conscious vitality and capac[illegible] survive is in stark contrast to the r[illegible] ical, sentimental, and often inv[illegible] pessimism that is the other main [illegible] ponent of the national character. [illegible] duality runs a red (and, alas, some[illegible] blood-soaked) thread through [illegible] garian history.

;in with: there were not
ungarians to populate a ho-
s state. They have no rela-
ir unique language is neither
Germanic, Hellenic nor Ro-
even hundred years ago, Hun-
es crossed a magnificent range
ains into what at that time
rgely empty basin. They
—well, largely—Christian
ı and Roman, not Byzantine
ı), and their kings established
al kingdom. In five hundred
y had a few remarkable rulers,
foremost among them King
, the founder of the Hungarian
d a saint. He admonished his
ans to accept other peoples as
uals in their midst: "A state
wns but one language and one
feeble and fragile."[1]

garians are not, and have not
ery religious. It is a national
nat Hungary has been "a bastion
estern Christendom" for
es—against Mongols, Tartars,
–and that "Western Christen-
i.e., Europe, always failed to
o its help whenever it was in-
from the east. Much of this is
ut the physical and spiritual con-
s of Hungary within that "bas-
were seldom edifying. Of course,
sity cannot be quantified; it can-
measured with a yardstick.[2] But
a symptom: in Hungary, unlike
d, the extreme nationalists hear-
d (and still hearken) back to

myths, symbols, and habits of an ancient and prehistoric religion of pagan shamans. (One thousand years ago St. Stephen himself had to fight and subdue his shamanic opponent Koppány.)

Compromise—political compromise—is not a Hungarian talent. An important factor in Hungary's catastrophes has been the Hungarians' propensity for fighting among themselves, something that has so often—indeed, even now, in 2007—included accusations of treason and questioning the very identities of political opponents. Bryan Cartledge cites another Englishman, Major-General Aubrey Edgcumbe, who was stationed in Hungary from 1945 to 1947: "Hungarians are on the whole very pleasant people, and in many respects highly cultured . . . efficient and hardworking. . . . [I]f they could think less about politics and their past, they should be capable of becoming a true democracy." A statement as true today as it was sixty years ago. Or in 1847, one hundred and sixty years ago.

In 1526 a Turkish army crushed a ramshackle Hungarian army. The king of Hungary drowned in a creek. Th after more than half of Hungary came under Turkish rule for about a century and a half. Yes, it is true, no one had come to help Christian Hungary against Islam. But what the Turks defeated was a gimcrack kingdom and state, semi-barbaric, as were many states and kingdoms in that Europe of five hundred years ago. And before and during this national catastrophe, Hungarians—nobles, clans, tribes, leaders of peasants—had fought one another and tried to murder their opponents.

What was then left of western Hungary was surrendered to the Hapsburg monarch of Austria. There were a few brave episodes during those one hundred and fifty years: one of them was the curious twilight existence of an occasionally half-independent duchy in eastern Hungary called Transylvania. Then an Austrian army and its allies expelled the Turks from most of Hungary. Out of the frying pan into the fire: Hungary became part of the Austrian Hapsburg empire for long centuries. A revolt against the Austrians was defeated. But the nation survived. A little less than

86, George Kennan—incognito—spent weeks in Hungary for the purpose of a atic treatment of his knees. He wrote in nal letter: "I find the more thoughtful of ngarians somewhat subdued, bewildered, epressed by the many bitter blows fate alt them over the centuries, largely in quence of their uniquely vulnerable geo- ic location and their small size. . . . They nscious of having been able to make, had nstances permitted, a larger contribution istory had permitted them to make. . . . respect and fear the intensity of their na- feeling. . . . I see, in other words, many adictions in their character and their ament—contradictions so profound that rhaps presumptuous of me even to spec- about them as I have in this letter . . . so casual and occasional excellence, all so lit- preciated—so poorly used. . . ."

e, admittedly odd, indication: there are ew Hungarian saints—and all of them n to be kings or their descendants—ared with the number of Polish and (formerly Bohemian) saints.

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two hundred years ago there arose an extraordinary surge of national reform: of the national language, of the national institutions, and of national consciousness and the wish for national independence. All of this debouched into the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848, which, after a year of impressive achievements, was bound to fail. The emperor of Austria and the tsar of Russia saw that an independent Hungary would mean the collapse of the Austrian empire and the end of the European order. Their two forces crushed the small Hungarian army. British and French people may have sympathized with the Hungarians, but their governments knew that the destruction of Austria would be a disaster. Hungarians themselves failed to see that millions of Romanians, Serbs, Croats, and Slovaks were restless: the prospect of an "independent" Hungary wherein they would be worse than second-class people did not appeal to them.

But what followed Hungary's defeat was yet another tide of national revival. Its symptoms were such that, less than twenty years after the failed Hungarian war for independence, the monarch of Austria chose to offer Hungary a compromise, fulfilling most of the demands of the Hungarian independence movement, and thereby elevating Hungary to an equal partner of Austria. This Compromise of 1867 transformed the latter into Austria-Hungary, the Dual Monarchy, which would last for only another fifty years. Hungary profited from that status: one of its results was an astounding rise of Hungarian schooling, literature, industry, inventiveness. Again there were plenty of Hungarians for whom this rise was not enough. They demanded total independence from Austria. The opportunity came to them in 1918, but at what a time and, again, at what cost! The Austro-Hungarian empire had lost the First World War. The tide of nationalisms swept Hungary along with it. Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Romanians, Serbs, and Croats all seized the opportunity to break away not only from Austria but from Hungary too, to claim new states and provinces for their own.

The Western powers, Britain and France, tired after a world war and the [illegible] Europe, and having no particular sympathy for the Hungarians, [illegible] districts of Hungary to new [illegible] the knew little [illegible] Hungarian state was cut into pieces: what remained was a small and misery-laden country one third of its former size, while almost three million Hungarians were allotted to live within the new (and unjustly drawn) frontiers of new states. That was another national catastrophe. Again Hungarians themselves had contributed to it. They had not treated those other nationalities fairly, instead regarding them as backward. If they had treated the minorities better, perhaps the old Hungary might have prevailed as a state.

In 1938, Hitler's Third Reich, having annexed Austria, became Hungary's immediate big neighbor. Then came World War II, and during that catastrophe Hungarians—some willingly, many unwillingly—became allies of the new Germany. In 1944, Hitler decided to occupy a perhaps recalcitrant Hungary and to install a wholly subservient government there. The hot rake of war now swept across Hungary. Within a year, Russian armies pushed the Germans and their Hungarian allies out of a devastated country, with its capital, Budapest, in ruins. Eight hundred thousand Hungarians died or disappeared, half of them Jews.

After 1949, Hungary slipped behind the Iron Curtain. But Russian and Communist rule was unpopular and ineffective. In 1956 almost an entire people rose up against Communism and the Russians. Astonishingly, for a few days they won; and then they lost. The Russians crushed the revolution. Hungarians, and their refugees, now earned a great wave of sympathy in the West. But the West [illegible] United States [illegible] would not [illegible] war for Hungary in 1956 (just as six years later the Soviet Union would not risk an atomic war for Cuba); 1956—like 1949, 1918, and 1526—was a time of great national tragedy. Then there came again something like a revival. Life—including cultural life—in the twenty years after 1956 had become tolerable again. And [illegible] years later the Russians and Communism were gone. There followed a brief moment of national unity now lost.

So the people of Hungary [illegible] gravely scarred by the catas[illegible] the twentieth century. Hence [illegible] creases and wrinkles on the [illegible] on the necks and minds and [illegible] one, two, three entire genera[illegible] fused with the feelings of a[illegible] pessimism. But these genera[illegible] soon be gone. And, after all, [illegible] occurred a change in the ve[illegible] ture of history—in the direc[illegible] popular democracy, good or b[illegible] might be.

"History," wrote the [illegible] historian E. A. F[illegible] more than a century [illegible] past politics, and politics is [illegible] history." We ought to know [illegible] is no longer so; indeed, tha[illegible] never really so. Shakespeare w[illegible] er to the truth in *Henry IV*, [illegible] "There is a history in all men's [illegible] Put it in other words: There is [illegible] ference between an historical [illegible] and a non-historical perso[illegible] recognition is one result of the [illegible] cratic age. It is no longer suffic[illegible] study and describe the his[illegible] minorities—even when the [illegible] the governing minorities. Th[illegible] Tocqueville saw early, and [illegible] than many others. In one of th[illegible] chapters in the second volu[illegible] *Democracy in America*, he wro[illegible] despite the coming openni[illegible] archives, the history of democ[illegible] will be more difficult to write [illegible] the history of aristocracies. The[illegible] ent crisis of professional histo[illegible] vides myriad examples of that. [illegible] has been lately a great overall e[illegible] sis on what goes under the bl[illegible] term "social history," but, wit[illegible] exceptions, that amounts to [illegible] thing like retrospective sociolog[illegible] seldom more than that.

My subject, however, is not [illegible] riography. It is the history of a [illegible] nation. And this involves the [illegible] lem of the slow and uneasy m[illegible] ment from aristocratic to democ[illegible] from minority to majority histo[illegible] is *the* problem not only of Hung[illegible] history but of Hungary at the [illegible] ent. For centuries there was a def[illegible] distinction—not only among [illegible] people but in the Hungarian [illegible]

Continued on page

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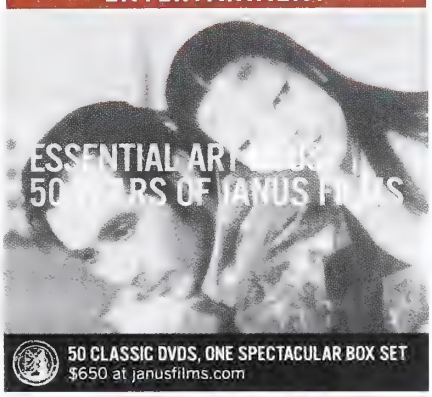
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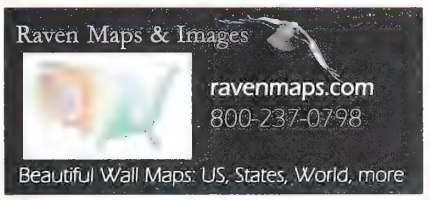
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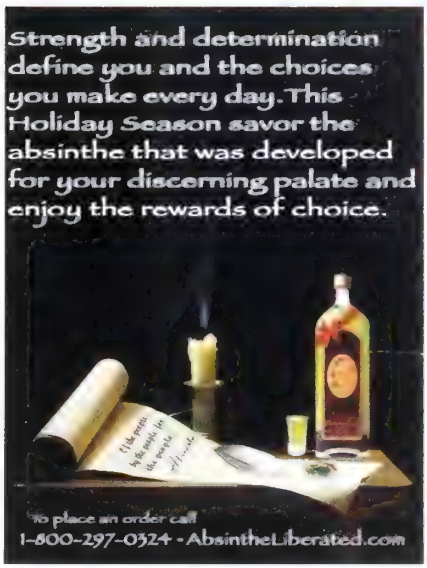
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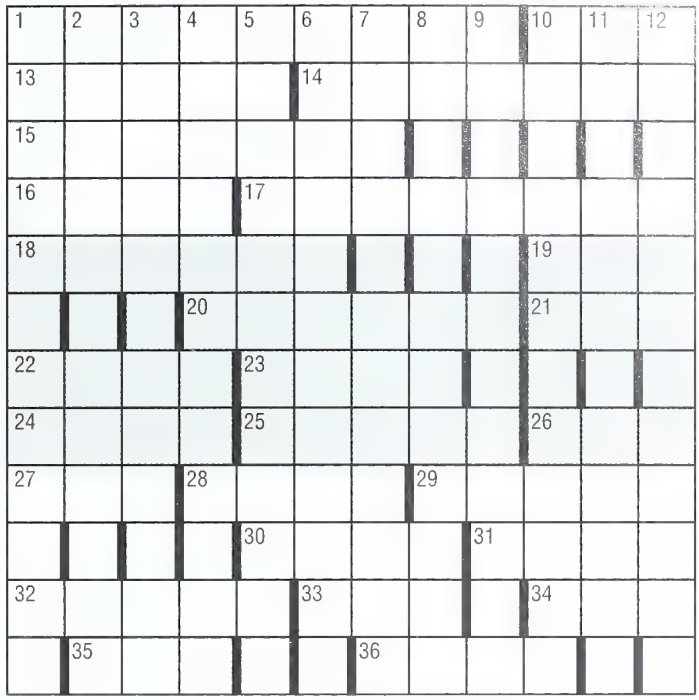
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Continued from page 104

guage—between "nati... "people." In the sixteenth ... great Hungarian jurist, Ist... bóczy, declared such a ca... and feudal and legal distinc... nation was not only repres... incarnated by the greater a... nobles and a few others; "th... were excluded from society ... government. Not until four ... later, in 1939, was there a ... election with an uninhibite... cret ballot. It was one of the ... grettable, nay, disastrous ele... Hungarian history. The Hu... National Socialists, in ma... worse even than their Germ... counterparts, got more than ... cent of the national vote, fo... more than the combined v... liberals and social democrats. ... the governing majority party, ... vative and nationalist, some ... willingly, others unwillingly ... along with the extreme right.

Such was the *Zeitgeist* in 193... the Third Reich next door a... dominant power in Europe. I wa... years old then, but it did not tak... for me to recognize the signific... these developments. Within a fe... I declared that I was a reactio... monarchist, a skeptic of popul... ereignty, of democracy itself. Th... the age of twenty-two, after th... sians had come, I fled Hungary t... United States. And here, anoth... decades later, having marrie... buried my two American wive... day I suddenly recognized that ... Hungary is my mother, America ... wife. Here I have written more ... two dozen books, but only one (a ... one, entitled *Budapest 1900*) a... Hungary. But the past and the pr... of my native country have not c... to be my concerns. I see—or at l... think I see—the problems, the c... nuities, the deep divisions in Hung... history, and the dualities of the ... tional character, better than if I ... stayed (and would I have survived ... Hungary during the past sixty-... years. Hence, too, my admiration ... what Bryan Cartledge has acc... plished in his fine book.

PUZZLE



ODY PARTS

Richard E. Maltby Jr.

h acknowledgments to Gong of The Listener)

The answers to all of the Down clues are twelve-er words. Each of these words must be split into ee equal parts. At least one part should be entered the column under which it is clued, with the re-ining parts to be entered in the diagram in various ner columns. "Heads" are always in the top section, odies" always in the middle, "legs" always at the ttom. In other words, when the diagram is com-eted, each down column will contain an artificial nsense word made up of the "head," "body," and gs" (in that order) of real words. As many as two rts of the clued answer may appear in the column under which it is clued, but never three.

Six Across answers are capitalized words. One is a common foreign word. 5 Down is a variant spelling. 27 Across is an abbrevia-on. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 73.

CROSS

1. It might give you speed whipping up shortcake (9)
10. Man's been relieved of repetition! (3)
13. Macho types, a type found at the end of a lady's skirt (2-3)
14. Part of the face (not the nose) that's American, e.g. (7)
15. Coolest wild animals (7)
16. Small flower featured in thriller (4)
17. Cleverness in this space died (lost life) (8)
18. Questionable news you hear from one boarding (6)
19. Work head off—it's part of dressing (3)
20. Big Bird's poetry's heartless and badly written (6)
21. Writer shows half his output! (3)
22. Starts from zero, increases geometrically, suddenly turns to the side (4)
23. Time line gets you to think in Shakespearean verse (4)
24. Having flu symptoms each year requires it! (4)
25. Company into duplicating choir works? (5)
26. Fish sent back in newspaper (3)
27. Band on the radio comes back, to a degree, in painting (3)
28. Recall name like a city in the Mideast (4)
29. Goodbye to royal leader of some Turks (5)
30. French filmmaker goes at it in the wrong way! (4)
31. Cheat is second-rate and kind (4)
32. She's no beauty—that's about right—and married (5)
33. Put the pedal to the metal, and minister quickly (3)
34. Guacamole ingredient makes you cry in Spain (3)
35. Heading off a lot of ice takes a bit of work (3)
36. I'm viewed as seven minus five (4)

DOWN (TWELVE-LETTER WORDS)

1. Sending up air to Nazi? It's loony!
2. Road, although unpaved, has meals offered
3. Violate, reviolate—am I making things better?
4. Come in quietly, standing up—that's ambitious
5. Possessing facts, reinvested in bank—e.g., do well
6. Curiously leery about raising even one indefinite amount for charity
7. Given directions for making preparations outside, bad actor returns
8. In indoor chest, rat ordinarily conceals identity of one instrumental in his employment!
9. "Th' boy's rich, I'm poor" [illegible]
10. A string went on around [illegible] batteries (*hyphenated*)
11. Hello, I yell, during [illegible]
12. Tailor to fit rib and hand

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Body Parts," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 [illegible] 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries [illegible] Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one year subscriptions to *Harper's* [illegible] be printed in the February issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "More Split Personalities," are Les Reid, Springfield, Missouri; Sue Willer, Cave Creek, Arizona; and Elliott Zuckerman, Annapolis, Maryland.



FINDINGS

The Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to three scientists who contributed to the development of "knockout" mice, in which individual genes can be disabled to replicate the genetic origins of certain human diseases. Researchers repaired nerve damage in mice afflicted with multiple sclerosis, reversed the effects of Parkinson's disease in mice by giving them green tea, and found a way to treat muscular dystrophy by doubling the muscle mass of mice. Oncologists created a virus that forces mouse brain tumors to eat themselves, and immunologists isolated a genetic code for ulcerative colitis after huge numbers of their lab mice began dying of bloody diarrhea. Scientists successfully created stem cells from the testicles of mice but worried that the "very painful" procedure, which can be used to treat only the subject from whom the cells are extracted, might encounter resistance in human males. Researchers used herpes to kill metastasized breast cancer, and other experts warned that women may be able to catch breast cancer from mice. The Adirondacks were plagued by mouse poison–resistant mice.

Feminists reported experiencing more stable heterosexual relationships and greater sexual satisfaction than did nonfeminists. Canadian researchers found that gays are almost as likely as women to be coerced into sex and that nearly a quarter of men are coerced into cuddling. Scientists reported that having sex with friends tends to complicate friendships, and 8 percent of participants in a study of "ex-gay" Christian therapy reported that the treatment had made them more gay than before. Female African jumping spiders that lose their virginity to large males and avoid being eaten by them after sex tend to choose smaller, less threatening males for subsequent sexual encounters. Male African bat bugs were found to have developed vaginas that look different from those of their female counterparts, in order to reduce their chances of being sexually attacked by other males who pierce their abdomens with hypodermic penises and inject sperm into their bloodstreams; female bat bugs have retaliated by acquiring male vaginas. Plants can warn one another of danger. Men are both smarter and stupider than women.

It soon will be possible to locate sunless orphan planets that wander through deep space; such planets may be able to sustain life near or below their surfaces with heat from their cores, and more life-sustaining energy could be supplied by the presence of a moon, whose gravity causes "tidal heating." The planets are more likely to possess liquid water and heat-trapping atmospheres if they were orphaned at a particularly young age. Astronomers confirmed that Saturn's moon Iapetus is half black and half white because its front side picks up space dust, some of which may have been shed by Saturn's other moons, and its back side accumulates ice. They also said that the moon has looked like a walnut for a very long time. Spaceflight was found to make salmonella more virulent, and Ukrainian villagers living near the site of a recent meteorite crash contracted an imaginary illness. Some neutron stars were observed to generate magnetic fields so powerful that they tear themselves apart in massive starquakes. Astrophysicists speculated that particles called inflatons drove the Big Bang and that the universe's first stars formed in long filaments shaped by warm dark matter. A naked singularity was suspected at the center of the Milky Way. All possible universes exist. ■

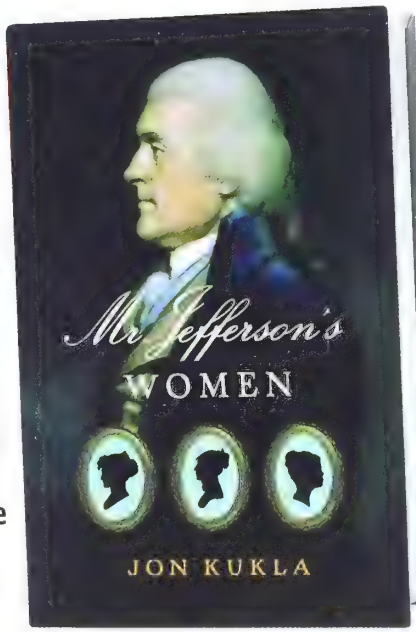
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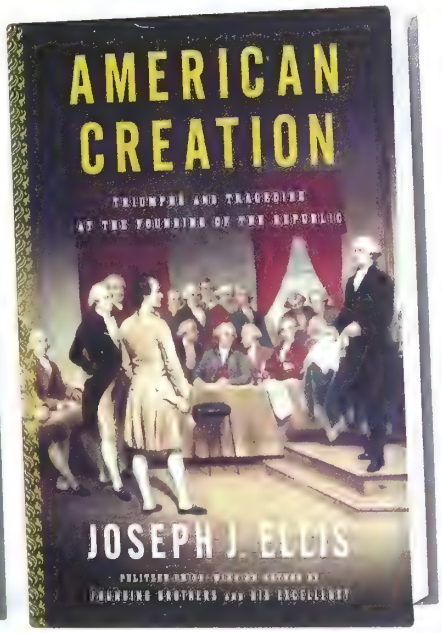
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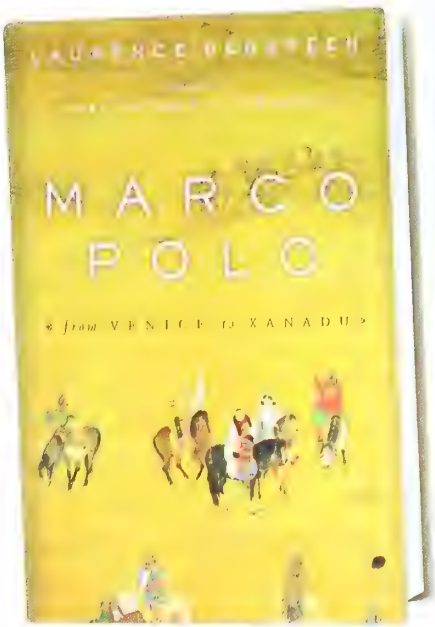


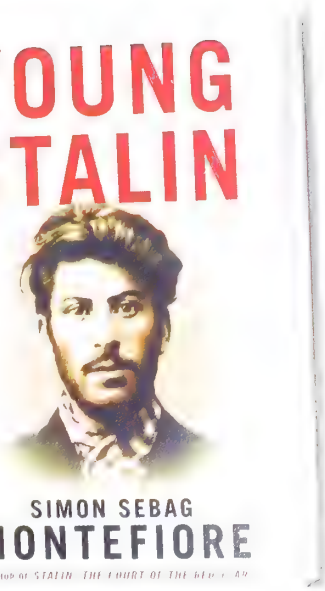
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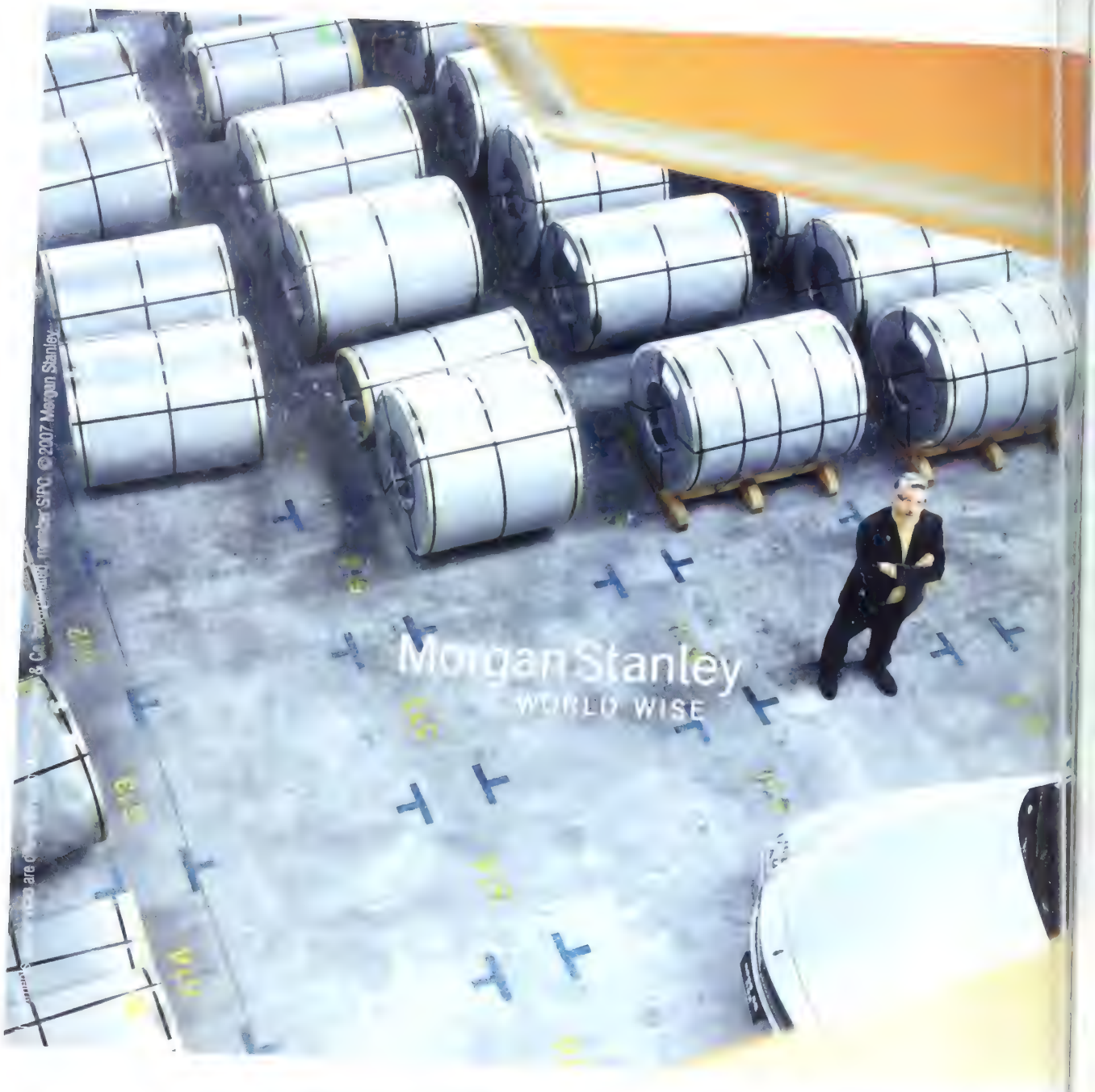


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